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**Food Crisis, Administrative Response and Public Action:
Some General Implications from the Kalahandi Issue**

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Summary of Dissertation submitted for PhD. degree

by

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on

Food Crisis, Administrative Response and Public Action: Some General Implications from the Kalahandi Issue

Kalahandi district in Western Orissa has received extensive media attention in recent years in connection with reports of starvation deaths, child sales and Government neglect. This thesis attempts to identify the roots of hunger in Kalahandi and strategies implemented by people in the district to cope with this problem. It also analyses the performance of Government interventions implemented between 1985 and 1991 designed to promote food security, locating this analysis in a longer historical context.

The study uses data collected over a seven month fieldwork period during 1992. Details of Government programmes were obtained through semi-structured interviews with Government officers and elected representatives at national and regional level. Published and unpublished Government data is used to construct time-series for variations in cropping patterns and production for a wide range of crop types over the period 1960 to 1988. Public responses to hunger and public opinion of state interventions are examined through semi-structured individual and group interviews in five villages in different parts of the district.

This thesis argues that the persistence of hunger in Kalahandi cannot be directly attributed to the failure of the Government to direct adequate finance and resources to relief and development programmes. It suggests that Government officers have at their disposal a wide range of well-formulated provisions to protect the vulnerable. However a range of factors limit the effectiveness of state interventions when guidelines come to be implemented in practice. In a wider context this study highlights the important role which Non-Governmental Organisations (N.G.O.'s), the media and the law courts may play in promoting food security; and the need to strengthen cooperation between the public, the administration and other key actors, including politicians and N.G.O.'s, in designing and administering measures to combat hunger.

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Glossary

adivasi	person of tribal (Scheduled Tribe) background
akbari	excise
arrack	form of country liquor
att	high lying land
baada	system of labour sharing
bahal	low lying land
balmela	children's fair
bandhak	mortgage
berana	medium lying land
bethi	unpaid labour
bhogra	land cultivated by a tribal headman (Gountia)
bidi	leaf cigarette
chua	well
chuda	pressed rice
dharna	form of seated collective protest
dongar	land on hill top
durbar	a royal court; Government of a ruling chief
dyori	method of grain storage
goonda	criminal, bandit, dacoit
Gountia	Village headman or revenue collector of a village
Grama panchayat	elected village level government
harijan	person of Scheduled Caste ('untouchable') origin
hat	market
jabar dakhai	'capture by force'
jagir	land or village provided on service tenure
Karanas	revenue record keepers
khalsa	land or village administered directly by the ruler
kharif	autumn cropping season
mahajan	moneylender
marwari	term generically used to describe merchants and landholders of non-Oriya origin -(even though these persons may not necessarily be of Marwari origin)
maufi	rent free villages
nala (nallah)	small canal
Naukhai	festival to celebrate the new rice harvest - literally eating 'new rice'

Panchayat Samiti	elected block level local government
patta	lease given to a raiyat showing lands and rents and the period for which this is fixed
patwari	a village revenue officer responsible for collecting land revenue and maintaining village records
pokhal	water rice
pan	betel
raiya	occupancy tenant
rabi	winter cropping season
ragi	a form of millet
rojgar	income
roti	unleavened bread (chappati)
sahukar	moneylender
sanad	firman, a written order signed and sealed by a King or Government
sarpanch	elected president of a village panchayat
taccavi	loan provided as a relief measure for promoting and protecting agriculture
tahasil	a unit of land revenue administration
takoli	tribute
thekedar	intermediary revenue collectors between raiyat (cultivator) and the Government
Wazib-ul-urz	revenue administration record
yojana	programme
zamindar	revenue intermediary
Zilla Parishad	elected district-level local government

List of Abbreviations

A.D.A.P.T.	Area Development Approach for Poverty Termination
A.D.M.	Additional District Magistrate
A.P.S.D.	base level godowns of the F.C.I.
B.D.O.	Block Development Officer
C.A.C.P.	Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices
C.P.I.	Communist Party of India
C.P.I.(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
C.P.I.(M-L)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
D.L.C.N.C.	District Level Committee on Natural Calamities
D.P.A.P.	Drought Prone Area Project
E.R.R.P.	Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Poor
F.A.Q.	Fair average quality
F.C.I.	Food Corporation of India
F.P.S.	Fair price shop
G.P.	Grama panchayat
H.Y.V.	High Yielding Variety
I.C.D.S.	Integrated Child Development Scheme
I.O.C.	Indian Oil Corporation
I.R.D.P.	Integrated Rural Development Project
K.A.B.	Kalahandi Anchalika Bank
K.L.F.	Kalahandi Liberation Front
M.S.P.	Minimum support price
N.A.C.	Notified Area Council
N.F.E.	Non-formal education
N.R.E.P.	National Rural Employment Project
O.M.S.	Open market sales
O.S.C.S.C.	Orissa State Civil Supplies Corporation
O.S.W.C.	Orissa State Warehousing Corporation
P.D.S.	Public Distribution System
P.S.	Panchayat samiti
P.W.G.	People's War Group
R.D.C.	Revenue Division Commissioner
R.L.E.G.P.	Rural Landless Employment Generation Project
R.M.C.S.	Regional Marketing Cooperative Society
S.D.O.	Subdivisional Officer
S.R.C.	Special Revenue Commissioner (Board of Revenue)

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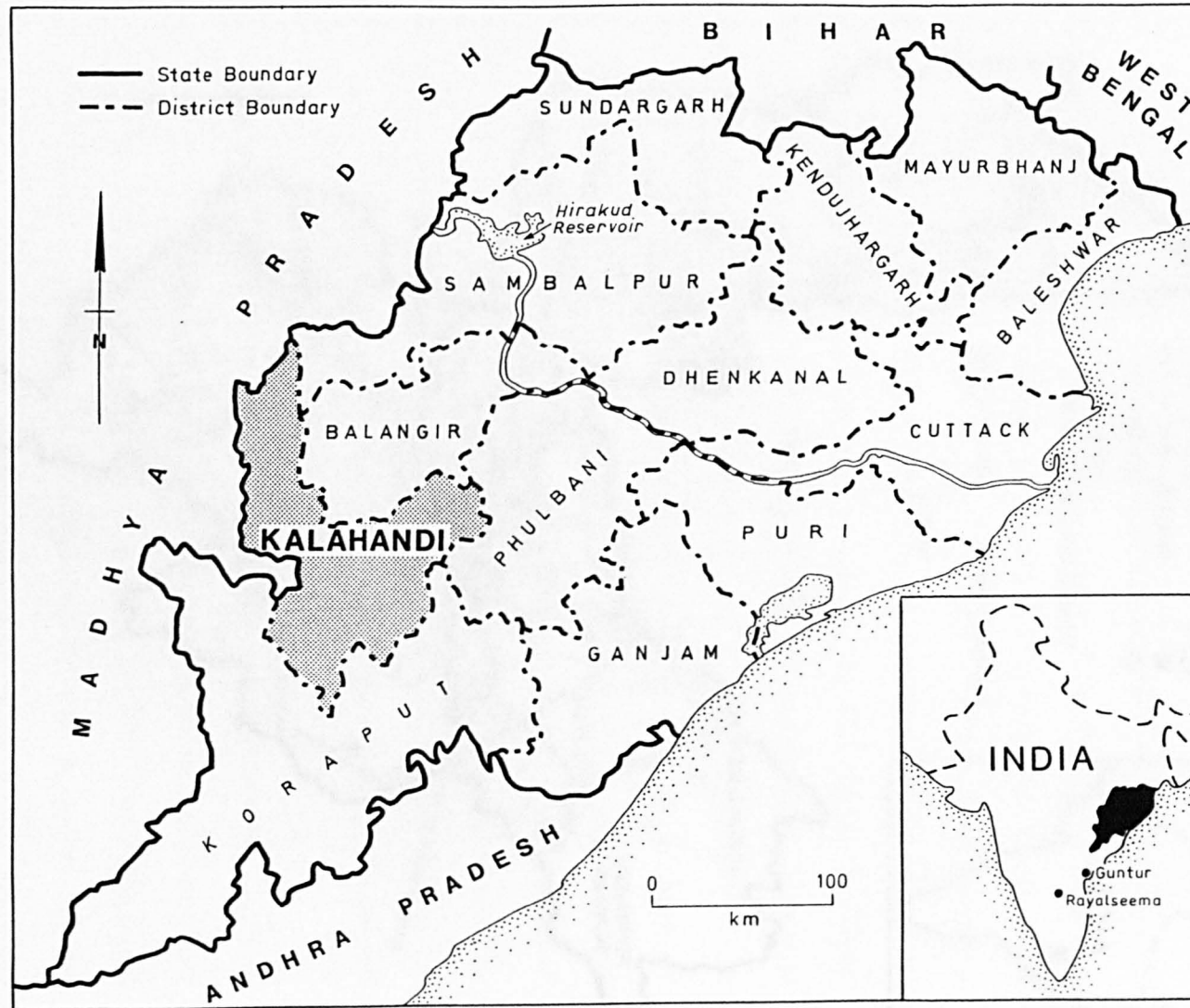
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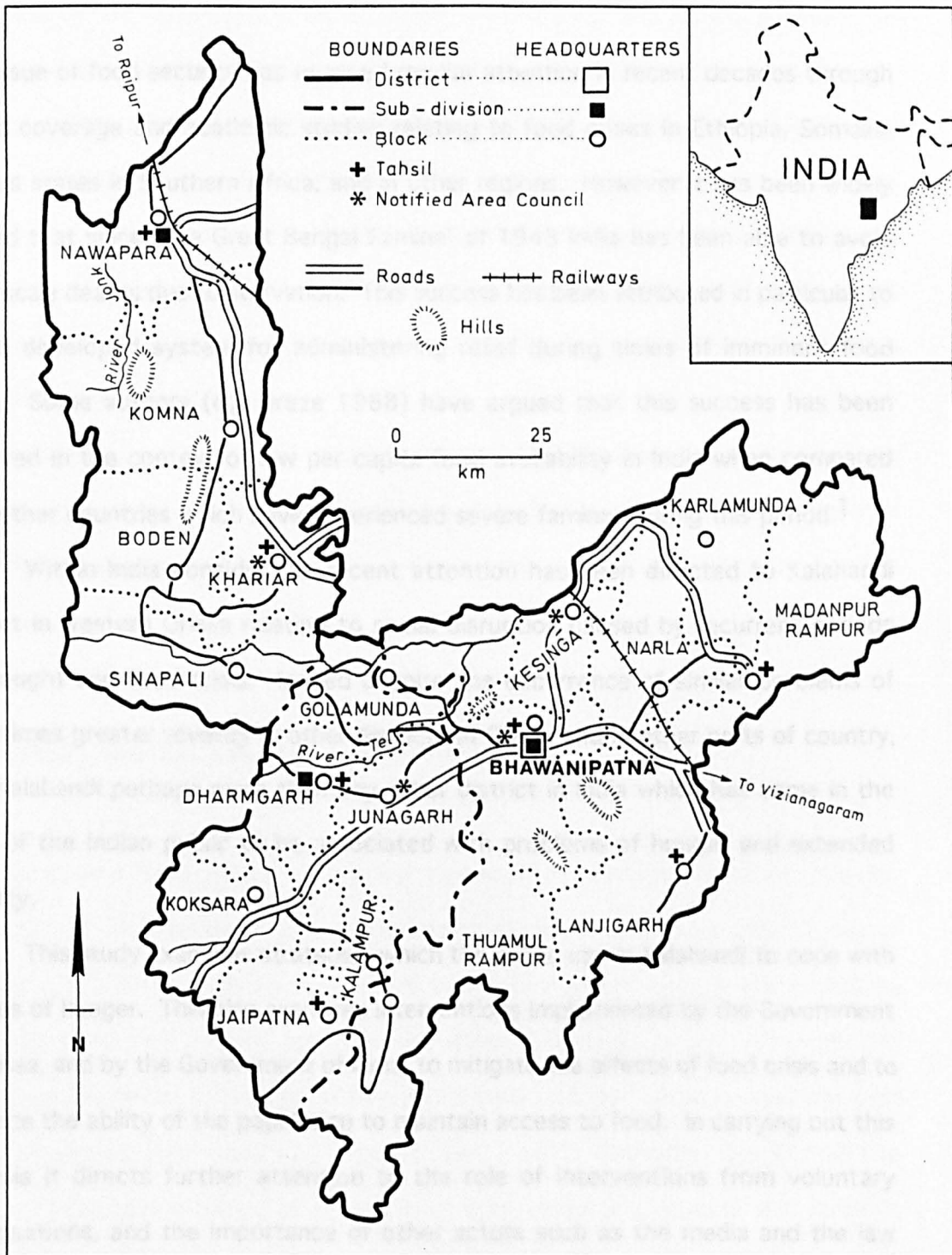
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THE ORISSA STATE

THE KALAHANDI DISTRICT



Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The issue of food security has received regular attention in recent decades through media coverage and academic studies relating to food crises in Ethiopia, Somalia, various states in Southern Africa, and in other regions. However it has been widely argued that since 'The Great Bengal Famine' of 1943 India has been able to avoid large scale deaths due to starvation. This success has been attributed in particular to a well developed system for administering relief during times of imminent food crisis. Some authors (eg. Dreze 1988) have argued that this success has been achieved in the context of low per capita food availability in India when compared with other countries which have experienced severe famines during this period.¹

Within India considerable recent attention has been directed to Kalahandi district in western Orissa relating to social disruption caused by recurrent periods of drought and food crisis. Indeed despite the occurrence of similar problems of sometimes greater severity in other districts of Orissa and in other parts of country, it is Kalahandi perhaps more than any other district in India which has come in the eyes of the Indian public to be associated with problems of hunger and extended poverty.

This study examines strategies which the public use in Kalahandi to cope with periods of hunger. This also examines interventions implemented by the Government of Orissa, and by the Government of India, to mitigate the affects of food crisis and to enhance the ability of the population to maintain access to food. In carrying out this analysis it directs further attention to the role of interventions from voluntary organisations, and the importance of other actors such as the media and the law courts, in the way they influence public action and administrative response.

¹ This issue is discussed in chapter 5.2 of this thesis.

Indeed in Kalahandi a wider set of issues than simply inadequate access to food has given special importance to the problem of hunger. In particular, a petition sent in 1985 to the Supreme Court of India by two Kalahandi social workers drew attention to the failure of the State Government to take satisfactory measures to promote development in the district, and to administer relief in response to drought and starvation. On the basis of the findings of the later 1990 Mishra Commission inquiry instituted by the Orissa High Court, the Government of Orissa was declared to have shown 'complete apathy in the matter' and to have 'done nothing to ameliorate the distress which prevailed in the district'.(Mishra Commission, 1990) Such criticisms made of a State Government in response to public interest litigation is unprecedented in India.

This study attempts to examine public action and Government response to hunger in the Kalahandi context, and to draw out the wider implications of lessons from this study for promoting food security and preventing food crisis in other regions.

1.2 Outline of this thesis and its principal contributions

This thesis aims to develop a theoretical framework for analysing food security and food crisis. This framework is utilised throughout the thesis to identify the set of factors which interrelate to create the conditions where people are unable to maintain necessary access to food and other essential items. Primarily this addresses the nature of access which persons have to food; or more generally what Sen has termed their food 'entitlements'(Sen, 1981) Secondly, this locates the problem of hunger in terms of access to a wider range of resources and facilities which include education, health services, drinking water, transport and marketing facilities. It assumes that people are not simply 'passive actors' in the process of maintaining food security, reliant on handouts from the state and other agencies.

Consequently people must have such a set of resources at their disposal to put them in a position to be able to act to meet their requirements for food.

This study goes on to use this theoretical framework to examine the roots of food insecurity in Kalahandi, and forms of public action and state response designed to cope with this problem. General background and history of Kalahandi are examined in chapter 3. This discusses systems of administration and revenue collection during the colonial period and in the post-colonial state. This also examines social welfare measures, and programmes for land reform and abolition of Zamindari implemented after independence. These factors have had an important influence on the ability of sections of the population to cope with hunger. In addition, the final section provides an brief overview of the history of drought and food crisis in Kalahandi.

The crux of the analysis of the roots of food insecurity in Kalahandi in this study is provided in chapter 4. This attempts to identify the range of variables which interact to create a situation where certain people in the district are unable to maintain access to food, giving particular attention to how people's vulnerability varies regionally and between sections of the district's population. This also discusses strategies which people implement to cope with hunger and to pressure external agencies, particularly the state, into taking necessary action to address this problem. As far as possible this analysis attempts to situate its discussion of these coping mechanisms within an understanding of local culture and customs.

According key importance to the role which the state may play in promoting food security, this thesis goes on to examine guidelines laid down in the Orissa Relief Code for administering relief during times of 'famine' and other 'natural calamity'.² These guidelines bear close similarities with recommendations developed during relief codes under British rule in India in 1880, 1898 and 1901. Chapter five provides a brief introduction to the historical development of relief administration in India. It then gives specific attention to the guidelines laid down for providing

² Refer to references provided in chapter 5.2 of this thesis.

relief in the current Orissa Relief Code (1980 edition), analysing details of specific responsibilities held by individual officers, the criteria by which states of famine and drought are declared, and programmes to be initiated in each particular situation.

This analysis provides the basis for an assessment of the effectiveness of recent Government interventions in Kalahandi to provide relief and to promote development. Chapter six highlights programmes implemented by the state between 1985 and 1991 to promote these aims. This analysis draws widely on data maintained by Government departments; on reports of meeting of the Kalahandi District Level Committee on Natural Calamities; on interviews with Government officers, politicians, voluntary organisation workers; and with a cross-section of the public in Kalahandi.

Limitations imposed on this study by fieldwork time, access to information, and space in this thesis necessitate that this study cannot provide an all-inclusive coverage of programmes during this period. However it attempts, as far as these constraints allow, to provide to the reader a broadly based snapshot of Government activities to promote food security during this time. In particular it draws upon the theoretical framework developed in chapter 2, and the guidelines for relief administration detailed in chapter 5, to assess strengths and deficiencies in these interventions. It attempts especially to identify whether deficiencies in relief administration are attributable to: (a) faults in the theoretical guidelines for relief laid down in the Orissa Relief Code; or (b) deficiencies arising in the way that these guidelines are implemented in practice.

Whilst the state may be well placed to implement programmes to protect people's access to food, this study suggests that locally based voluntary organisations also have an important role to play in promoting food security. The operations of two local N.G.O.'s operating in Kalahandi are examined in chapter seven, this giving attention to the effectiveness of programmes which they implement, and the lessons which these provide for interventions from the Government and other agencies. This

study also forms the basis for an examination of the strength of the cooperative nexus between the state, voluntary organisations and other actors in the relief and development process.

In addition to mechanisms (including interventions from state and N.G.O.'S discussed above) which promote people access to food (either directly by supporting their own production, or indirectly by improving their ability to generate purchasing power which can be used to purchase food from market outlets), a range of other mechanisms or institutions may enhance people's ability to maintain access to necessary food and other essentials. This set of variables includes: an active judicial system, independent from Executive and Legislature and free from control of other vested interests; an adversarial system of multi-party politics; and a politically conscious population with channels for action through elected representatives, or through a range of forms of collective or individual protest.

Public interest litigation brought against the Government of Orissa in the Supreme Court of India and the Orissa High Court, in response to allegations directed against the Government of Orissa that it has neglected in duties to implement necessary measures for relief and development in Kalahandi is examined in further detail in chapter 3. Under the Orissa Relief Code such responsibilities are declared to be directly the responsibility of the State Government. As a result of its alleged negligence the petitioners in these cases argued that the Government failed to prevent starvation deaths, child sale and various forms of suffering and exploitation amongst sections of the district's population. With reference to observational and interview material collected during fieldwork for this project in Kalahandi, this section also examines the effectiveness of public interest litigation in protecting to access of the vulnerable to food.

The importance of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics, and the role of the media, in promoting food security in Kalahandi provide the content of the last fieldwork-based chapter of this thesis. This examines proceedings relating to issue of hunger and starvation in Kalahandi in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. This

also addresses the extent to which political activity through this Assembly, and through other forum, have been used as a bona fide means to pressure the State Government into implementing necessary interventions to protect the vulnerable in Kalahandi. It goes on to analyse the importance of collective action through demonstrations, riots, and lootings; or through radical political activity channelled through Maoist-oriented Naxalite organisations which operate in some areas proximate to western Orissa. Finally, this gives attention to the role played by the press in bringing the issues of hunger and poverty to the attention in Kalahandi of a wider public; and in an adversarial capacity in placing pressure on the State Government to step up its interventions to protect the vulnerable.

The concluding section attempts to draw together issues raised in earlier discussion, and to highlight the wider implications of issues discussed in this study. This particularly focuses on : (a) how this study of food security and relief administration in Kalahandi adds to wider debate and theoretical analysis relating to food security; (b) important implications of this study for increasing the effectiveness of interventions from Government or other agencies in Kalahandi; (c) the wider policy implications of conclusions from this study to the issue of food security, and relief and development administration, in other parts of India and in other countries.

Through this conceptual framework, this study hopes to use fieldwork data from Kalahandi to illustrate and extend theoretical debates relating to the analysis of food and famine. In particular, this hopes to provide concrete fieldwork evidence to examine how variables such as education, health, and the role of media, politics and legal action, influence food security. Whilst a range of food security literature has identified these factors as likely prerequisites for eliminating hunger (see further in chapter 2), these studies have commonly lacked adequate research data or case-study evidence to support this argument.

Further, this analysis attempts to use the theoretical framework developed in the next chapter to advance the study of food insecurity in Kalahandi. This draws on

data from my fieldwork carried out in other regions, and on the findings of research on food problems in other areas, to enable the reader to locate similarities and differences in difficulties faced in Kalahandi with those in other regions prone to food crisis. Similar theoretically-based comparisons are lacking from other discussions of hunger in the district..

1.3 Methodological Note

This study uses data collected during a seven month fieldwork period during 1992. Details of Government programmes were obtained through semi-structured interviews with Government officers and programme administrators (N=30). It also draws upon published and unpublished data from Government records. The latter is used to construct time series for variations in cropped area, yields and production for a range of crop types during the period 1960-1988, thereby making a significant addition to work on food insecurity in Kalahandi which has previously lacked similar time series analysis of this data.

This study examines the performance of locally operating voluntary organisations through semi-structured interviews (N=20) and participant observation during time spent with two organisations operating in the area.³ Information relating to other key actors in the process of providing relief and development was collected through interviews with Lok Sabha M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s for Kalahandi (N=3); petitioners in public interest litigation brought against the Government of Orissa relating to drought and starvation (N=2), along with legal representatives relevant to these cases (N=2); and press reporters working in Kalahandi (N=3).

Public responses to hunger and public opinion of state interventions are examined through semi-structured individual and group interviews, and through

³ A period of two weeks was spent with one organisation; whilst a total time of approximately one month was spent working with the other, this divided into a number of separate visits.

participant observation techniques in 5 villages in Kalahandi. To gain a more complete view of the affect of seasonal variations on food security, these were spread over visits made in the late winter (interviews in Feb/Mar), summer (interviews in April/May) and early monsoon (interviews in July) seasons. Pilot interviews were conducted in 2 villages in the Nawapara subdivision, one close to Khariar N.A.C. and one in a more remote part of Boden block. Information from these pilot interviews was used to finalise issues for examination in the main study. For this, a more detailed study was carried out in one village in Khariar block, one village in Sinapali block and one village in Boden block. This region demonstrates arid climatic characteristics, and a mixed adivasis and caste population in a semi-hilly area. Two villages were also selected for study from remote, hilly parts of Thuamur Rampur block with predominantly adivasis populations. For individual interviews in these villages, attempts were made to sample by caste/tribe, and within these subcategories to obtain a balance of male and female and young and old (sampled as below 35/ above 35).

To provide an impression of how people's condition, survival strategies, and opinion of state intervention, varies between Kalahandi and other regions, brief visits were made to villages in the Guntur and Rayalseema regions of Andhra Pradesh, to the Padampur and Sambalpur regions of Western Orissa, and to one village in Cuttack district of coastal Orissa. Information in these areas was again collected through semi-structured interviews and observer participation methods.

This chapter has introduced the aims and content of this thesis, along with the principal methods used in fieldwork. The next chapter attempts to develop a theoretical framework for analysing food security and famine, providing an overview of measures implemented by the state in India since independence to promote the access of the population to food.

Chapter 2 Conceptualising Food Security and Food Crisis: A theoretical analysis of methods and processes

2.1 Introduction

Food crises tend to occur when a range of factors, influenced both by nature and human action, interact over a period of time to push a region or society past the point at which it is able to cope with the impending situation. Whilst 'natural' factors can trigger a set of processes which may result in food crisis, it is only when considered alongside the prevailing social, political and economic situation in the region concerned that we are able to understand why a crisis took place at a particular time and with a particular set of effects. The effects of such a crisis are not fixed, but vary between regions and states and in the impact which they have on different sections of the population. Such variations can be attributed partly to differences in the effectiveness of mechanisms and survival strategies which these actors implement in attempts to cope with their difficulties. Policies implemented by the state may also be crucial in explaining this variation.

This chapter examines different aspects of food security and problems of measurement and cross-cultural comparison. It outlines factors which may lead to food crises, and which may explain why a particular set of conditions may lead to a collapse of food security in one society, whilst another society may be able to cope with these conditions and is therefore able to avoid such a collapse. In addition, it discusses strategies which people adopt to cope with periods of food insecurity and which reduce their vulnerability. Finally it examines interventions by external agencies, and the state in particular, to relieve distress and to preserve food security. It does this with particular attention to such interventions made by the state in India. This theoretical framework provides a basis for analysis in the Kalahandi context in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Conceptualisation, Measurement and Cross Cultural Comparison of Food Security

The term 'food security' generally implies a situation where members of the population under consideration have access to sufficient food to provide an adequate energy intake¹, and to meet other nutritional requirements. The quantities and types of food needed to meet this requirement will vary between people depending on their size, age, gender, level of activity, state of health and so forth. It will also vary seasonally and temporally, possibly increasing for example at times of year when work requirements are high, such as at harvest times.

In this thesis 'food security' is operationalised according to two criteria. Firstly, it is operationalised in terms of people's concrete and measurable access to food. Food security, as above, is taken to imply a situation where people are able to maintain access to a necessary quantity and balance of foodstuffs. As mentioned, the standard accepted to be 'adequate' will vary interpersonally and intrapersonally. For this reason the limitations of using a single standard, such as calorific intake, for cross cultural comparisons of food security must be recognised accordingly.

Secondly, food security in this thesis is also operationalised in terms of people's *perception* that they are able to maintain such an access to food. In this sense food security is therefore taken to mean, quite literally, that people *feel secure* in their ability to satisfy their food requirements through the activities and opportunities open to them.

This feeling of security may derive not only out of people's direct access to food and other essentials. It may also be influenced by a wider set of variables, such as the safety-net provided by support networks and systems of reciprocity based in household and community structures²; by interventions made by the state, by voluntary organisations and other agencies; and by a range of other factors which not

¹ This idea is discussed further in chapter 2.2.

² What Thompson, Scott and others have perhaps more generally called the 'moral economy'. See further in this chapter and in chapter 4.10.

only protect people's access to food and essential items but also reinforce their confidence that this access is available.

Central to the problem of developing an objective definition of food security is that of conceptualising human need. As demonstrated in figure 2.1, human needs may be represented in terms of prerequisites ('satisfiers') for satisfying goals which humans universally share. Doyal and Gough suggest that these goals are notably: (a) to avoid serious harm; and (b) to be able to participate socially.³ (see fig.2.1)

In these terms a 'need' may represent what is accepted as necessary to maintain an individual in an acceptable state which avoids the prospect of meeting serious harm.⁴ On this basis, 'needs' are seen to be essentially public' in that they utilise a shared understanding of actions which can be implemented to achieve this aim.(1991:41) However it is recognised that subjective feelings, or wants, are not necessarily reliable measures of human needs. It is quite possible that humans may often want things which harm them (eg. tobacco, cream cakes); and may not want things which prevent harm (eg. exercise, fruit).

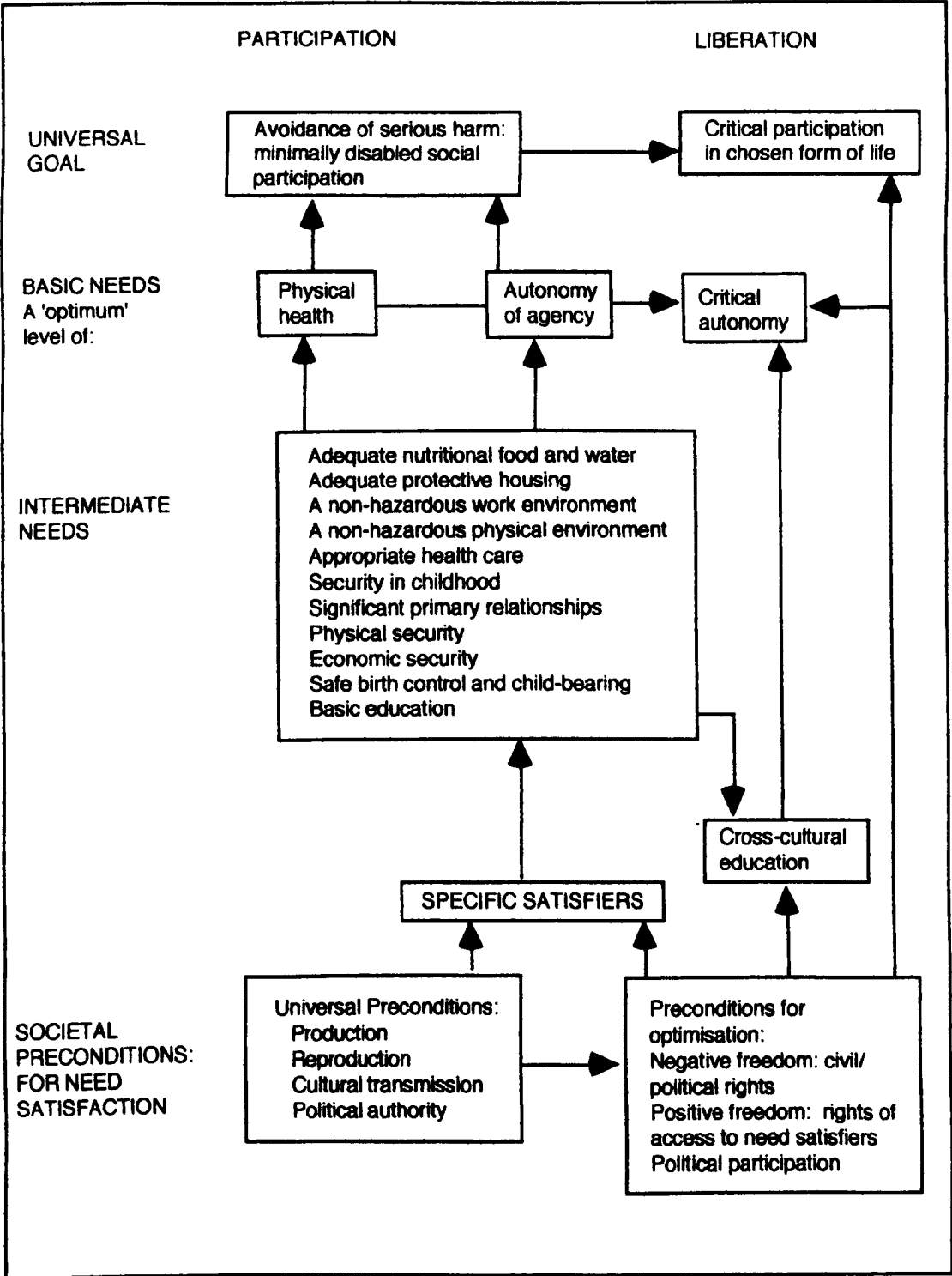
In addition to the need to avoid 'serious harm', a further precondition for human action in any culture may be an individual's 'personal autonomy'. Doyal and Gough rightly argue that satisfaction of basic needs may be partially categorised in terms of a person's success in social participation. Public and private goals must also be achieved through successful interaction with others.(1991: 50/51)

On this basis a person's needs may be perceived in terms of prerequisites for satisfying the universal goals mentioned above (notably avoiding serious harm, and successful social interaction and participation). These may be subdivided into 'basic

³ Indeed Doyal and Gough suggest that a 'need' may connote either: (a) a drive or motivational force established through a specific lack, and set up by a state of disequilibrium or tension; (b) goals or strategies which are believed to be universalisable (1991:35ff.). Because it is possible for a drive to exist without there being a need (eg. a drive to drink alcohol) and for a need to exist without there being a drive (eg. the need to take exercise), these authors suggest that the idea of need may be represented more accurately in terms of universalisable goals and strategies (eg. as in (b))

⁴ Doyal and Gough conceptualise 'serious harm' as 'the significantly impaired pursuit of goals which are deemed of value by individuals'. They suggest that to be seriously harmed is to be 'fundamentally disabled in the pursuit of one's vision of the good'. Given that it is possible for a person to be able to achieve aims deemed to be important despite experiencing unpleasant feelings such as anxiety or sadness, serious harm is not reducible to such subjective feelings. Basic human needs therefore specify what a person must achieve if they are to avoid sustained and serious harm in these terms.(1991: 50)

Figure 2.1: Representation of Human Need



source: Doyal and Gough(1991:170)

needs' and 'intermediate needs'. In the category of 'basic needs' may fall: a need for satisfactory *physical health*; and a need for personal and critical *autonomy*. (fig.2.1 and 2.2) In this sense 'autonomy' represents a person's ability to 'make informed choices about what should be done and how to go about doing it'. (ibid: 53)⁵ Intermediate needs may include: nutritional food and clean water; protective housing; a non-hazardous work environment; a non-hazardous physical environment; appropriate health care; security in childhood; significant primary relationships; physical security; economic security; appropriate education; safe birth control and child-bearing. (ibid: 157/158) The characteristics of these satisfiers are universal since they represent properties of goods, services, activities and relationships which enhance physical health and autonomy in all cultures. (fig.2.1 and 2.3)

Whilst basic needs satisfaction has been regularly defined in terms of 'minimum' standards sufficient to enable people to avoid ill-health or to perform a certain minimum level of functions, the task of fulfilling one's obligations in public and private life frequently involves far more than the minimal level of action allowed by this minimum level of needs satisfaction. For this reason it may in some contexts be more appropriate to refer to 'optimal' rather than minimum levels of needs satisfaction. These may be defined at two levels, neither of which imply 'maximum':

a. *Participation optimum* - at this level individuals have health and autonomy such that they can choose the activities in which they will take part within their culture, and further possess the cognitive, emotional and social capacities to make such a choice.

⁵ Doyal and Gough argue that a number of prerequisites exist to ensure minimal levels of autonomy over sustained periods of time. These include: (1) that actors have the intellectual capacity to formulate aims and beliefs common to a form of life; (2) that actors have enough confidence to want to act and thus to participate in a form of life; (3) that actors sometimes actually do so through consistently formulating aims and beliefs and communicating with others about them; (4) that actors perceive their actions as having been done by them and not by someone else; (5) that actors are able to understand the empirical constraints on the success of their actions; (6) that actors are capable of taking responsibility for what they do. (1991:63)

Fig.2.2 Suggested Indicators of Basic Need Satisfaction

Basic Need Components	Suggested Indicators
<i>Physical health</i>	
Survival chances	<p>Ω Life expectancy at various ages including disaggregated and distributional measures</p> <p>Ω Age-specific mortality rates, especially infant and under-5 mortality rates</p>
Physical ill-health	<p>ß Prevalence of disabilities, according to severity</p> <p>ß Prevalence of children suffering from developmental deficiencies, according to severity</p> <p>ß- Prevalence of people suffering from serious pain</p> <p>ß- Morbidity rates for various disease categories</p>
<i>Autonomy</i>	
Mental disorder	ß- Prevalence of severe psychotic, depressive and other mental illnesses
Cognitive deprivation	<p>ø- Lack of culturally relevant knowledges</p> <p>Ω- Illiteracy</p> <p>ß- Lack of attainment in mathematics, science and other near-universal basic skills</p> <p>ß- Absence of skill in world language</p>
Opportunities for economic activity	<p>ß- Unemployment, and other measures of exclusion from significant social roles</p> <p>ß- Lack of 'free time', after accounting for productive and reproductive activities</p>

Notes:

Ω- Reasonably reliable universal or near-universal data

ß -Data for a few countries only, but where there is a clear idea of operationalisation

ø- More speculative suggestions for indicators

Source: Doyal and Gough,(1991:190)

Fig.2.3 Suggested Indicators of Intermediate Need Satisfaction

Universal satisfier characteristics	Social indicators
<i>1. Food and Water</i>	
Appropriate nutritional intake	Ω- Calorific consumption below FAO/WHO requirements β Other nutrients consumption below requirements Ω- % lacking access to adequate safe water Ω- % suffering malnutrition/ deficiency diseases ® Ω- % low birthweight babies ® β-% overweight/obese ®
<i>2. Housing</i>	
Adequate shelter	β- % homeless β- % in structures that do not protect against normal weather
Adequate basic services	Ω- % lacking safe sanitation facilities
Adequate space per person	β- % living above specified ratio of persons per room
<i>3. Work</i>	
Non-hazardous work environment	β- Incidence of specific hazards ø- Incidence of job tasks undermining emotional/cognitive autonomy Ω- Deaths/ injuries from work accidents ® Ω- Deaths/ illness from work related diseases ®
<i>4. Physical environment</i>	
Non-hazardous environment	β-% experiencing concentrations of pollutants > specified levels: air, water, land, radiation, noise
<i>5. Health care</i>	
Provision of appropriate care	Ω- Doctors/nurses/hospital beds per population < specified levels
Access to appropriate care	Ω- % without access to community health services Ω- % not fully immunised against specified diseases
<i>6. Childhood needs</i>	
Security in childhood	ø % children abandoned, abused, neglected
Child development	ø - % lacking stimulation, positive feedback, responsibility
<i>7. Support groups</i>	

Presence of significant others	ø - % without close, confiding relationship
Primary support group	ß - % with no/very low social contacts ø - % with nobody to call on when in need
8. Economic security	
Economic security	Ω - % in absolute poverty ø - % in relative poverty (participation standard) ß - % with poor protection against specified contingencies
9. Physical security	
A safe citizenry	Ω - Homicide rates ß - Crime victim rates
A safe state	ß - Victims of state violence Ω - War victims
10. Education	
Access to cultural skills	Ω - Lack of primary/ secondary education Ω - Years of formal study < specified level ß - Lack of specified qualifications
Access to cross-cultural knowledge	Ω - Lack of higher education
11. Birth control and child-bearing	
Safe birth control	Ω - Lack of access to safe contraception and abortion
Safe child bearing	Ω - Maternal mortality rate ®

Notes

Ω- Reasonably reliable universal or near-universal data

ß -Data for a few countries only, but where there is a clear idea of operationalisation

ø- More speculative suggestions for indicators

® Indicator of health or autonomy related to a particular universal satisfier characteristic

Source: Doyal and Gough(1991: 220)

b. *Critical optimum* - at this level individuals must have health and autonomy such that they can formulate the aims and beliefs necessary to question their form of life, and also have the capacity to participate in a political process to achieve this aim, and/or to join another culture altogether. (ibid:160)⁶ The idea of *critical autonomy* implies a person's capacity to compare cultural rules, to reflect upon the rules of one's own culture and to work with others to challenge these rules. In extreme circumstances this also implies a person's capacity to move to another culture if the need prevails.

Given that people's conception of 'needs' draw upon a shared understanding, it is likely that what people consider to constitute a 'need' will vary between cultures.⁷ Similar cultural variations will also be evident in the ways which people satisfy their needs, and in people's conception of what constitute 'adequate' levels of needs satisfaction. For this reason problems arise in establishing methods for cross-cultural measurement and comparison of need. These problems themselves translate into specific difficulties in establishing standards for intrapersonal and interpersonal comparisons of food security in a cross-cultural context. Indicators for measuring and comparing both 'basic' needs and 'intermediate' needs are detailed in figs. 2.2 and 2.3.

When applied to food security, such standards are frequently based on 'equilibrium' level measures of nutritional standards. Such a equilibrium state describes a balance, at a given level of physical activity, between a person's intake, and their expenditure of energy and other nutrients. At such a level, body weight and composition are therefore likely to remain unchanged. (Osmani, 1991a: 249)

⁶ Participation optimums and critical optimums diverge at the level of cognitive understanding and social opportunities for participation. The critical optimum implies that opportunities are available for acquiring advance knowledge of other cultures, and to exercise political freedom as well as freedom of agency. However the physical and mental health requirements for a person to participate in a culture and for questioning and improving the culture will be the same for both categories. (ibid, 1991:160)

⁷ Doyal and Gough suggest that insofar as persons follow 'approximately equal rules concerning what they perceive to be the most significant aspects of everyday life' they can be seen to share a culture. (1991:79)

Only when a person's capacity to perform a range of functions⁸ lies at a level considered satisfactory within a given culture can a person be said to be in adequate nutrition. Commonly such a 'requirement standard' is established at a level which will enable a person to maintain body weight, without nutrient deficiency, and to maintain a level of activity consistent with full functional capability.

Nutritional measures are commonly established in terms of:

- (a) '*functional*' standards - indicating the level of intake at which the set of nutrition-dependent functions achieves a necessary level;
- (b) '*normative*' standards - where a target level of intake is established within the society concerned. This target may be established, for example, according to alternative claims on scarce resources, and assessments within the society of the importance or validity of competing claims on these resources by its members.⁹

Commonly used approaches to measuring undernutrition, as an indicator of food insecurity, include:

- (a) *dietary approach* - where energy intakes of individuals or households are compared with a norm established for people's requirement, and those falling below this norm are identified as being undernourished;
- (b) *anthropometric approach* - where indicators of growth are compared with norms established for desired growth standards for the population section in question, and those falling below these norms again identified as undernourished. This method is particularly used for identifying undernourishment in children.¹⁰

However there are problems attached to using both these methods. Nutritional capabilities may span several dimensions, including immunocompetence, physical work activity, and level of cognitive skill. All of these criteria are hard to

⁸ For example the capacity to avoid disease or to perform physical activity.

⁹ Such a process is used to establish income level 'poverty line' standards and calorific intake based standards for identifying the undernourished. Osmani points out that functionally based standards are unlikely to be fully independent of 'normative' judgements. Necessarily some functions will be favoured at the expense of others, and there will therefore be some degree of normative judgement in establishing which functions are prioritised. (1991a, :250)

¹⁰ See further in Osmani (1991a); B. Harriss (1991)

measure either by anthropometric or dietary approaches.(Osmani,1991a: 278-279)

For example, whilst in using anthropometric indicators a person's having growth indicators below the chosen standard is likely to indicate that they are undernourished, the converse is not necessarily true (ie. deficiencies in nutrient intake need not necessarily lead to reductions in body measurements) Instead such deficiencies may lead to reductions in activity levels and metabolic rate to cope with deficient nutrient intake, without reduction in body size. In this case undernourishment may be not indicated by anthropometric measurements. (1991a: 267)

Further, calorific intake levels or nutrient intake levels established to identify undernourishment (ie. where the undernourished are those falling below these norms) often fail to make allowances for variations in individual requirements due to genetic or cultural differences. Also, there is some evidence that people are able to adjust to prolonged food deficiencies such that their requirements change. These adaptive variations may invalidate 'dietary norm' based measurements. Poor health and environmental hygiene may also reduce a person's ability to metabolise nutrients from consumed food, variations which are likely to be masked by indicators based primarily on food intake.¹¹

2.3 Conceptualisation of Crisis

The term 'food crisis' has a number of connotations. It may be evidenced in terms of a change in actions adopted by persons affected. In Kalahandi this may represent the heightened incidence of survival strategies which include mortgage or distress sales of land and other crucial productive assets; sales of items deemed crucial to a retained social standing and self-respect (eg. a woman's jewellery); long term or

¹¹ Again see further particularly in Osmani(1991a); B. Harriss (1991)

permanent migration to other regions; and, some would argue, sale of children. It may also be characterised by deaths due to starvation or malnutrition-related illnesses.

Further, it is likely to represent a situation where immediate assistance is required to protect the immediate survival of those affected and to minimise long-term disruption to their lifestyles. Such interventions must be made before these persons are forced into adopting survival strategies, such as those mentioned above, which are likely to severely limit their ability to maintain access to food and to carry out necessary social and community obligations after the crisis has subsided.¹²

In addition, a 'food crisis' is likely to threaten major loss or unwarranted change for sections of the community concerned. Such a challenge is likely to represent a perceptible threat to the established order, generally such that persons not themselves directly in danger, in addition to those directly affected, may be convinced of its reality.¹³

For this reason it is important to take into account perceptions of crisis from the viewpoint of a range of actors. This should include persons directly threatened by famine, for whom marked changes in lifestyle, and threats of ill health or death may be an imminent possibility. This should also include administrators and policy makers, who may hold direct responsibility for designing and implementing interventions to mitigate the affects of crisis for those in danger. Further, this should include the perceptions of observers such as journalists, politicians and legal representatives who are not themselves directly in danger and are also not involved in relief administration. Frequently 'crisis literature' has tended to focus on crisis

¹² Further, by characterising a situation as a food 'crisis' it is important to not to overlook that for certain sections of the population this represents a worsening of an already unsatisfactory access to food and other requirements. Indeed whilst it may demand immediate response in the form of relief from the state and other agencies, this is not to understate the importance of more long-term interventions to address the problem of sustained hunger faced by members of the Kalahandi population, even in supposedly 'normal' times.

¹³ On this last point see further in Brass(1986); Brecher(ed.)(1978); Billings et al.(1980)

perception from the standpoint of administrators and policy makers, whilst giving inadequate attention to the perceptions of those themselves directly in danger.

A model representing crisis perception is provided in fig.2.4.¹⁴ In this model Billings et al. have suggested that a first step in defining a situation as crisis involves identifying an event which triggers the crisis, notably some 'precipitating event' or 'change in the internal or external environment'. However for a problem to be sensed, this triggering event must be perceived and evaluated against some measure or standard of 'how things should be'(1980:302) Crisis is therefore perceived in terms of a discrepancy between the existing state at a particular time, as recognised by the actor concerned, and a state established by the actor as a 'standard', deemed to be a 'desired' or 'normal' state.¹⁵

However sensing a discrepancy between the existing state and one's standard is only a first step in the process of crisis definition. After such a discrepancy is sensed, the magnitude and urgency of the problem must be assessed. The degree of perceived crisis is likely to be a function of factors including the perceived value of possible loss, probability of loss and time pressure:¹⁶

value of possible loss - operationalised as the magnitude of loss or damage which is likely to occur if the problem is not solved;

probability of loss - even if the value of possible loss is high, the perception that the loss is improbable will reduce the likelihood that the actor views the situation to be one of crisis;

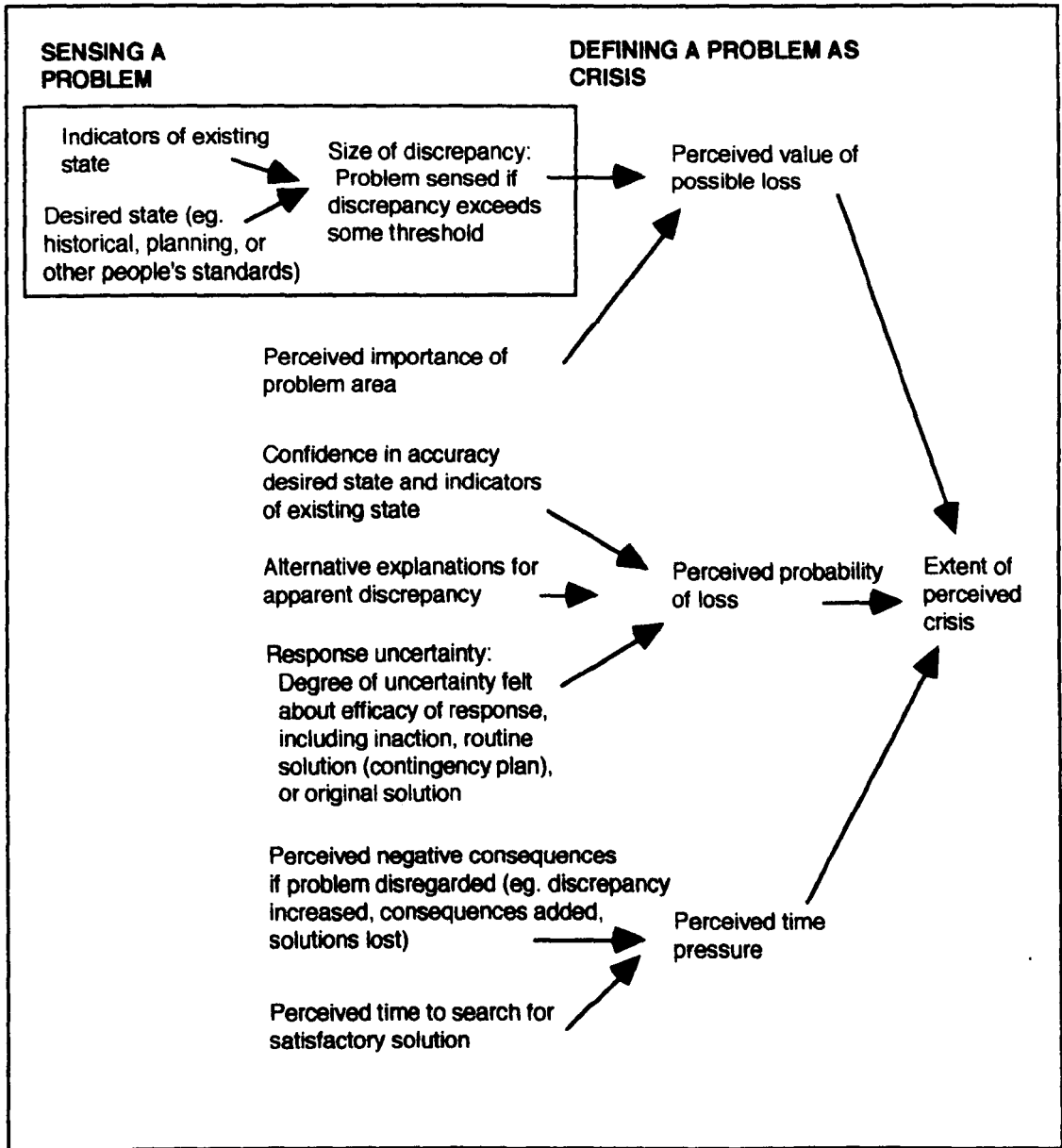
time pressure - without time pressure a problem may be left to the future and may be systematically misperceived.

¹⁴ For alternative conceptualisations of 'crisis' refer for example to Brecher(ed.)(1978)

¹⁵ A full analysis of crisis perception must therefore take into account the process of identifying which standards are to be used for the 'desired' state; which indicators are to be used for the existing state; and why a discrepancy has been perceived between these indicators (Billings et al., 1980:306)

¹⁶ Such perceptions are likely to be influenced by: (a) confidence in the accuracy of the standard and the indicators of the existing state (b) the number of plausible explanations for the perceived discrepancy (c) response uncertainty - the degree of uncertainty felt about the appropriateness or efficacy of response to the prevailing situation. If the decision maker or the public feel that responses implemented are likely to solve the problem, perceived probability of loss is likely to be small and the degree of perceived crisis is likely to be low.(Billings et al., 1980:302)

Fig.2.4: A model of crisis perception



Source: Billings et al(1980)

Famine may be seen to represent one manifestation of food crisis. There has been considerable debate in food security literature regarding how 'famine' should be defined. For example, Alamgir(1980) has argued that a definition of famine must fulfill the following objectives:

- (1) It should be able to distinguish between a famine and non-famine situation. Therefore he suggests that an emphasis on excess mortality is important to distinguish between hunger, starvation and malnutrition on the one hand, and famine on the other.
- (2) It should identify the prior indicators of famine. These will provide a basis for prior warnings for governments and potential victims to enable relief instruments to be activated.
- (3) It should indicate the immediate cause of a set of famine substates which ultimately lead to excess mortality.

Alamgir suggests that famine is a prolonged foodgrain intake deficiency per capita giving rise to a number of other substates or symptoms involving individuals or the community, which ultimately lead, directly or indirectly, to excess deaths in a region of the country as a whole.¹⁷ He argues that a focus on death is important because it represents the ultimate manifestation of famine. 'Excess' death refers to rates above the normal observed level in the prefamine period, and hunger and starvation should not be confused with famine unless accompanied by excess deaths. Foodgrain shortage itself does not lead to death, but only when translated into prolonged foodgrain intake decline, which operates in one or more intermediate steps to bring about excess deaths. The effects of this food intake decline will vary between individuals and can occur in certain sections of the population even without their being an overall shortage of foodgrains.

However a difficulty with definitions of famine which focus on 'excess death' is that it is hard to be specific about what 'excess death' actually means. Even in supposedly 'normal times' levels of death will vary from year to year and between

¹⁷ These substates are detailed in Alamgir(1980).

different societies. Identifying how 'excess death' during famine differs from supposedly 'normal' levels is therefore problematical.

Such definitions have been criticised by Alexandaar de Waal(1987,1989). He suggests that this focus on extreme cases, or the 'ultimate manifestation of famine', is of little help in marginal or borderline cases. Like de Castro (1958) and Sen(1983), De Waal is rightly critical of the Malthusian legacy which has led to many misconceptions in the analysis of famine. He suggests that the Malthusian debate produced a shift from previous conceptions of famine, which were 'what individuals and communities experienced', to new conceptions of famine as 'an externally quantifiable change of state among a population.' Previously famine existed when 'those suffering it understood it to be so'.(1989:17-18) However now famines became seen to be a technical malfunction rather than a social experience; as
a

'measurable increase in the death of an aggregation of individuals, diagnosed by medical professionals as being due to starvation and causally related to a measurable increase in food availability.'(ibid)

De Waal's analysis has the strength that it takes into account perceptions of food crisis from the point of view of those directly affected. The importance of this recognition was emphasised in the previous section. However his alternative definitions perhaps fail to clearly distinguish between subsistence crises and shortages of lesser severity. For de Waal these all represent part of a spectrum of famine, which ranges between:

- (1) shortages of grain;
- (2) times of 'dearth', when those affected are forced to resort to collecting and eating wild foods;
- (3) more serious cases which imply 'destitution' as well as hunger. Those falling into this category are severe famines, which sometimes kill, and are constituted by notions of hunger, destitution and death. In Darfur he suggests that these are named '*maja'a al gatala*' or 'famines that kill'. However there are differing kinds of *maja'a* and we need to distinguish between:

- (a.) famines that kill and those that do not;
- (b.) famines which represent only hunger, and those which also consist of destitution and social breakdown.¹⁸

A possible weakness in de Waal's approach is therefore that he uses the term 'famine' in such a diverse and general sense that its meaning represents all situations from temporary perturbations in household food supplies to the most acute subsistence failures. He fails to explain why we need to refer to periods of 'dearth' as famine, and why it is advantageous to do so. The only reason offered is that this is how it is done in Darfurian Arabic.

In this thesis the term 'famine' is used to imply a situation which not only involves hunger and malnutrition, but also leads to deaths amongst the affected population. Defining a situation as famine has important policy implications, representing a case that has become so severe that immediate assistance may be necessary to those affected to protect their immediate survival and their ability to maintain food security in the future. This is often the point at which intervention becomes necessary by some external agency, frequently the state.

Whilst I have suggested that it is appropriate to reserve the term 'famine' to describe acute situations involving death, it is important that such periods of acute crisis do not become the sole object of study. Indeed there are lessons to be learnt not only from periods when, in the eyes of certain observers, 'famines' have occurred; but also from situations when these have been averted and food security has been maintained. By focussing only on 'crisis' situations we may overlook that for sections of the population in certain areas such a situation is simply a worsening of an already unsatisfactory access to food and other requirements. Even in 'normal' times, as opposed to acute crisis periods, their needs are not satisfied. Therefore policies to improve food security need to address the problem of sustained and long-term chronic hunger, which may also be strongly linked to poverty, as well as to preventing further sudden deteriorations from this already unsatisfactory 'normal'

¹⁸ See further in de Waal(1987), chapter 1.

state. This point is particularly germane to the food problem in India. Whilst a number of authors have pointed out that the Indian state has been comparatively successful this century in preventing famine, its record has been most unsatisfactory in dealing with the high levels of chronic malnutrition which affect large sections of the population much of the time, particularly in rural areas.¹⁹ This issue is discussed in further detail in chapter 5 of this thesis.

2.4 Processes contributing to Food Crisis

A number of different processes may give rise to food crises. Firstly, there are long-term causes of household income loss or income insecurity that make poor people more vulnerable. These may include physical factors such as environmental degradation, and social changes such as landlessness and assetlessness among rural people. Poverty and social inequalities, which frequently characterise famine affected societies, have regularly meant that sections of the population are constantly kept at levels of marginal subsistence. Indeed writing about China in the 1930's , Tawney argues that

'Famine is a matter of degree; its ravages are grave long before its symptoms have been sufficiently shocking to arouse general consternation. If the meaning of the word is shortage of food on a sufficient scale to cause widespread starvation, then there are parts of the country for which famine is rarely absent..... There are districts in which the rural population is that of a man standing up to his neck in water, so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him.....Famine, in short, is the last stage of the disease which, though not always conspicuous, is always present.(1932:77)

However there are also factors which precipitate famines and which drag people below the level at which they are able to cope. Such precipitating factors might exacerbate long-term levels of poverty and malnutrition to such an extent that people can no longer rely on arrangements previously used to ensure that their needs are met. In such circumstances a crisis situation may occur, even without there being any overall decrease in foodgrain availability. Therefore for many, crisis

¹⁹ See, for example, Dreze(1988).

periods of outright hunger are superimposed onto a general trend of long-term malnutrition.(Raikes,1989; Curtis et al.1988) 20

Indeed Appadurai has argued that famine is a 'special sort of lens for examining society at normal times', one which seems both to 'exaggerate existing trends and thus to amplify preexisting conditions', but also to 'bring about various forms of breakdown, and with them, the distortion and destruction of routine structures and moralities'.(1984:481)

Further, food crises do not materialise instantaneously. Instead they develop through the interaction of a range of factors, possibly over a considerable period of time. To adequately understand why they occur, and importantly how they may be prevented in the future, it is therefore necessary to understand both the mechanism underlying this interaction, and the factors which provide the dynamic for such a process to take place. Such an investigation must be historically based, taking into account the reasons for the differentiation and social inequality which mean that some people have greater access to food and other requirements than others. In particular this may result from differences in access to cash, which enables people to buy food through the market.

Such an interaction is likely to involve factors related both to human action and physical environment. Indeed food crises are not simply 'natural disasters', or 'Acts of God'. In certain instances they may be largely the result of human negligence, although they may also be prevented or mitigated by timely human interventions or by changes in human behaviour.²¹ 'Natural' factors (such as drought, floods, desertification, earthquakes, pest damage, epidemics) may 'trigger' or 'catalyse' a sequence of events which leads to famine. However in themselves they

²⁰ As Curtis et al correctly argue, famine may represent: 'a process beginning with the existence of a large number of people living so close to subsistence that any disruption that reduces their purchasing power or their access to resources from which they derive their livelihood threatens many of them with starvation.'(1988:6)

²¹ However just as it is inadequate to attribute the roots of food crises simply to 'natural' factors, it is also inadequate to attribute them only to 'human' factors such as the rise of colonialism, capitalism, war, inappropriate state policies, corruption, conditionality imposed by donors; the concentration of global grain trade in the hands of a few, largely US based multinationals; the control which a number of industrialised countries have over global food and primary commodity markets; and so on. Indeed the reason why famines have been so severe in many developing countries is due not only to the way that these countries have been incorporated into the international division of labour, but also because this incorporation has taken place in the context of unfavourable and unstable climatic conditions and physical environment.(Gartrell, 1985)

are not sufficient to explain why one set of conditions may lead to famine in one society, whilst another society (where food reserves may be greater, food is distributed more equitably, or people are better remunerated for the sale of their produce or their labour-power) may be able to cope with such environmental variations such that famine does not occur. These issues are discussed at length in the Kalahandi context in chapter 4.

Consequently to analyse a particular crisis it is necessary to identify the nature of the interaction between the physical environment and human action. It is also necessary to take into account the breakdown of food systems and other networks through which people have for centuries been able to meet their requirements for food and other requirements.²² Since this may be shaped by factors which have changed over a considerable time span, such an analysis must be historically based.²³

2.5 Access to Food and other Essentials - The Concept of 'Entitlement'

Food security is not just a function of the levels of food production in a particular society. Whilst food output, and the structure and organisation of food production, are clearly important determinants of food security, equally important are patterns of distribution of food and other requirements. Indeed various authors have correctly recognised that fluctuations in food production and overall declines in the availability of food in a particular society, are not on their own sufficient to explain the occurrence of famines and food crises. Rather, people's food security is

²² The importance of such systems are emphasised by Watts. He suggests that 'the connection between famine and environmental variability such as drought is mediated by the prevailing social and environmental conditions of the stricken social formation. Not only can some form of societal arrangements either accommodate or amplify the affects of environmental variability or harvest shortfall, but chronic hunger may become a structural feature of society itself'.(1983:190)

²³ Refer in particular to Watts,(1983,1989,1990); Bush,1986.

dependent both on the availability of food; and on people's command over that food, which is frequently a function of their purchasing power.(Sen,1981) ²⁴

Sen argues that famines have generally occurred when specific sections of the population have experienced a dramatic reduction in their 'entitlements' to food. This term refers to people's ability to command sufficient food through the legal means available in society, which includes food obtained through their own household production, by trade and exchange, by purchasing food with the wages earned from wage labour, and food provided directly by the state. He suggests that the contrast between different types of entitlement failures is important to understanding the precise causes of famines.²⁵

Sen's contribution is extremely valuable in providing a framework for analysing famines. He correctly demonstrates that there is no necessary direct relationship between the severity of famine and the extent of crop failure. This enables us to explain why famines can occur in overall boom conditions for food production, as well as in periods of slump.

Secondly, Sen demonstrates that it is incorrect to focus simply on the total availability of food, since the effects of famine may not be felt by all groups in a famine affected society. It is possible for some groups to experience acute absolute deprivation even when there is no overall food shortage. Thus a sudden collapse in a group's command over food may go against a trend of rising food production. Thirdly, by referring to 'food entitlements' Sen correctly emphasises that food is not a privilege; in any society all its members should have the right to sufficient food and other basic needs to guarantee an adequate level of nutrition and health.²⁶ Fourthly,

²⁴ Indeed, as Sen has suggested: 'starvation is a characteristic of some people not having enough to eat. It is not the characteristic of there not being enough to eat. While the latter can be a cause of the former, it is but one of the many possible causes'.(1981:1)

²⁵ Consequently we need to distinguish between declines in food availability, that is how much food there is in the economy in question; and direct entitlement to food. In a rural economy both these factors may be reduced by crop failure. However small farmers are often dependent mainly on food grown by themselves, and may have little ability to buy and sell in order to buy food in the market. Thus they are often affected by famine due to a failure of their direct entitlements, where we are largely concerned with that part of the food growers' output which they are able to consume directly. (Sen, 1981: 162ff.)

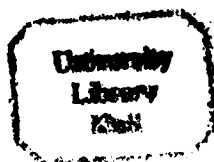
²⁶ Although this right is not legally enforced in many countries, guidelines for protecting the population's welfare and right to work are codified in the Indian Constitution. Article 39 states that 'The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life.' Directive principles in Article 40 include

Sen is correct to argue famines differ widely in their nature and affects. Consequently explanations of famines, and the means developed to cope with them, must also be specific to each situation.

In his more recent work with Jean Dreze, Sen's analysis has been extended beyond the concept of entitlements to the broader goal of ensuring that *each person has the capacity to avoid malnutrition, and to escape from the 'deprivations associated with hunger'*. (Dreze and Sen, 1989) Sen and Dreze rightly emphasise that people are not passive actors in the process of maintaining food security. Their subsistence is not simply a function of structural agencies such as rural production and tenancy relations, of commodity and labour markets, and of other institutions which influence their access to food and other entitlements. Rather this is an active process in which people must have certain facilities and resources at their disposal which enable them to act to preserve their food security. Sen and Dreze refer to such factors as a person's 'capability'. These may include access to health care facilities, drinking water, adequate sanitation, education and so forth.(ibid) It will be noted that this set of variables resembles closely the set of factors which Doyal and Gough term 'intermediate needs', as discussed earlier in chapter 2.2.

However to suggest that maintaining food security is an active process, in which people must have access to certain facilities and inputs to ensure that this task can be successfully performed, is not to downplay the importance of structure. It is evident that a person's 'capability' is affected by factors other than their own actions. This will be in part a function of the social and economic climate in which they live. It will also be affected by political factors, particularly the nature of the ruling state in the country or region concerned.

There are numerous examples which demonstrate that timely action by the state is capable of averting situations which have looked likely to develop into severe



food crises.²⁷ In addition to policies which address the immediate affects of preventing such crises, governments can preserve food security through more long-term action to protect the population and to maximise their capabilities. Such action relates to structural and institutional reforms, and to wider policies to promote development including measures to extend health and education services, to generate employment, and to provide income support.

For this reason maintaining food security is not simply a matter of protecting what Sen and Dreze call 'entitlement' and 'capability'. People must also be given a say in formulating policies implemented by the state and other institutions to protect food security and to promote development. Further, it is important that the politicians and administrators involved with implementing these policies remain accountable to the people whose livelihoods and future these will affect. Consequently the ideas of *participation* and *accountability* are central to food security.²⁸

During times of shortage or food crisis, demonstrations, lootings and acts of dissent may provide both a means through which the hungry and oppressed may draw attention to their situation, and place pressure on the state and other institutions to make necessary interventions. For this reason food security may also be influenced by levels of collective action and protest in the society concerned. In turn, such activity is contingent upon the social and political *consciousness* of the affected population, and extent to which this shared consciousness is '*organised*' as part a group, 'crowd'²⁹, or political movement behind collective demands or expressions of dissent. Failure of the authorities to respond to such collective action may lead to loss of political support; to criticisms from the media or political opposition; or to

that: citizens, men and women equally, have a right to an adequate means of livelihood; that material resources of the community should be distributed to best serve the common good; that there should not be undue concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment. The right to work, to education, and to a living wage are included in Articles 41 and 43.

²⁷ In the Indian case refer for example to K.S.Singh(1967). For a different perspective on the food crisis in Bihar in 1967 see to Brass(1986). Refer also to Dreze(1988); various studies in Dreze and Sen (1989)and Dreze and Sen(1991); Mathur and Battacharya(1975); Chaturvedi(1975); Gangrade and Dhadda(1973). This issue is discussed in further detail in chapter 5 of this thesis.

²⁸ Appadurai has used the term 'enfranchisement' to describe such a set of ideas. By this he means 'the degree to which an individual or group is able to legitimately participate in the decisions of a given society about entitlement.(1984:481)

²⁹ See for example E.P. Thompson's 'Moral Economy of the Crowd' in Thompson (1991); or Tilly(1975).

challenges to peace, personal safety and the stability of the established order in circumstances where collective protest becomes agitated.

A possible gap in Sen's original work is that he has given little attention to the development of the social relations of production and reproduction, and the inter-relationship between humans and nature, which have historically shaped people's food entitlements. Secondly, he gives little attention to the role which political action and collective protest may play in the process of maintaining food security. Thirdly, he says little about how people's food entitlements have changed with time, as people's methods of food production and distribution have been altered by processes such as commercialisation, capitalisation, changes in farm techniques and so on.³⁰ Therefore it is also important to discuss why people differ in their vulnerability to food crises. Factors which account for this include inequalities in ownership and use of assets and resources; and relations of caste, gender and class which provide the basis for repression and exploitation in the society concerned. .

Differences in vulnerability between regions and sections of the population also result from differences in the range and effectiveness of survival and recovery strategies which people have at their disposal. Such differences are accentuated as the effectiveness of these strategies is undermined by factors such as degradation of the environment, ill-planned agricultural or modernisation policies and so on.

This chapter goes on to discuss in further detail why vulnerability varies from person to person and between regions. It also discusses the implications of such differences for people's survival and recovery strategies, and for policies to promote food security.

³⁰ For more complete discussion or criticisms of Sen's work, refer for example to Gore(1993); Doyal and Gough(1991); de Waal(1987); Swift(1989); Gill(1989); Cohen(1993)

2.6 Differences in Vulnerability to Food Insecurity

People's vulnerability and the way that they are affected during food crises differs according to their gender, age, caste, class and the resources which they possess. Small families with few resources may be more vulnerable to problems of debt and sudden falls in income. Such families which are dependent on agriculture may be less able to alter their farming techniques to suit climatic variations, and may be more vulnerable to seasonal pre-harvest shortages. This often forces them to seek waged employment at an earlier stage, so reducing the time they have to work on their own plots. It may also force them into taking out loans at a time when pre-harvest grain prices are near maximum; and then to either pledge a share of the final harvest to the moneylender, or to sell their crop in order to repay the loan just after the harvest when grain prices have fallen to near minimum.(de Janvry, 1981; Watts,1983; Raikes,1988; Bush et al.1989) Further, in times of shortages the poor tend to be the first to be forced into selling assets such as land, cattle and tools, in order to buy food. This may leave them lacking the resources required to recommence production when the crisis has subsided. For these reasons food crises often further exacerbate problems of poverty and social inequality.

Women, and especially women headed households, are also particularly vulnerable. Often they bear the burden of food production, in addition to household tasks which include collecting fuel, fodder and water. In times of shortage reduced supplies of these items further extend their working day. Because male members frequently control the distribution of the resources within male headed households, and are regularly the first to be fed, women and children will often be the first to become malnourished. In many societies the plight of women is also made harder by having weaker rights to land and lesser access to credit, innovations and know-how.³¹

³¹ On the vulnerable position of women refer for example to Das and Das(1992); Agarwal(1989, 1990); Gill(1989); Harriss et al.(1990); and various articles in Bernstein et al.(eds.)(1990); Ahmad et al.(eds.)(1991); Dreze and Sen (1989, 1991)

A variety of other factors may lead to differences in people's vulnerability. One such factor is access to a wide range of income sources, which may provide sufficient cash to enable families to buy food when their own production is insufficient to meet their needs. Indeed for small and medium sized households, off-farm income may represent a sizeable part of total household income, and may be a crucial component in the relative prosperity of individual households. Consequently the rural poor are often those without access to secondary occupations.(de Janvry, 1981; Bush et al. 1988; Watts,1982)

A further factor is access to land and other means of production. These may include: (1) access to livestock, doubly important in some areas as the basis of livestock herding, and as a source of draught power; (2) access to other necessary inputs such as water, seed and 'Green Revolution' technology; (3) access to sufficient wage labour. The latter may particularly be a problem at peak seasons such as planting and harvesting. Labour bottlenecks may be especially serious for women headed households, such as those affected by migrant labour absences, where the women may have little time left over from household duties to devote to food production. It may also particularly affect poor households which lack the resources to purchase labour-power.

However whilst poverty and differences in people's asset base are a crucial determinant of their vulnerability, those with the least are not always those who are the most at risk. Particularly their vulnerability may be reduced if their well-being is partially safeguarded by assistance from neighbours and other family members. A variety of technical and social insurance mechanisms exist within certain societies, ensuring that all members receive at least a minimum level of income and resources to enable them to meet their subsistence needs and to fulfill necessary social and ceremonial commitments. Such mechanisms³² therefore not

³² These may take the form of patron-client relationships, reciprocity, forced generosity, work sharing and redistributive mechanisms such as periodic redistribution of communal land according to need. They may also include other technical arrangements, devised by 'trial and error' over periods of centuries to ensure the most stable and reliable crop yields possible, even at the cost of reduced returns. See further in chapter 4.10 of this thesis, and also particularly in Scott(1976).

only protect subsistence, but also help to prevent loss of standing in the community and a possible permanent situation of dependence.³³

Social obligations, which require that those able in a society protect the vulnerable, may also have a redistributive affect, representing a transfer of income and assets to the poor from those who are better off. However, as Scott points out, we should possibly avoid idealising such arrangements. These may be more the product of necessity than altruism. In the past these forms of social insurance were possibly the only way for landlords and rich peasants to secure a workforce in situations when land was abundant and labour scarce; or when there were limitations on the coercive powers which could be exercised by these dominant classes, or by the state. Furthermore, violation of this 'subsistence ethic' may provoke resentment and resistance from the mass of the community: both because basic needs may not be met; and also because it would represent a violation of communal rights to which considerable importance was attached.(Scott,1988:307)

Many farmers in low rainfall areas have adopted a variety of other adjustment devices designed to help in minimising risk, to manage losses and to accelerate recovery. These may be necessary in response either to seasonal shortages, or to more acute shortages during droughts and famines.³⁴ The strategies which people implement will vary, depending upon the severity of the situation and the stage of the crisis. As the situation becomes more severe, people may be forced into actions to maintain their immediate levels of consumption, even at the expense of their ability to secure production and income in the future and therefore to recover from the crisis when it eases.

³³ A number of authors have recognised the importance of such technical and social arrangements in people's strategies for survival and recovery. Refer for example to the work of Scott(1976,1985,1988), who suggests that these form part of a peasant 'moral economy', a term adapted from the work of E.P. Thompson (see Thompson,1991). See also Watts(1983), Shenton and Watts(1979). Similar ideas are discussed by Hyden(1980), as the basis of what he terms 'economies of affection'. For an alternative viewpoint refer to Popkin(1979); and for an assessment of the Scott/Popkin debate refer to Journal of Asian Studies(1983). A number of these ideas are also usefully developed in Lemarchand(1989).

³⁴ See Agarwal(1990).

People may respond initially by adopting survival strategies which have relatively low cost in terms of the long-term livelihood of the household, such as³⁵:

- (1) changes in cropping and planting practices;
- (2) sale of small stock, jewellery and other assets;
- (3) reduction of current levels of consumption, and use of stores collected during more prosperous times;
- (4) use of interhousehold transfers and loans; and drawing upon other social relationships, patronage, kinship, informal credit networks etc.;
- (5) collection of wild foods and use of common property resources (CPR's);
- (6) increased petty commodity production and other means of diversifying income sources;

Indeed people are generally reluctant to sell or use up assets which are crucial to future production (such as land, draught animals, ploughs etc), even if this means dramatically reducing consumption levels in the immediate period. Only when a food crisis becomes so severe that they can no longer continue simply by 'tightening their belts' and resorting to other 'low cost' survival strategies are they likely to turn to more drastic measures, such as distress sales of crucial productive assets to maintain their immediate survival.

Therefore it is evident that people implement a variety of strategies for coping with and recovering from periods of shortage. These strategies are crucial in reducing the vulnerability of those with a weak asset base and those living in high risk areas. However there is evidence that in some areas the effectiveness of such mechanisms is being reduced, so undermining the coverage of this safety-net for certain people.

³⁵ See for example Swift(1989); Corbett(1988); Jodha(1978) and other references cited for Jodha in this thesis; Agarwal(1990); Reardon, Matlon and Delgado(1988). Most of this literature concentrates on survival strategies in rural areas. For an examination of survival strategies in urban areas refer for example to Harriss et al.(1990); Bhattacharya et al.(1991).

2.7 Reduced Range and Effectiveness of Survival Strategies

The expansion of commodity production in parts of rural India has accelerated the demise of production skills which were previously used. This has frequently created new sets of needs, both for new inputs necessary for production, and for consumption goods which were previously met out of people's own production.

Further, improved transport and communication facilities have led to greater integration of rural and urban areas. In certain cases this has meant that goods traditionally stocked for lean years are now sold in the market, so reducing the security provided by household stores. Secondly, in some areas it has resulted in the growth of 'export enclaves', using low cost local labour to produce goods primarily for export, with much of the surplus from such production being transferred out of the area.

These factors have changed the nature of crisis response in the areas concerned. Particularly they have had the contradictory affect of increasing the availability of grain in the market, but without ensuring that people have the monetary income required to purchase it. Thus households which have become reliant on grain purchases have also become increasingly subjected to the fluctuations of volatile grain markets. On occasions this increase in market participation has meant that people have become more responsive to opportunities for profit than to assisting fellow members of the community in times of distress.(Jodha(1975):1615-17)

Thirdly, there has been a decline in levels of common property resources (CPR's) and in their effectiveness.³⁶ In part this has been the result of degradation of such resources as the pressure placed upon them exceeds their carrying capacity.³⁷ This increased pressure may result from a combination of factors:

³⁶ Refer further to Jodha(1990, 1991); Hussein(1990); Pasha(1990); McCabe(1990); Chopra, Kakakodi and Murty(1989); Iyengar(1989); Brara(1989); Bush et al.(1989).

³⁷ However 'carrying capacity' is not simply a measure of the potential of a particular 'natural environment'. This term also implies a 'human element' and must take into account the social activities for which the land is used.

increases in population; overgrazing of communal pastures; monocropping encouraged by the promotion of HYV crops and so on.

Regressive state policies, both before and after independence, have also been a major factor in causing a decline in the effectiveness of CPR's and coping mechanisms. Deforestation and other forms of environmental degradation have markedly increased as a result of the modernisation policies and changes in ownership taking place in India. Forests which were traditionally owned by local communities have been appropriated by the state and commercial interests, as have other resources such as land, water and soil. Such appropriations have seriously undermined the livelihoods and coping mechanisms of tribals and weaker sections of the community.³⁸ They have also particularly affected women by extending the distance which they have to travel to collect water, fuel and other needs.

The state has also encouraged privatisation of CPR's and redistribution of common lands as part of intended welfare programmes. However, whilst land redistribution is a necessity in India, it is essential that attention is given to the type of land redistributed. By failing to do this, some such programmes have led to a decline in the area and quality of CPR available, and to a major reduction in the overall quality of CPR benefits to the poor.(Jodha,1986)

However people's survival and recovery strategies have not only been harmed by policies designed for extracting revenue and for commercial gain. In certain instances this has also occurred as the result of policies designed to relieve people's distress. There is evidence that prolonged stays in relief camps may weaken recovery mechanisms which depend on people's ability to beg or borrow food, livestock and other assets from those better off. Such arrangements will depend upon a person being able to maintain links with friends and neighbours. The longer that a

Consequently 'carrying capacity' must refer to 'the potential of a particular environment, when used in a particular way'. It is therefore a measure of the farming system and farming techniques involved, as well as of the natural environment.(Bush et al,1989:30)

³⁸ Such appropriations have undermined the balance between human needs and environmental imperatives which were traditionally maintained by tribal communities. Consequently they have been forced into a destructive dependence on these resources, rather than the constructive reliance which they had maintained for centuries. See further in Murishwar and Fernandez(1988.)

person remains in a relief camp, the more such bonds may be weakened, so reducing that person's chance of receiving assistance through loans, sharing of food and assets, and other forms of social support.(McCabe,1990)

For these or other reasons the coping mechanisms which people adopt to reduce distress and vulnerability have in many cases become less effective with time. For those who have been forced to sell crucial productive assets in order to preserve immediate levels of consumption, their ability to maintain future sources of income may now depend on assistance from some external agency. This may take the form of direct aid in kind, or guarantees of income from employment schemes and public works. The next section goes on to discuss some of these measures for crisis prevention and relief. These must act to reduce people's vulnerability and to protect the assets and coping mechanisms which have been described.

2.8 Interventions to Protect Food Security and to Relieve Food Crises: The Central Role of the State

Frequently, the state is in the best position to make structural and institutional reforms and to take action to protect capabilities and entitlements. The forms of institutional change which are likely to be most effective will tend to be those which help to safeguard assets, and which increase the control of poor groups over common resources. Amongst the most important is to ensure that each household has access to its own plot of land, and therefore to the means to produce its own subsistence needs without complete reliance on the market. Consequently land reform must be central to poverty and famine alleviation measures. Also important are measures to improve the access of poorer households to agricultural inputs and to credit facilities. These inputs are often more available to rich peasants and capitalist farmers due to their greater social ties and command over resources.

Further, state action must help to place people in a position to recover from a period of crisis. Consequently it is necessary for the state to ensure that farmers

have access to necessary inputs, and that they are prepared and ready to recommence production when the situation improves, for example when the rains come.

State organised programmes to contain food crises must have a number of other objectives. They must include measures which safeguard people's ability to generate long-term income: by improving and protecting household assets; by generating investment and employment opportunities; and by improving security of income by extending people's access to non-farm activities. Linked to this, they must protect people's purchasing power, so that they are able to withstand the immediate affects of periods of hardship without needing to resort to distress sales, migration and other measures which may endanger their ability to generate future income. Thirdly, such programmes must also protect women and children, tribal communities, and other vulnerable sections of the population.

Measures for employment generation and to protect purchasing power Central to improving food security in India have been state organised measures to protect the purchasing power of the population through labour based relief and employment guarantee programmes. Such employment for a subsistence cash wage, with gratuitous relief provided to those unable to work (for reasons of health, age etc), formed the core of the recommendations for providing relief outlined in the Famine Codes of 1880. Despite subsequent refinements, the recommendations of these Codes continue to form the basis for relief procedure currently in operation. In their modern version, wages paid on such relief schemes provide cash to enable workers to buy food, either on the market or from Fair Price Shops.

An advantage of such relief works has been their self-targeting nature. Evidence suggests that work on these schemes has tended to be taken by those most in need, with many of the participants being small farmers and agricultural labourers.³⁹ These issues are discussed further in chapter 5.

³⁹ Probably the best known and most successful of such income generating schemes has been the Maharashtra Employment Generation Scheme, introduced in 1972. As well as relieving famine distress, this has had the additional aims of relieving rural unemployment and of creating productive assets. For further details refer to MHJ(1980); Dandekar and Sathe(1980); Bagchee(1984); Dreze(1988)

Interventions in Foodgrain Distribution In addition to maintaining the purchasing power of the population, a further key aspect of state intervention has been to ensure that sufficient food is available to people at prices that they can afford. This requires that the Government maintains a well organised system both for distributing food and for maintaining price stability. Intervention has also been necessary to counter other problems: high levels of production instability; large differences in production between states; high levels of inequality in land and asset ownership; and a tendency for private traders to put their own personal profits before satisfying the food needs of the population.

The marketing and distribution of foodgrains in India has generally involved a combination of Government procurement, and distribution by private markets and traders. To balance food between surplus and deficit areas the Indian Government aims to purchase foodgrains from States producing a surplus at prices recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (C.A.C.P.). On submitting estimates of needs, deficit States are allocated grains available from procurement operations and from previous stocks, according to the strength of need of that State as perceived by the Central Government. Much of this task of purchase, storage, sale and movement of foodgrains is carried out by the Food Commission of India(F.C.I.) on the Central Government's behalf..⁴⁰

Given the high levels of instability in foodgrain production in India, and the resulting possibility of price fluctuations, speculation, and profiteering by traders, Government maintained buffer stocks have also played an important role at various times in ensuring food availability to consumers and in maintaining price stability.⁴¹ These interventions, and their strengths and deficiencies, are discussed in further detail in chapter 6.2.

⁴⁰ See further in Chopra(1981); Venugopal(1992); Kabra(1990); Mitra(1986); Bora(1982); Narayanan(1986).

⁴¹ Indeed buffer stocks were used to maintain price stability during the drought of 1987-88 in India. Stocks which had reached a level of 23.6 million tonnes in Jan 1987 were run down to less than 10 million tonnes by the end of the dry period.(Kumar,1990) This was perhaps an important factor in preventing the drought developing into famine. However it has alternatively been argued that excessive emphasis has been placed on maintaining buffer stocks to protect against variations in prices. See, for example, Venugopal(1992).

Structural and Institutional Reforms The Indian government has made various attempts since independence to improve food security through a range of structural and institutional reforms.⁴² Land reforms have been introduced alongside legislation to abolish *Zamindars* and other intermediary interests such as '*jagidars*' and '*imandari*'. More comprehensive reforms were implemented in certain States designed to regulate rents, to increase security of tenure and to confer ownership rights over non-resumeable land. Various attempts have also been made to institutionalise credit and marketing systems. However large inequalities in land holdings remain despite these measures, and the poor continue to have lesser access to inputs and credit than the better off.⁴³ These issues are discussed further in the Kalahandi context in chapter 3 and 4 of this thesis.

Measures to Increase Foodgrain Production The Indian state has given considerable encouragement, particularly since the mid 1960's, to improving and stabilising food production. Since the Green Revolution agriculture in many states received a considerable boost from the introduction of new seed varieties and production techniques, and by improvements in terms of trade in favour of agriculture. Whilst these developments have substantially reduced India's need for foodgrain imports, levels of foodgrain output and per capita availability of foodgrains in India continue to lag behind those in many other Asian countries.

Moreover, many of the benefits from substantial agricultural developments and rapidly rising foodgrain prices have been concentrated in a few States. Five States, namely Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, with a total 40.5% share of India's total cropped area, have accounted for 60.5% of the increase in the country's foodgrain production since the Green Revolution.(Kumar,1990:502)

⁴² Whilst lack of space prevents me from discussing these in detail, they have been extensively discussed elsewhere. Refer in particular to Herring(1983,1991); Sama(1983); Mehta(1975).

⁴³ For a more detailed discussion of these persisting inequalities in the Kalahandi context refer further to chapter 4.10 of this thesis.

This has been accompanied by broad variations in production instability between States.⁴⁴ This affects both food security and stability of income in a given State, especially when agriculture is a primary source of revenue. Wheat growing regions have further benefitted from a significant decrease in instability in wheat production relative to that of other crops. (Mahendradev, 1987)

Thirdly, there has been a dramatic change in the composition of foodgrain output in this period. The share of rice and wheat has increased in proportion to both total output and area sown. In contrast the shares of coarse cereals and pulses, which constitute a major part of the diet of the poor population, have declined or stagnated, accounting for just 8% of production in 1984-85. (ibid) ⁴⁵

Poorer sections of population have suffered in other ways during this period. The introduction of new technology has accelerated the transfer of land from small and marginal to larger farmers, increasingly pushing the latter out of cultivation into waged labour. This process has been accentuated by the labour saving nature of mechanisation in agriculture, biased towards rural classes which possess the large land holdings required to reap the full benefits of the use of the new machinery, and towards those with the substantial resources required for its initial purchase and maintenance. It has further increased the dependence of cultivators on the market, and their vulnerability to price fluctuations and problems of supply. (Byres, 1983 :31-2)

Therefore it is apparent that the 'Green Revolution' has brought substantial benefits to certain States and sections of the population, but has in some instances produced a significant increase in regional and social inequality, also leaving sections of the population more vulnerable than before. This issue is discussed in further detail in the Kalahandi context in chapter 4.2 and 6.4.

⁴⁴ Whilst there has been a high decline in instability in Punjab, and a declining trend in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Bihar, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, instability has increased in many remaining States including Assam, Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. (Mahendradev, 1987)

⁴⁵ See also Chattopadhyay and Marty (1991).

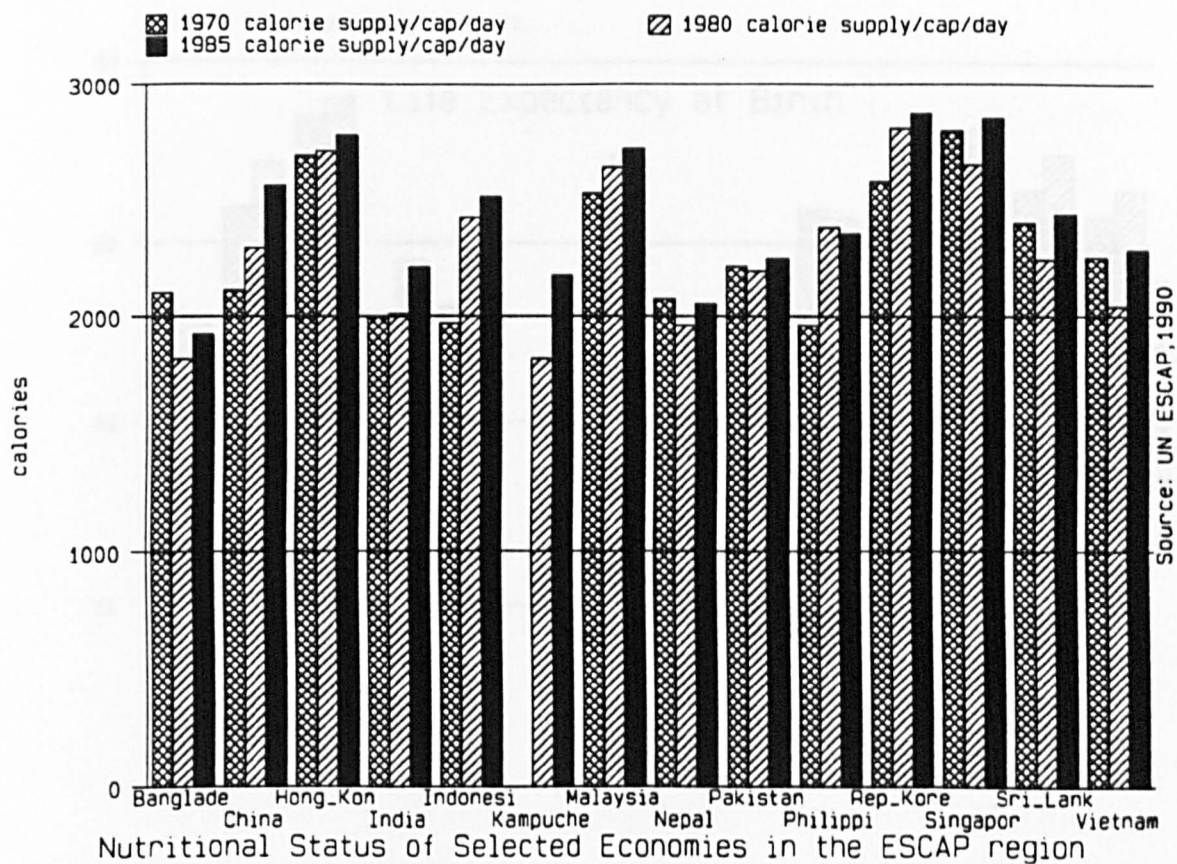


Fig. 2.5

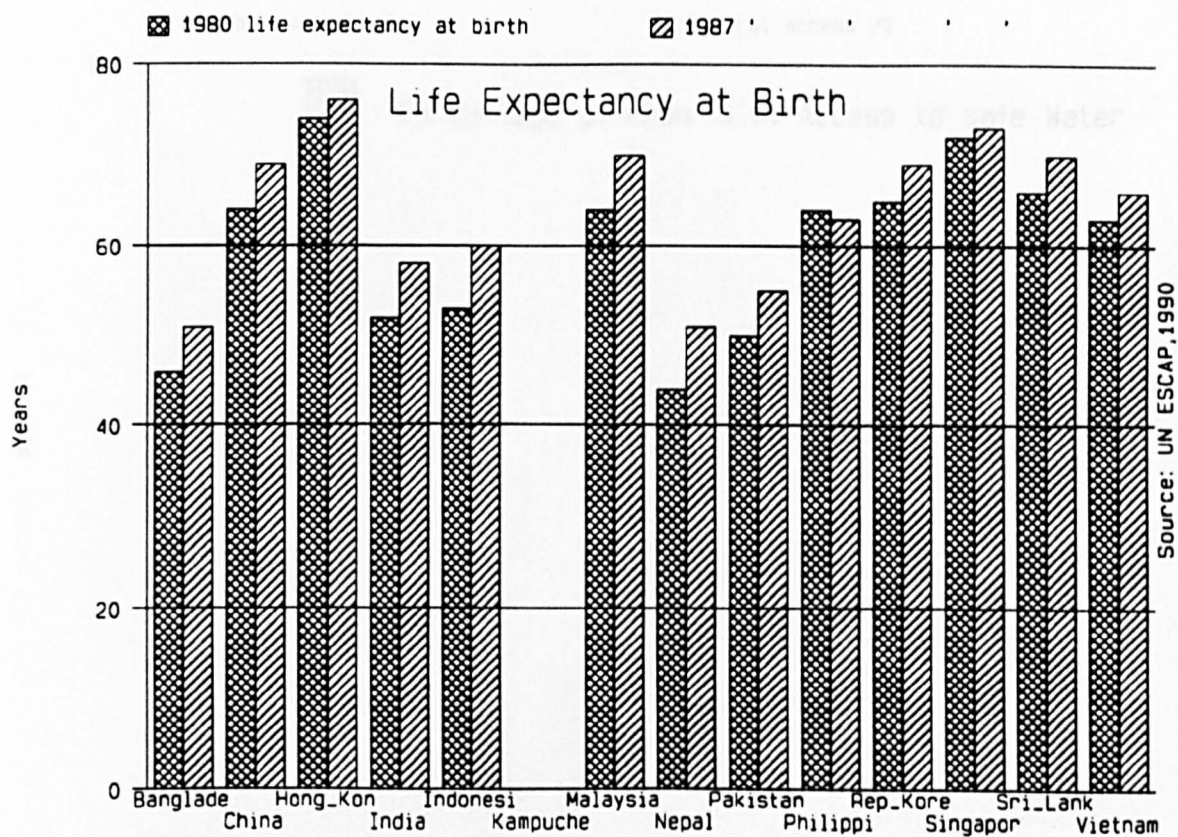


Fig. 2.6

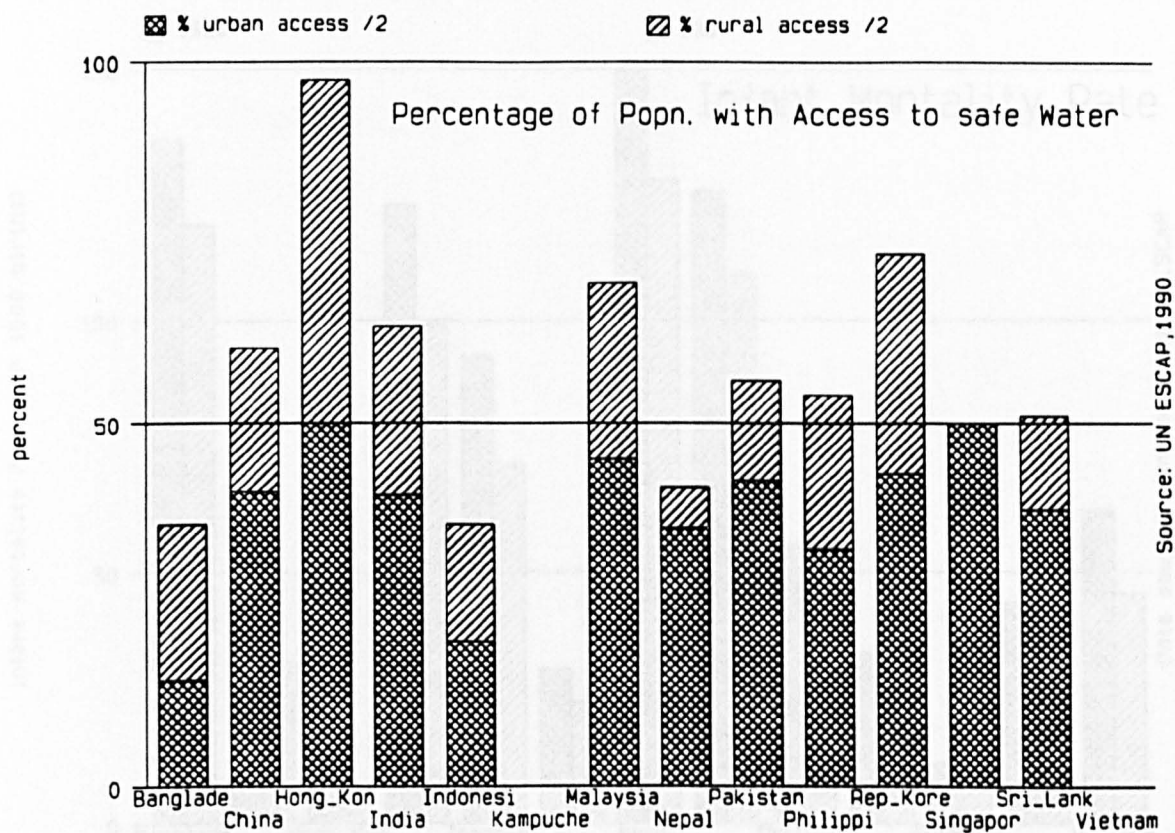


Fig. 2.7

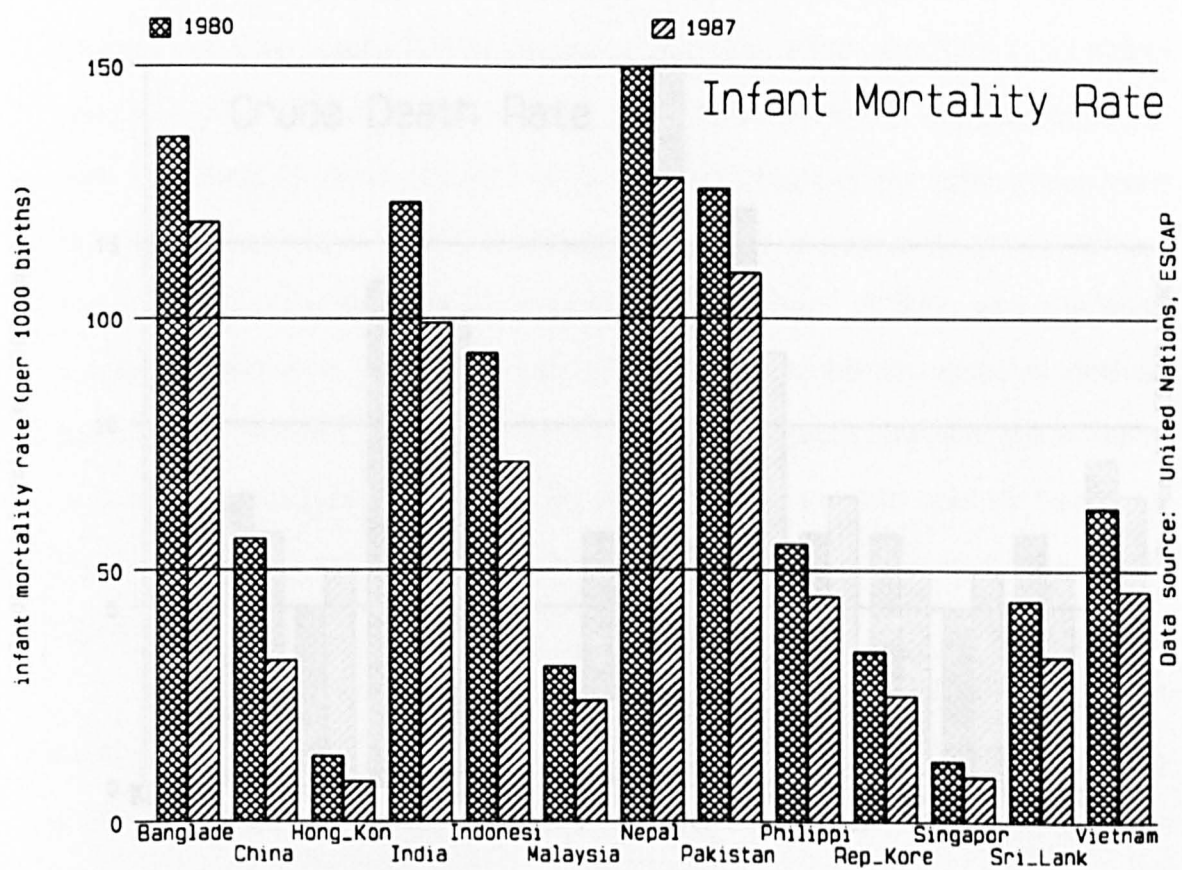


Fig. 2.8

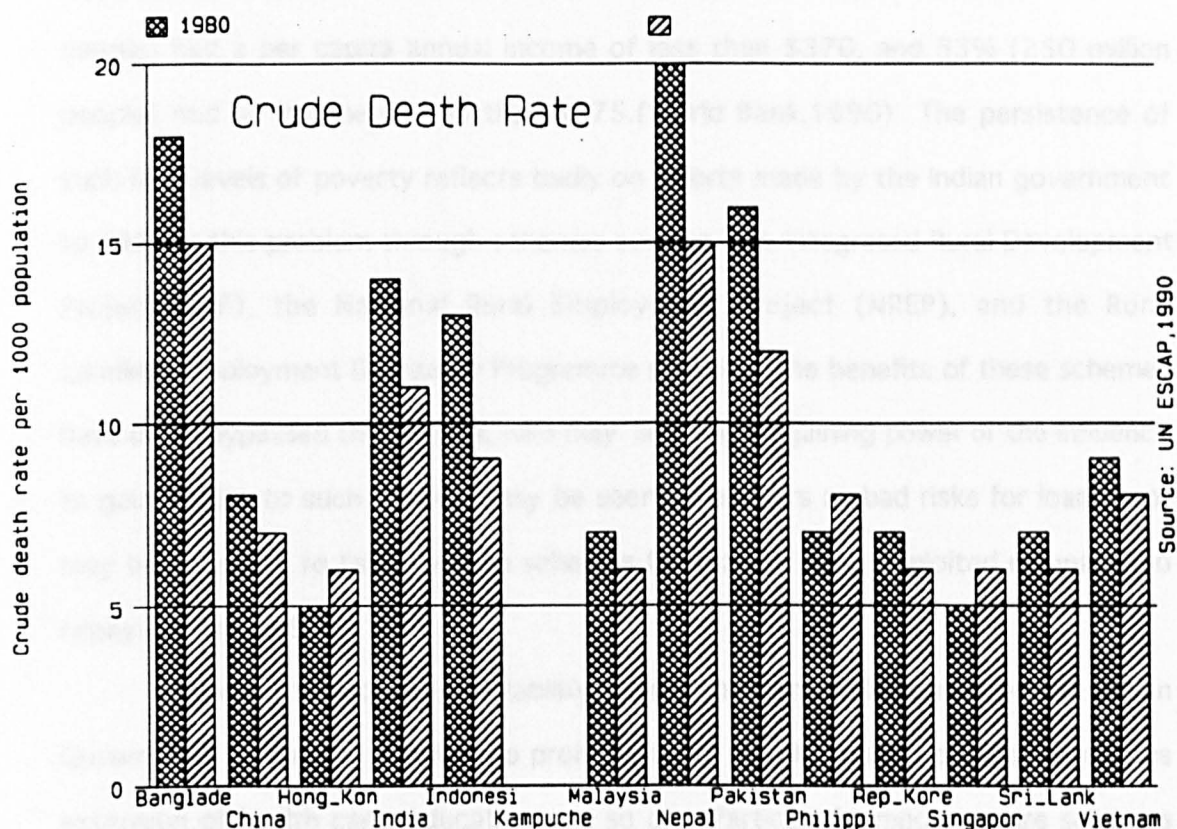


Fig. 2.9

⁴⁸ Such a scheme is the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), which appears to have been successful in reducing the rate, but has again has heightened the problem. Further, there have been significant variations between states, with relatively poorer states having to experience lower infant mortality rates than other states. The reasons for this is that more expenditure is required in relatively poorer states. (See for example in S. Narain et al., 1993)

Wider Programmes for Poverty Reduction and Development in promoting Food Security As I have discussed, the problem of vulnerability is closely linked with the problems of poverty and social inequality. This is particularly relevant in the Indian case, where in 1985 still an estimated 55% of the population (520 million people) had a per capita annual income of less than \$370, and 33% (250 million people) had an income of less than \$275.(World Bank,1990) The persistence of such high levels of poverty reflects badly on efforts made by the Indian government to address this problem through schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Project(IRDP), the National Rural Employment Project (NREP), and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). The benefits of these schemes have often bypassed the poorest, who may lack the bargaining power or the influence to gain access to such credit; may be seen by bankers as bad risks for loans; or may be reluctant to take up such schemes for fear of being exploited or unable to repay.(Dreze,1990)

Measures to reduce vulnerability have also been implemented by the Indian Government as part of schemes to promote wider developmental objectives such as extension of health care, education and so on. Particularly important are schemes designed to protect specific vulnerable groups such as women and children.⁴⁶ However, India continues to lag well behind many of her Asian and Pacific neighbours in terms of providing health facilities and in improving its health status. This is indicated further in figs 2.5 to 2.9.

There is also considerable regional variation within India in public efforts to improve health care. It is significant that States providing the highest per capita subsidies on social services, particularly towards health care, water supplies, housing and sanitation, are also those with the lowest infant mortality rates, a useful measure of prevailing health conditions.(Fig 2.10) Further, the three States

⁴⁶ Such a scheme is the Integrated Child Development Scheme (I.C.D.S.), which appears to have been comparatively successful in reaching the poor, but but again has bypassed the poorest.. Further there have been significant variations between states, with relatively poorer states tending to experience fewest benefits, particularly since they often lack the resources to put in their share of expenditure required for nutritional supplements.(See for example in B. Harriss et al.,1990)

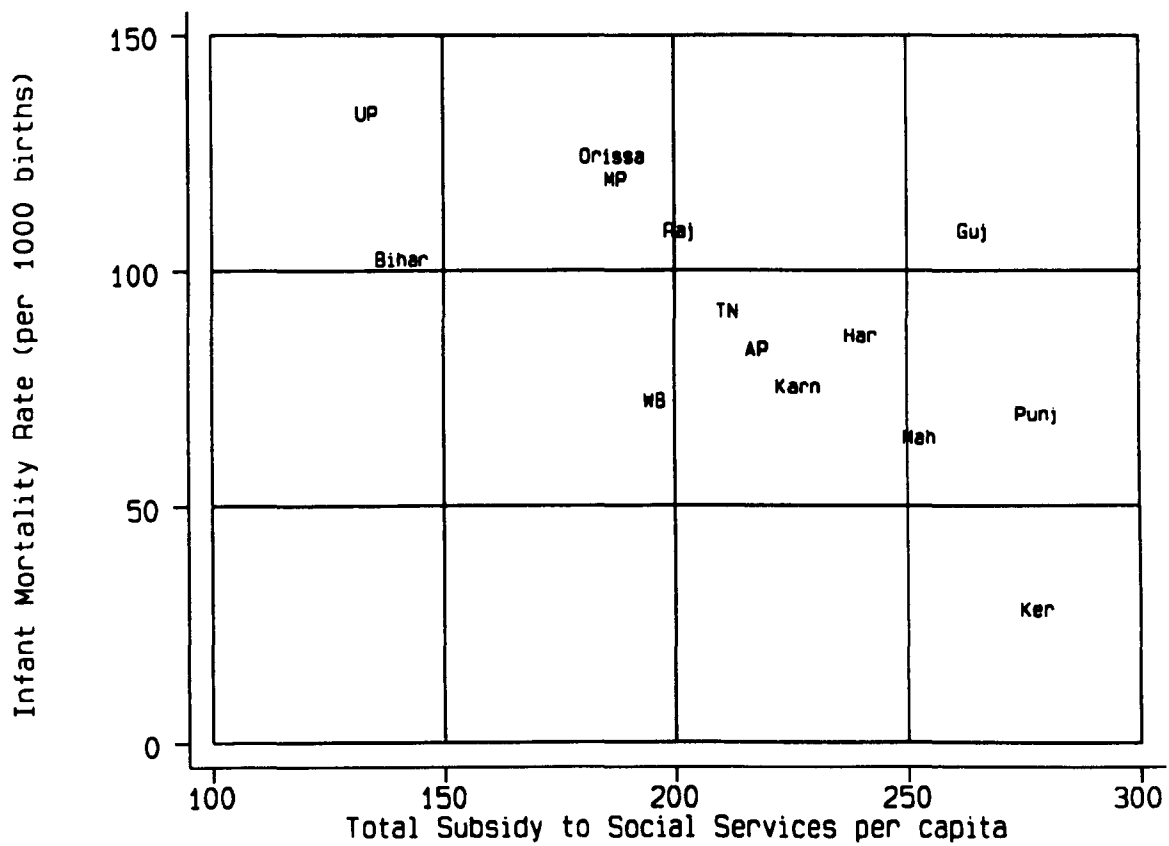


Fig. 2.10 Variation in Infant Mortality in States in India with Spending on Social Services
Source: Currie(1992)

with the lowest per capita expenditure on health care, namely Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, are also those with the highest levels of poverty, the lowest life expectancy and the highest infant mortality rate.(Mundle and Rao,1991)

In the sphere of education and literacy the record of the Indian government is again poor. Public spending on education in 1986 represented 3.4% of GNP, less than that spent on defence (3.5% of GNP). Further, India in 1990 retained the highest number of adult illiterates in the world (300 million in 1990), with the percentage of women able to read and write (29%) only half that of men (58%).(Viratelle,1991) Female illiteracy was estimated in 1991 to be as high as 80% in rural India, and 92% amongst the poorest quintile of the rural population.(Economist,1991)⁴⁷ As with spending on other social services, there are considerable differences in per capita education subsidies between States. As may be expected, literacy seems to be highest in States where subsidies are greatest. Also it appears that spending on education fails to achieve the maximum possible improvements in literacy due to the major share of such spending directed towards higher and technical education. This therefore benefits those already partially educated, often from more privileged sections of the population.

2.9 Policy Implications

To overcome some of these problems it is crucial to ensure that people are politically represented at national and particularly local level. This is to ensure that their needs are met, and that government policies to deal with food difficulties and poverty are effective. It is necessary to avoid the situation described by Dantwala, where in India programmes to counter rural poverty

...are launched by the dozens, social and economic processes which continuously deplete the resources from which the poor derive their income and employment and make their traditional skills redundant are either not noticed or ignored and effective action to stop such processes is

⁴⁷ Although there have been improvements in literacy levels since 1986 in a number of Indian States. The importance and effects of literacy and education programmes are discussed further in chapter 4.6 and chapter 6 of this thesis.

rarely taken. Thus, what the Government gives to the poor through its anti-poverty programmes is taken away, not unstealthily, by the social processes dominated by the rich.'(in Kurian,1989:A15)

Frequently anti-poverty programmes have rested in the hands of a bureaucracy geared to administering uniform operations over wide political areas, rather than to adapting these programmes to the requirements of particular societies. Supposedly 'people-oriented' projects organised by governments have often given the people themselves little say in how these schemes should be organised. Similarly when communities have tried to influence such schemes to meet their own needs they have often received little cooperation from official sources. Frequently there has been little redistribution of asset ownership and few attempts to transfer resources to weaker sections of the community. Also the interests of Government and agency officials often appear to have been closely tied up with the interests of commercial institutions.(Murishwar and Fernandez,1988)

Therefore it is essential to have mechanisms which ensure that rural development programmes are monitored at grassroots level. In India attempts have been made to do this with mixed success through the *panchayati raj* system, although such efforts have been hindered on occasions by the reluctance of state level politicians and bureaucrats to share authority and power with their counterparts at a district level or below.(Kurian,1989:A-16)⁴⁸ Further, in many cases *panchayats* have failed to perform their responsibilities to protect CPR's and people's coping mechanisms. CPR's have frequently been turned into open access resources and traditional guidelines regarding the use and maintenance of such resources have been replaced by unenforceable legal and administrative measures. Indeed little attention has been given to people's initiatives to protect their resource base and to slow their growing reliance on government support.(Jodha, 1990)

Policies which aim to combat food crises must also take dynamic considerations into account. The poor must be given immediate relief, before they are forced to sell their assets at give-away prices to buy food. This will result in their

⁴⁸ For more on the *panchayati raj* system refer for example to Hirway(1989); Sanwal(1989); Ghosh(1989); Chandrasekar(1989); Krishnaswamy(1993).

losing productive assets which they require to recommence production when the worst of the crisis has passed. Furthermore, when malnourished they will be increasingly vulnerable to disease and may not be fit enough to produce their own food. Thirdly, in acute situations they may be forced to cut down trees or to overgraze land, so accelerating environmental degradation. To prevent the poor being pushed into such policy choices which may dramatically impair their ability to produce adequate yields after the crisis, it is necessary to provide them with immediate guarantees of food, work, fodder and assets required to prevent such an acute situation from being reached.(Kumar,1987) Chambers(1989) calls this 'putting floors under the vulnerable'.

Furthermore, programmes to combat food crises and poverty must be based upon a detailed study of the mechanisms and institutions responsible for the production and distribution of food entitlements. Firstly, this concerns household production of food: both for subsistence on household plots; and of cash and export crops to earn money with which to buy food on the market. This must also investigate the way that households transfer income between consumption and investment. Secondly, this must include a thorough study of markets, and the effects of their variations on both the producers and consumers of food. Whilst both private and state controlled markets represent an agency for exchanging produce, they may also represent a source of social inequality via the relations of power and status which they express amongst the actors. Government intervention can be used to generate political resources, which can be distributed to build organised support for political elites and the policies which they promote. Therefore it becomes necessary to examine how the market and state procurement agencies represent more than just a locus of competition and conflict, and instead become an instrument of political control.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ For further discussion of the power which the market may accord to certain actors refer for example to B. Hariss(1989); Bates(1981).

Since private grain marketing systems may be imperfectly competitive, the heavy concentration of production, and their monopoly over supplies of agricultural inputs, may provide opportunities for mercantile classes to exploit producers. This may also occur through ties of credit which limit the ability of the producer to dictate when and to whom they sell their produce.

Thirdly, studies must take into account the central importance of further improving the 'capabilities' of the population. Emphasis must be placed on improving water supplies, sanitation, housing, education and literacy, health and child care. Measures must also be formulated to reduce the burden of women's tasks, whilst safeguarding the access of women to employment. As we have seen, these issues are not only central aspects of development, but are crucially linked to, and have a direct bearing on, food security.

Fourthly, further research must investigate how modern scientific techniques and practices, which may for example improve food yields, can be made to complement 'traditional', indigenous lifestyles and production techniques, so increasing the sustainability of people's environments, rather than undermining them.⁵⁰

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter attempts to establish a theoretical framework for analysing food security and food crisis. This framework is used more specifically to examine the issue of food insecurity in Kalahandi in subsequent chapters. The chapter examines factors which account for differences in people's vulnerability to food crisis, arguing that whilst food insecurity is not reducible to the problem of poverty, those most at risk are often those who are most deprived in terms of ownership and access to assets, and who have lowest incomes and purchasing power. Such inequalities are

⁵⁰ Refer in particular to the references cited in this thesis for Jodha (eg. Jodha, 1991) and Chambers et al. (eds.) (1989)

frequently rooted in relations of class, race, caste and gender which lead to the exploitation or subordination of certain groups in the society concerned. Regions will also vary in their vulnerability due to: their differing social and physical environments; their differing political, social and economic situations; or due to differences in the way they are incorporated into the national and international divisions of labour.

The chapter goes on to examine various forms of social and reciprocal arrangements which provide a 'safety-net' for the vulnerable, along with a range of coping mechanisms' which people may implement to secure their access to food and other essential items. Their ability to maintain food security may be further improved by interventions by some external agency. In many cases the Government may play an important role in initiating such action.

For this reason the existence of mechanisms and institutions which place pressure on the state to take such action, and which provide people with a say in formulating policies which affect their future, may be indispensable to protecting a satisfactory food position for all members of a population. This may include the existence of a free and objective press; a multiparty system of adversarial politics; an independent and objective legal system; and politically and socially conscious population with freedom and power to demonstrate (either collectively or individually) their problems and opinions.

Finally, the chapter introduces a range of interventions by the state in India to protect and promote food security. There is little doubt that such interventions have achieved considerable success in preventing famine. In certain regions there have also been significant improvements in standards of health, education and other services, which have led to a concomitant improvement of the ability of sections of the population to maintain food security. However such measures have often made little impact on the widespread chronic malnutrition which affects considerable sections of the population much of the time, particularly in rural areas.

The next chapter provides a brief overview of the background and history of Kalahandi. This provides an introduction for a more analytical examination of factors contributing to food insecurity in Kalahandi in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3: Kalahandi Profile and History

This chapter introduces the central characteristics and history of Kalahandi.¹ More extensive discussion of the district's population, land types, agricultural patterns, and other features, are provided in later chapters of this thesis (particularly chapter 4). Where this is the case, information is generally not also discussed at length in this section.

3.1 General

Kalahandi district in the western region of Orissa was formed in 1949 from the ex-State of Kalahandi and the ex-Zamindari area of Khariar. The district is bounded in the north by Orissa's Bolangir district and the Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh; in the South by Orissa's Koraput district; in the East by Phulbani and Koraput district; and in the West by Phulbani and Madhya Pradesh.(see map)

It has an area of 11,772 Sq. Kms. (7.45% of the area of Orissa). According to provisional figures for the 1991 Census its population stands at 1,591,984 persons, of which 795,939 persons are male (50.0%) and 796,045 female (50.0%). From 1981 Census figures, the population of the district includes 15.76% persons from Scheduled Caste background, and 31.28% from Scheduled Tribes. The principal tribes include Kondhs, Gondhs, Bunjhias and Paharias. This combined Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population lies above the Orissa average of 37.1% for percentage of the population per district from S.C. or S.T. background.(Tripathy,1991)

From fig.3.1 it may be noted that a large percentage of the district's population rely on agriculture, either as cultivators or through agricultural employment, as their principal means for producing food or generating purchasing

¹ The organisation of Orissa's districts has undergone reorganisation during 1993. The former Nawapara Subdivision of Kalahandi has now become Nawapara district, leaving the two other previous subdivisions, notably Dharamgarh and Bhawanipatna, to form the reorganised Kalahandi district. All references to Kalahandi made in this thesis refer to the organisation of the district during 1992 before these changes took place.

Fig.3.1 Distribution of Main Workers in Kalahandi For District and Individual Tahasils

District/ Tahasil	Year	Total main workers	% main workers of total popn.	Percentage of main workers				
				Cultivators	Agricultural labourers	Workers in household industries	Other workers	
Kalahandi	total	1971	380978	32.73	53.57	32.09	2.82	11.52
		1981	481340	35.94	50.74	35.59	2.55	11.12
	male	1991	598658	37.61	46.33	38.52	3.03	12.12
		provisional						
		1971	348273	60.16	56.65	30.87	2.22	10.26
		1981	401622	60.29	56.36	30.52	2.05	11.07
	female	1991	474321	59.59	52.81	31.67	2.52	13.00
		provisional						
		1971	32705	5.59	20.73	45.08	9.21	24.98
		1981	79718	11.84	22.43	61.16	5.05	11.36
		1991	124337	15.62	21.64	64.67	4.93	8.76
		provisional						
Nawapara - total	1971	106011	31.28	58.98	29.39	3.35	8.28	
	1981	75030	38.06	54.81	32.23	2.19	10.77	
Khariar - total	1971							
	1981	69698	35.64	54.10	33.60	4.09	8.21	
Dharamgarh - total	1971	66925	33.23	51.60	33.06	3.54	11.80	
	1981	86286	34.89	50.09	38.28	2.93	8.70	
Jaipatna - total	1971	75079	34.97	47.84	35.82	3.19	13.15	
	1981	80305	36.36	46.35	40.36	3.02	10.27	
Kalahandi - total	1971	77083	32.63	50.00	32.04	1.91	16.05	
	1981	99846	36.12	46.30	34.13	1.80	17.77	
Lanjigarh - total	1971	55880	32.58	58.27	31.12	1.70	8.91	
	1981	70175	34.76	55.21	34.47	1.45	8.87	

Source : Census of India, various and 1991 Census Provisional Population Table 2

power. This data indicates that 46.33% of Kalahandi's population are classified as cultivators (owning some portion of land), whilst a further 38.52% of this population are classified as agricultural labourers. Workers in household industries represent only 3.03% of the district's population and levels of larger industry are minimal (as discussed further in chapter 4.4).

Figures for 1986-87 indicate that 51.90% of Kalahandi's total area is available for cultivation (601,000has.). From this, approximately 93.8% is net sown area. Area sown more than once represents 35.1% of net sown area. Figures for 1988-89 indicate that irrigation potential in Kalahandi remains low, at only 12.39% of gross cropped area, compared with 30.74% average for the State. This low level of irrigation limits possibilities for double cropping (33.68% of net area sown, compared with the State average of 42.01%). This also limits area sown under H.Y.V paddy. (13.77% compared with an Orissa average of 25.33%), and use of fertiliser (4.30Kg per hectare compared with 22.6 Kg. per hectare average for the State). However despite these factors, per capita food production in Kalahandi at Rs.348 per capita lay above the Orissa state average of Rs.256 per capita (in value terms (at 1988-89 prices)).(Tripathy,1991)² These issues are discussed further in chapters 4.2 and 4.3 of this thesis.

Kalahandi has two primary physiographic regions, notably the plains and hilly tracts (Mahajan,1991) Plain lands cover almost half the district's total area. Hilly tracts are located primarily in the Western side of Nawapara subdvision and in the south-western region of Bhawanipatna subdivision (see map). Forest cover has been markedly reduced on these slopes through deforestation both by the Government and private contractors. The principal forms of forest produce are timber and bamboo, along with kendu leaf (used for bidis), sabai grass (for use in paper mills) and mahua flower (used to distill liquor). These hilly regions also hold

² This factor illustrates the point made in chapter 2 that it is not levels of production of food in a particular region per se which principally determines the likelihood of food crisis. Instead more specifically it is people's access to food (or their food 'entitlement' as it is termed by Sen(1981)) that is the primary determinant of food crisis and starvation. This issue is again discussed more fully in chapter 4.

Fig.3.2 Percentage of Urban Population, Decennial Growth Rate, Sex Ratio by Residence and Density 1991 Census Provisional Figures

India/State or Union Territory/ District	Urban population as percentage of total population		Decennial growth rate of population (per cent) 1981-91			Sex ratio, 1991 (Females per 1000 males)			Density (Population per sq. km.)
	1981	1991	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	
INDIA	23.34	25.72	23.56	19.71	36.19	929	941	893	267
Orissa	11.79	13.43	19.50	17.28	36.08	972	989	866	202
Sambalpur	15.49	17.18	17.86	15.51	30.71	967	984	886	153
Sundargarh	30.60	33.46	17.23	12.40	28.19	938	990	842	161
Kendujhar	11.34	12.67	18.03	16.25	31.95	969	985	868	158
Mayurbhanj	5.72	6.19	18.33	17.74	27.95	982	990	875	180
Balasore	8.25	9.46	24.13	22.50	42.23	968	976	894	443
Cuttack	10.28	12.31	18.89	16.20	42.36	964	987	820	494
Dhenkenal	7.82	9.89	20.08	17.38	51.97	951	966	825	176
Phulbani	5.26	5.95	19.70	18.83	35.29	998	1004	896	77
Bolangir	9.13	9.64	16.77	16.11	23.33	981	988	916	191
Kalahandi	6.01	6.53	18.88	18.23	28.99	1000	1005	927	135
Koraput	11.31	11.26	20.77	20.84	20.23	992	998	944	111
Ganjam	14.25	14.97	17.72	16.74	23.66	1012	1024	947	251
Puri	14.79	19.76	22.22	15.09	63.30	940	975	810	351

Source: Government of India, 1991 Census of India: Paper 2 Provisional Population Tables, Rural/Urban Distribution

Fig.3.3 Decadal Variation in Population since 1901 - 1991 Census Provisional Figures

State/ District	Percentage Variation in Population since 1901								
	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
ORISSA	+10.44	-1.94	+11.94	+10.22	+6.38	+19.82	+25.05	+20.17	+19.50
Sambalpur	+15.80	+4.54	+11.75	+12.63	+8.25	+15.89	+22.29	+23.64	+17.86
Sundargarh	+30.65	+4.23	+15.74	+12.33	+12.53	+37.38	+25.87	+29.79	+17.23
Kendujhar	+27.63	+4.06	+21.37	+15.02	+11.07	+26.32	+28.55	+16.65	+18.03
Mayurbhanj	+19.47	+3.44	+17.94	+10.69	+4.48	+17.03	+19.12	+10.30	+18.33
Balasore	-1.39	-6.99	+1.29	+4.68	-0.25	+28.02	+29.28	+23.07	+24.13
Cuttack	+2.42	-2.81	+6.45	+4.71	+3.32	+21.25	+24.96	+20.93	+18.89
Dhenkenal	+3.29	-12.81	+23.38	+16.72	+13.12	+22.63	+26.04	+22.33	+20.08
Phulbani	+13.17	-0.45	+9.38	+9.33	+1.52	+12.59	+20.85	+15.38	+19.70
Bolangir	+39.50	+15.50	+11.60	+8.32	+5.28	+16.43	+18.24	+15.47	+16.77
Kalahandi	+20.34	+1.82	+19.05	+13.75	+8.10	+17.53	+22.92	+15.06	+18.88
Koraput	+20.22	-3.12	+17.93	+18.55	+12.37	+18.03	+30.89	+21.57	+20.77
Ganjam	+11.18	-3.25	+13.24	+12.19	+4.11	+15.24	+22.50	+16.40	+17.72
Puri	+1.96	-10.04	+10.81	+8.07	+7.93	+18.39	+25.51	+24.79	+22.22

Source: Government of India, 1991 Census of India, Series 19: Paper 1 Provisional Population Tables,

substantial mineral deposits, principally graphite, quartz, manganese, and bauxite.(ibid)

The plains area of the district is drained by the River Tel and its tributaries in the south and south-east of the district, along with the river Jonk in the northern part of Nawapara subdivision. The Indravati river system also flows from Thuamur Rampur block in the south-east of Kalahandi, into Koraput district, and on into Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh. Whilst a number of streams in the hilly tracts are perennial, rivers on lower land tend to rapidly dry in their lower reaches in hot weather, particularly between February and June. This is especially the case for the Tel, Sagada, Hatti, Ret and Utei.(Mahajan,1991)

Other principal characteristics of Kalahandi are discussed more fully in their specific relation to food security in chapter 4 and in subsequent chapters.³

3.2 Historical background⁴

The 1980 Kalahandi District Gazeteer states that Kalahandi was under the rule of various Hindu dynasties from the first century A.D.⁵ The princely family which reigned in Kalahandi upto 1947 is said to trace its rule back to 1005 A.D., when Rugznaath Sai, a prince from Chhotanagpur reportedly married the only daughter of the last Ganga-dynasty ruler of Kalahandi and usurped the throne. Thirty one rulers are claimed by the family itself to have ruled during this time. (Mahahan, 1991:19; Senapati,1980, ch2.)

Kalahandi fell under direct British influence with the transfer of the Nagpur kingdom to the East India Company in 1853, after the defeat of the Marathas in the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18) and the death of Raghuji III, a nominal Maratha ruler. There were a number of reported tribal rebellions between 1796

³ Refer also particularly to Senapati (1980); Nayak and Mahajan(ed.)(1991); Deo(1984,1990,1992); papers from Lokadrusti conference(1991); and data provided in Government of Orissa(1990,1991).

⁴ Extensive commentaries of the history of Kalahandi are limited. There is also some debate regarding the accuracy of historical outlines of the region provided in more readily available sources such as Senapati(1980).

⁵ For further details of the historical development of Kalahandi State refer to the interpretation in Senapati(1980): chapter 2.

and 1831, following the increased alienation of tribal persons from the polity of the region.(ibid: 20) A further Kandha insurrection was reported in 1855 led by Chakra Bisoyee. British troops were used to check this protest.⁶

Between 1853 and 1881, Kalahandi was ruled by Udit Pratap Deo. During this period a range of levies and restrictions on trade were liberalised to encourage traders to visit Kalahandi from other regions. Kulta cultivators were also brought in from the Sambalpur region in an attempt to increase land revenue and agricultural production in the state. These Kultas reportedly exploited indigenous Kondhas, leading to considerable alienation of land from the latter. This exploitation motivated the Kandha rebellion of 1882. This was eventually quashed by British troops, with its leaders being sentenced to capital punishment.(ibid)

Between 1882 and 1894 the State was administered directly by the British Government. After this the throne (gadi) was transferred to college-educated Raghu Keshri Deo. On his murder in 1897 his only son, Brajamohan Deo was brought up under Ward of Court. Brajamohan was made ruler in 1917. Shortly afterwards he received the O.B.E., and in 1926 the title of 'Maharaja'. Under the latter's reign there was reportedly considerable modernisation in Kalahandi, including attempts to improve agriculture, communications, and to introduce western-style education.

The Princely State of Kalahandi and the Khariar Zamindari merged with the Union of India in 1947 to form the Kalahandi district of Orissa.

The Former State of Kalahandi The Kalahandi State was taken under British jurisdiction with the lapse of the Nagpur province to the British crown in 1853, and then made into a feudatory state. This was subdivided into the Khalsa area which was ruled directly by the Chief, and Zamindari which was administered through the Zamindars.

⁶ Mahajan reports that use of British troops, and the increasing links between feudal princes and the British, is indicative of the growing alienation of tribal people in Kalahandi.(1991: 20)

During princely rule in the ex-State of Kalahandi, the Gountia patta was the only existing charter of rights and duties. There was no tenancy law.⁷ There are few accurate records for amounts of land revenue extracted from villagers in the former Kalahandi state by ruling dynasties during the pre-British period.(Concerned Scholars Group, Sambalpur University, 1985:1857) The Kalahandi District Gazetteer suggests that its early rulers were concerned primarily with collecting as much revenue as possible from peasants in the area, whilst making little effort to change 'the old tribal system' of villages, largely managed by village headmen (gountias).(Senapati,1980: 267) These Gountias were given virtual autonomy by the state to collect revenue from cultivators in their village according to their own judgement or interests.⁸ The financial burden placed upon villages by the state was very high, sometimes 'as much as it would bear and agree to pay'. (ibid)

Revenue Settlements in the former Zamindaris - The ex-state of Kalahandi was composed of five Zamindaris, namely Karlapat, Mahulpatna, Madanpur-Rampur, Lanjigarh and Kashipur.⁹ The first regular settlement to be carried out in Karlapat took place in 1917-18, encompassing 36 villages. A revision settlement was made in 1929-30, leading to an enhancement in total revenue demand by 40%. In the Madanpur-Rampur ex-Zamindari the first regular settlement was made in 1926-27. In Mahulpatna the first settlement was made in 1927-28, whilst in Lanjigarh this was carried out in 1942-46. The terms of these settlements varied between 10 and 20 years.

These estates were administered by Zamindars under the administrative control of the ruler. Zamindars were accountable to the ruler to efficiently carry

⁷ Although it is suggested that the Central Provinces Land Revenue Act and the Central Provinces Tenancy Act provided guidelines for revenue collection. (Senapati, 1980: 268)

⁸ The Kalahandi District Gazetteer suggests that cultivators rather than artisans and agricultural labourers tended to pay the bulk of this revenue in the village, for the reason that the latter categories simply could not afford to pay. Frequently these persons were supported by the cultivators themselves. It is argued that this is likely to have been the origin of the rent-free holdings held by inhabitants such as blacksmiths, carpenters and others.(Senapati, 1980: 267)

⁹ The former now forming part of Koraput district, whilst the other four Zamindaris fall within the boundaries of Kalahandi district as they stood in 1992.

out the tasks of revenue collection and administration. The State Administration played little part in collecting revenue, with Zamindars being accorded roughly equal rights in this process to the ruler. They were also provided with considerable rights over forest, and powers to appoint and dismiss Gountia in the Zamindari without consulting the durbār. (Senapati, 1980: 272-3)

Responsibility for managing villages fell to Gountias, apart from khas villages held directly by the Zamindar. These Gountias held responsibility for collecting the sum of revenue demanded in each village by the state. They held no proprietary rights in the village. In some villages Gountias had been given protected status, meaning that they could not be evicted and that they were entitled at the next settlement to renew the lease (theke) on their Gountia tenure when it expired. Where this protected status was not held, the ruling authority was able to terminate the lease at will.

In situations where villages did become vacant the Gountiaship was frequently auctioned for the greatest prestation or narazanor. Gountias tended to be remunerated through holding bhogra land, the value of this remuneration being generally fixed at between 20% and 25% of the full rental for the village. Frequently the bhogra land held by the Gountia was of the highest quality in the village. Gountias controlled allocation of surrendered or abandoned land in the village, and were also entitled to take over unlimited quantities of waste land, which they could lease out to other villagers.(khudkast). Such control over free land enabled them to extract salami from persons wanting to gain land in the village. (Senapati, 1980: 272)

Occupancy Tenants - All tenants holding cultivable land and paying rent were deemed to be occupancy tenants in the former Kalahandi state. Until the ex-State merged with Orissa, tenants held no right to transfer their land to others by sale, mortgage or other means. If land was to be transferred, this could only be carried out by surrendering this land to the Gountia, who would redistribute this to another person on payment of salami. It was stipulated that land abandoned by tribals and some

low-caste raiyats had to be redistributed to other persons from these categories.¹⁰ Occupancy raiyats could be removed from their land if rent was not paid. (Senapati, 1980:274) Technically land revenue was not collected from those carrying out podu cultivation in the ex-State (although in practice podu cultivators were often forced to contribute this revenue). (ibid:275)

Settlements in the Khalsa Area - The first summary settlement in the Khalsa area was introduced in 1883, followed by a second in 1888. Rent assessments were made on the basis of yields from land and the tenant's capacity to pay. The first regular settlement in the area was made in 1904-5 by Kamal Lochan Pujhari of Sambalpur. This settlement led to an increase in revenue demand which was met largely from patwariness.

A second regular settlement was made in 1911-12, even though the proposed period for the previous settlement had been four years. This settlement produced a thirty percent increase in revenue demand, with individual enhancement being around 50 percent. The period for settlement was announced to be 11 years.

A third settlement followed in 1922-23, leading to enhancements of 100 percent on individual raiyats, these being restricted to 60% on the pargana. Where enhancements were more than 100%, it was recommended that these increases should be gradually introduced over a ten year period. An enhancement of 36% was also made on forest cess.¹¹

This settlement was implemented for 20 years, and succeeded by a fresh settlement only in 1946 as a result of the war. This was the final settlement made under the British, producing a reported rise of 62% in revenue demand. (Sambalpur, 1985: 1858-59; Senapati, 1980: 268-9) As discussed further in chapter 4.9, The substantial burdens which revenue collection under this system of settlements placed on local people in many cases severely affected their ability to maintain food security, as discussed further in chapter 4.9.

¹⁰ Except from instances when the Gountia himself came from the same background, when he was then entitled to cultivate this land himself. (Senapati, 1980:274)

¹¹ With assessments being made according to rupee value rather than on the basis of acreage.

The former Khariar Zamindari Before 1869 the colonial government had little involvement in the internal management of the Khariar region, tending only to collect an annual tribute from the Khariar Zamindari. Revenue tended to be collected by village headmen and paid to the Zamindar along traditional lines. The sum collected from inhabitants of the village depended upon the status and asset base of the person concerned. Responsibility for collecting revenue requested by the state from each village lay with the headman. Owing to the widespread incidence of communal land ownership in the Zamindari, and the prevalence of podu cultivation, revenue demands tended to be difficult to assess. For this reason the village headman himself tended to dictate how these demands should be split between the villagers.

Revenue Settlements - The first settlement to be completed in the Khariar ex-Zamindari was completed by J.F.K. Hewitt in 1868. Owing to the poor land quality in the Khariar area, low assessments were made for the estate under this settlement. Police administration continued under the Zamindari.(Deo, 1989; Sambalpur University, 1985) The task of assessing revenue under this settlement was complicated by the extensive use of shifting cultivation in the region and quantity of seed used was seen to be the only practical way of measuring land holding .

Many tribal families did not have written records of land holding. For that reason it was often only village headmen who had established a village, or were known to have been in possession of land for a considerable period, who were able to prove permanent possession, and were registered as 'Gaotia' or 'thekedar'. (Deo, 1989) These theka's, or leases, came up for renewal every three years, and were renewed on an auction basis such that those able to bid the highest price were granted the theka. This frequently precluded tribal families, whose low purchasing power prevented them paying prestation or Nazrana to the Zamindar. This process of land transfer was accentuated by numerous distress sales of land, forced upon tribals in response to repeated rainfall failures during the period 1869 to 1891.

These issues were addressed in the first systematic settlement under Mr. Carey in 1891. Two forms of rights (*wazib-ul-arz*) were confirmed under this settlement: (a) those governing the relationship between the Zamindar and the government; (b) and those relating to the nexus between the Zamindar and the tenant. Khariar Zamindari was created as a single region for settlement of land revenue. The Zamindar (*Sadar Lambardar*) held the Government tenure on condition that he carried out his job efficiently, and remained loyal to the British. This tenure could not be subdivided, and could not be transferred to other persons, apart from the Zamindar's eldest son.

Thekedars were lease holders in the village, holding responsibility for collecting rent from tenants and giving the full amount collected (*theka jama*)¹² to the Zamindar. In return the thekedar held rent free land (*sir land*), which was often of the highest quality in the village. In Carey's Settlement (1889-91), village *maufidars* (rent free tenure holders), thekedars (lease holders) and traditional 'Gountias' (village headmen) were classified as Gountia. Whilst in this settlement 17 out of the 18 Gaotia were tribals, many of these lost their position despite protected status. Indeed, one third of the total land previously owned by tribals was transferred to moneylenders and businessmen between 1891 and 1910. To counter these transfers the Central Province Land Alienation Act was passed in 1917, banning the transfer of land held by a tribal to anyone other than another tribal. (Deo, 1989: 93)¹³

Kalahandi after the 1948 merger After the merger of the ex-feudatory states, full security of tenure was provided to occupancy tenants in the ex-State area under the Administration of Orissa States Order of 1948. This provision granted the right for tenants to freely transfer their holdings. It also allowed them to use this land in any manner which did not materially impair the value of the land or make it unfit for

¹² This *theka jama* was assessed according to the number of ploughs and bullocks held under each thekedar. The rate per plough tended to vary between four and six annas depending upon the locality. (Deo, 1989:90)

¹³ These measures are discussed further in the context of their relevance to Kalahandi in chapter 4.9.

tenancy. This Order also stipulated that occupancy tenants could not be evicted from land without executing a degree of ejectment. This restricted free transfer of holdings by a raiyat of 'aboriginal tribes' to persons from non-aboriginal tribes.(Senapati, 1980: 289)

The Orissa Merger States Law Act of March 1950 accorded firmer land rights to tenants and Jagir holders in the ex-State area. Service tenure was abolished, and former service tenure holders were granted occupancy rights, without needing to render service, providing they maintained payment of 'fair and equitable rent'. Those unable to take advantage of this act were treated as raiyats.(Senapati, 1980: 290)

Under Orissa Act 17 of 1953, occupancy raiyats of the Nawapara subdivision were granted the same rights as those available in other areas of the State, thereby becoming free to sublet their land for one agricultural year and to transfer their land through mortgage, sale or donation to 'a bonafide agriculturalist'. Occupancy tenants of S.T. background were again restricted to transferring their land only to other persons from S.T. background.(ibid)

Abolition of Estates - As part of a wider programme to abolish Zamindari rights throughout India after independence, intermediary rights in permanently settled and temporarily settled Zamindari estates were abolished in Orissa under the Orissa Estates Abolition Act of 1951 . These measures were designed to bring raiyats and sub-raiyats into a direct relationship with the State, and therefore to increase the security of tenure of these tenants. (Rath, 1977: 263; Senapati,1980) In carrying out these measures, it was considered necessary to provide statutory protection to all tenants actually cultivating their land.(Rath, 1977: 74)

Further protection was also afforded to tenants under the Orissa Tenant's Relief Bill of 1955. As an incentive for cultivators to increase production this recommended that tenants should be allowed to retain a larger share of the crop which they produce, and that temporary tenants should not pay in rent more than one

quarter of the gross produce of their land in cash or kind.¹⁴ It also advocated rent reductions to improve the economic and social well-being of cultivators.¹⁵ In addition, it ruled that no person could be lawfully evicted from their land if they had held their land under cultivation on July 1st 1954.

The four Zamindaris in the ex-State of Kalahandi and the ex-State of Khariar were officially rendered free of Zamindari activity on 27th. November 1952.¹⁶

Following the merger of the State and the abolition of the Zamindaris, revenue administration took a different form in the district. The Gountia system prevailing in Bhawanipatna and Dharamgarh subdivisions, and the thekedar system operative in Nawapara subdivision, were abolished from 1st April 1956. Intermediary concerns of thekedars in the Nawapara subdivision in ordinary, protected, or maufi form, were transferred to the State Government on 1st. June 1959. Sir lands held under khas possession were retained by thekedars (as for raiyats with occupancy rights), providing that they paid fair and equitable rent.

Comprehensive legislation was passed in 1960 under the Orissa Land Reforms Act, designed to set ceilings on land holdings and to enhance rights of 'weaker sections of the peasantry'.¹⁷ Central to this Act were the aims to ensure: greater equity in land rights; stricter rights on temporary leases, sharecroppers and under-tenants; provision of occupancy rights on homestead land; settlement of disputes between tenants and landlords; and fixed ceilings on land holdings. To receive raiyatwari rights under this Act, raiyats and subtenants were required to pay

¹⁴ Further it was stipulated that this rent was not to exceed six maunds of paddy in dry or wet lands, and eight maunds of cotton, jute, sugarcane, tobacco, betel leaves, potato and other special crops. (Ibid)

¹⁵ A tenant was defined under this Act to be a person who cultivated the land of another person under any custom or law, and paid to that person an agreed rent in cash or kind. A landlord was defined as a person whose land is cultivated by a tenant under some agreement for payment of rent, or a share of the produce, by the tenant. (Jena, 1968: 75)

¹⁶ Under Section 8(3) of the Estates Abolition Act. (Senapati, 1980: 291)

¹⁷ Included under the category of raiyat for protection under this Act were raiyats in raiyatwari villages of Orissa, and also: cultivators with occupancy rights on land which they held; persons with land under service-tenure from a 'feudatory ruler'; those entitled to acquire the right of occupancy in the 'khamar' lands of a Ruler in merged feudatory estates areas, such as Kalahandi; recorded sub-tenants and under-raiyats; those holding temporary leases for personal cultivation of land in estates abolished under the 1952 Estates Abolition Act; and persons who were to receive land on lease from a landholder, or from the State, after the initiation of the Land Reforms Act. (Jena, 1968: 92)

fifty percent of the market value of the land in compensation to the landlord. They were also required to pay a 'fair and equitable rent' to the state, or to the person holding the land, as fixed by the Revenue Officer in the region.¹⁸ Raiyats were not granted rights to lease out their raiyatwari land¹⁹, and could be evicted if they used it in a way which left it unfit for cultivation²⁰, or if they leased out this land.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Thakkar Committee for abolishing Gothi, the Government of Orissa in 1948 adopted the Orissa Debt Bondage Abolition Regulation, designed to abolish the system of debt bondage. In a meeting with the Tribes Advisory Committee in April 1956, the latter also advised the Government to abolish 'bethi begar' or forced labour 'wherever and in whatever form it exists'. (Rath, 1977: 235) On the recommendations of the Thakkur Committee, the Government of Orissa in 1948 amended the Agency Tracts and Interests and Land Transfer Act of 1917, with the intention of empowering the Agent (ie. the collector) or subordinate officers to restore to adivasis land which had been illegally extracted from him/her by a non-tribal moneylender. Further power to restore land to tribals under these circumstances was provided under the Orissa Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (by Scheduled Tribes) Regulation of 1956. This prevented transfer of land from a tribal person to a non-tribal without the permission of the relevant Subdivisional Officer. The importance of this legislation with reference to food security in Kalahandi is discussed in further detail in chapters 4 and 8 of this thesis.

The next section provides an overview of the development and structure of administration in Kalahandi. This information provides a background for a more specific examination in chapter 5 of particular responsibilities held by individual Government officers for promoting food security and administering relief. This also

¹⁸ Although this rent was not to exceed one eighth of the product of the land. (Jena, 1968)

¹⁹ Except in special circumstances, ie. if they were a person considered 'disabled', or if they were classed as a 'privileged' raiyat. See further in Jena (1968) pp. 92 ff.

²⁰ Although this land would be restored to the raiyat if it was returned to a cultivable condition within one year. (ibid)

provides the basis for an analysis of the performance of state interventions in chapter 6 and chapter 8.

3.3 Structure of Administration within the district

At the time of this study during 1992 Kalahandi was made up of three subdivisions, notably Kalahandi, Dharamgarh and Nawapara. Kalahandi and Dharamgarh formed part of the former Kalahandi State, which merged with the ex-States of Patna and Sonepur to form a new Kalahandi district in 1949, with its headquarters at Bolangir. On November 1st 1949 the Patna and Sonepur ex-States were detached from Kalahandi to form Bolangirpatna district, later to become Bolangir. The former State of Kalahandi merged with Nawapara subdivision (the entire former Khariar Zamindari, which since April 1st 1936 had been part of Sambalpur district) to form a separate Kalahandi district, with headquarters at Bhawanipatna. At this time the Kashipur region, which had been previously part of Kalahandi, was transferred to Koraput district as part of Rayagada subdivision.²¹ Kalahandi itself merged with Orissa in 1948.(Senapati,1980:2 and 261ff.; Dash, 1991:54)

During the colonial period, interactions between the State of Kalahandi and the British Government followed the provisions of the 1867 Sanad. This relationship changed when Kalahandi was transferred in 1905 to the Orissa division. Under this structure full authority relating to criminal issues was held by the Chief, apart from the power to issue capital sentences, for which confirmation had to be obtained from the Commissioner of the Orissa Division.

Whilst the State was under Government administration, management of the State was conducted by Political Agents. Full powers of Chief were exercised by a Superintendant, apart from the right to pass sentences longer than seven years, which had to be authorised by the Political Agent. An Assistant Superintendant had the authority of First Class Magistrate. These officers were supported by a team of

²¹ This was largely due to its poor communications with Kalahandi.

Revenue Officers, responsible for managing matters relating to general administration. (Senapati,1980:261ff.)

Since the merger of the ex-States with Orissa in 1948, and the formation of a new Kalahandi district in 1949, responsibility for the general administration of the district lies primarily with the Collector (District Magistrate). He is assisted in the role by an Additional Collector (Additional District Magistrate) and a range of other district level officers. Principal tasks of officers at district level are as follows:²².

District Collector The Collector maintains responsibilities in the district which include protecting law and order; promoting and advising welfare institutions; providing adequate technical support and facilities to district level officers; coordinating and guiding departmental officers in implementing Government programmes; coordinating and supervising development works; managing Government land estates and maintaining land records.

The Collector as District Magistrate is no longer responsible for trying criminal cases. As a consequence of the separation of the powers of Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, separate Judicial Magistrates are posted to the district and function under the supervision of the District and Sessions Judge.

In his absence from the district, full powers and responsibilities of the Collector are held by the A.D.M., who is required to carry out the duties of the Collector during this period.

Revenue District Commissioner In revenue matters the Collector falls under the control of the R.D.C., who has the power to provide him with instructions and supervision, and the authority to amend his orders. The R.D.C. is principally the

²² Their responsibilities for administering relief and implementing measures to promote food security are discussed more fully in chapter 5.

Member, Board of Revenue and is therefore responsible for effectively managing revenue administration throughout Orissa.

Subdivisional Officers (S.D.O.'s) As discussed, at subdistrict level Kalahandi is divided into three subdivisions, notably Bhawanipatna, Dharamgarh and Nawapara. A Subdivisional Officer (S.D.O.) is in charge of affairs in each subdivision, having charge over the subdivisional staff of other departments, along with Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats in the subdivision. As the Chief Revenue Officer of the subdivision he is responsible for the proper administration of the Tahasils. He also holds control and supervisory authority for the police; and acts as Estates Officer for Government property. Further, S.D.O.'s are Subdivisional Magistrates under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Separate sections within the Subdivision Office are managed by gazetted officers under the supervision of the S.D.O.

Tahasildars Kalahandi is subdivided into six tahasils for administering revenue administration. These are notably Nawapara and Khariar in Nawapara subdivision; Dharamgarh and Jayapatna in Dharamgarh subdivision; and Bhawanipatna and Lanjigarh in Bhawanipatna subdivision. One Tahasildar is in charge of each tahasil, assisted by an Additional Tahasildar. Each tahasil is subdivided into revenue circles, which are the units for collection of land revenue. One Revenue Inspector is employed to collect land revenue from villages within his circle, as well as carrying out crop cutting experiments during times of rainfall shortage to test for drought.

Block Development Officer (B.D.O.) The district is subdivided into 18 blocks, with one B.D.O. in charge of each block. The structure was originally introduced to facilitate implementation of the Community Development Programme. The B.D.O. carries responsibility for a range of tasks. These include supervising development and relief programmes, distributing and collecting loans, and overseeing law and order, local elections and other concerns.

3.4 Structure of Local Government

In the former Kalahandi State there was little system for local self-government under the Durbar Administration. As part of Central Provinces this Zamindari was governed by the Central Provinces Local Self-Government Act of 1883.²³ This was replaced by the Sambalpur Local Self-Government Act of 1939, under which Union Boards were instituted at Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Barpali, Padampur and Khariar to replace their four local boards previously existing. (Senapati, 1980: 335) Nawapara subdivision was transferred to Kalahandi on 1st. November 1949.

Local self-government was introduced in village communities in Orissa under the 1948 Orissa Gram Panchayats Act. Under this Act the elected and representative village administration, namely the Gram Panchayat, was accorded power for supervising primary and adult education, maternity and child welfare centres, and sanitation within the village. In addition to recommending the abolition of all intermediary interests between the raiyat and the state, the 1949 Report of the Land Revenue and Land Tenure Committee advocated a programme for 'deprovincialisation of land revenue', by subdividing Orissa into administrative units known as 'anchals'. The Anchal Sabha, made up of elected members from the Gram Panchayat, was designed to take charge of revenue collection, to manage the abolished zamindaris (estates), and to exercise the community's right over land. (Rath, 1977: 56)

Under the 1960 Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, Gram Panchayats were made the basic unit of administration for development work at village level. Panchayats elected members for the Panchayat Samitis at block level. The non-official elected component of Zilla Parishads were made up from Chairs of the Panchayat Samitis, alongside a number of district level officials.

²³ As mentioned, Khariar Zamindari was previously part of Raipur district in Central Provinces and was incorporated into Orissa in 1936 as Nawapara subdivision of Sambalpur district.

To execute development and welfare programmes, the Orissa State Government established a three-tier system of decentralisation between 1950 and 1960. This consisted of : elected Gram Panchayats; representative Panchayat Samitis; and Zilla Parishads. This structure was intended to provide popular participation in Government programmes.

The State system for administration of such schemes was composed of: 1. the Chief Secretary to the Government, also being Development Commissioner; 2. the Additional Development Commissioner; 3. the District Officer; 4. the Subdivisional Officer; 5. the Block Development Officer; 6. Village Level Workers.(Rath, 1977: 60)

Zilla Parishads/District Advisory Councils Zilla Parishads for Kalahandi district were established on 26th. January 1961 under the Zilla Parishad Act, 1959. These served at the top of the three-tier system for democratic decentralisation of administration and were designed to perform a range of roles:

- (1) to advise the State Government on planning and executing development works and welfare schemes;
- (2) to supervise the progress and execution of Government schemes at block level and Gram Panchayat level;
- (3) to oversee the allocation of funds for Government schemes;
- (4) to coordinate welfare schemes at all levels in the district. (Rath,1977: 60; Senapati,1980:342)

Zilla Parishads were made up of both official and non-official members. This included district level officers involved with development works, along with non-official persons including the Chairman of each Panchayat Samiti, Chairman of the Municipalities and N.A.C.'s, and President of the Central Cooperative Bank. During a number of periods since their introduction in 1961 this Zilla Parishad system has not operated in Kalahandi.

Panchayat Samitis This second tier in democratic decentralisation was established throughout Orissa in accordance with the Orissa Panchayat Samitis Act 1959. Samitis in Kalahandi were constituted on 26th. Jan. 1961. At the time of this research in 1992 there were 18 panchayat samitis, these corresponding to areas adopted by blocks established under the Community Development Programme. Each consists of official members including the Block Development Officer, representing the executive officer of the P.S.; officers from various State Departments; and non-official members including Sarpanchs of the Gram Panchayats and women, S.T. and S.C. representatives. The Chair is directly elected by Sarpanches and Panchayat members.

The role of Panchayat Samitis include the following:

- (1) supervising and administering development programmes within the block;
- (2) overseeing primary education, management of trusts and endowments entrusted by the Government, registration of births and deaths;
- (3) supervising work of Gram Panchayats within its ambit.(Senapati, 1980:344ff.)

Gram Panchayats Some Gram Panchayats were introduced in the district after the introduction of the Orissa Gram Panchayats Act of 1948. Gram Panchayat administration was extended throughout the district in 1953 and brought officially into operation under the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act of 1964. Each G.P. may be composed of one or more village. The intention of this Act has been to establish and to develop local self-government in villages and to improve facilities for their administration. (Senapati,1980: 342-344) The Gram Panchayat forms the main administrative unit for the implementation of development and relief works under the supervision of the B.D.O. It is also the primary unit of democratic decentralisation. The Sarpanch of each village is directly elected by the voters of the Gram Panchayat.

The functions of G.P.'s include:

- (1) maintaining village sanitation, supplies of clean drinking water, roads, street lights, assisting schools and implementing agricultural schemes.
- (2) providing measures for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
- (3) providing training for women in a range of activities.
- (4) providing units for feeding centres for pregnant women and pregnant mothers.(ibid:345)

Municipality and Notified Area Councils (N.A.C.'s) ²⁴ Local self-government for the principal towns in Kalahandi was accorded under the Orissa Municipal Act, 1950. Under this Act Bhawanipatna Municipal Council was established in 1951, and four other Notified Area Councils were formed in Khariar, Junagarh, Kesinga and Khariar Road.²⁵

This section has introduced the structure of administration and local government in Kalahandi, providing a background for a study of the the administration of relief and development in the district in chapter 5. The next section provides a brief overview of the history of drought and food crisis in Kalahandi.

3.5 History of Drought and Food Crisis in Kalahandi

It has not been possible to trace extensive records of the history of drought and famine in the former Kalahandi state, particularly before the mid-nineteenth century.²⁶ The 1980 Kalahandi District Gazetteer suggests that the state of Kalahandi was not badly affected by the much publicised 'Great Orissa Famine' of

²⁴ For further details of the operations and structure of N.A.C.'s in Kalahandi refer to Senapati(1980), chapter 14.

²⁵ These were established as follows: Bhawanipatna municipality(16th. April 1951); Khariar Road N.A.C. (11th. August 1964); Kesinga N.A.C. (2nd June 1965); Khariar N.A.C. (6th. August 1972) (Senapati,1980:336ff.)

²⁶ Some information regarding the history of drought and food crisis in the former state of Kalahandi may be obtained from Famine Reports of the Chattisgarh area, of which Kalahandi was a part until 1936.

1866. However untimely rainfall during this period did reduce the paddy harvest. In response, the Government opened feeding centres to provide food for those in need. The remaining shortfall in the population's food requirements was reportedly met from a good kodo crop obtained in that year.(Senapati,1980: 140)²⁷

For about three years from 1884 onwards there was partial failure of both the kharif and the rabi crop. Following this there was marked scarcity of food in 1897 due to untimely and excessive rains which damaged the crop. This crisis produced a sharp rise in commodity prices and in the cost of living. In response the Government opened relief centres and public works to provide employment to the needy, and made loans to cultivators under the Agriculturalists Loans Act. However the Gazetteer suggests that district officers had little experience at this time of dealing with famine situations, and for this reason there was considerable loss of life.(*ibid*)

The 1980 Gazetteer reports that again rains were irregular in 1899. According to the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur this led to 'complete and absolute failure of both autumn and spring harvests in 1899-1900, particularly as a result of the lack of available water retained in tanks in the district. Public works were opened to provide employment to the affected population. These focussed on building roads, irrigation tanks and earth works and on collecting ballast for the Raipur-Vizagpatnam railway line. In a number of villages doles were also distributed from kitchens opened to distribute free food. It is suggested that around 42% of the population of Chattisgarh received such food, although some were initially ambivalent about accepting such doles for fear of losing caste.(*ibid*)

Relief in some form during this crisis was provided to roughly 707,000 people, or approximately 45% of the population. The former Zamindar spent around Rs. 8,000 in maintaining relief works and relief kitchens, and provided Rs. 30,000 in loans to be used for purchasing seeds. Collection of land revenue was also suspended, this amounting to Rs. 8,50,000 for the period concerned.(*ibid*: p.141)

²⁷ See also Jagannath Dash in Nayak et al.(ed)(1991)

This crisis became known locally as Chhapan salar durbhikshya. (Mishra, 1991: 2)²⁸

Again in 1902-03 there were scarcities which were less acute. In 1908 there were shortages due to flooding and due to the early conclusion of the monsoon. (Senapati, 1980:141; Dash, 1991:57) A more severe 'famine' was experienced in 1919 in the former Kalahandi state and in Khariar. This was the result of shortages of rainfall from September onwards (after rains had been good upto that point). The majority of crops including mandia, rasi, mung, biri and kandol were seriously affected, with only early paddy being reasonably successful.²⁹ The situation was exacerbated by rapid increases in foodgrain prices, and by profiteering and unauthorised movement of commodities. The main burden of these trends was reportedly met by poorer sections of the community. The number who died during this crisis was also increased by an outbreak of a virulent form of cholera, alongside suffering created by malnutrition and an epidemic of influenza. (ibid)

After drought conditions brought scarcities in 1922-23, 1925-26, and in 1929-30, few instances of severe shortage were reported until drought again affected various parts of the district in 1954-55, including the whole of Nawapara sub-division. Early season rains were inadequate, preventing the paddy crop from successfully germinating, and hindering reploughing and transplantation. For this reason, although rains were more copious in September, yields were greatly reduced. Because late ploughing and transplantation could not be carried out in sufficient time, late paddy crops were also badly affected. Throughout the Nawapara subdivision crop loss was more than 50%, whilst in Dharamgarh subdivision and in other pockets losses were higher still. (Senapati, 1980:142)

²⁸ Mishra suggests that the memory of this crisis has become incorporated into daily language in some parts of Kalahandi. He states that if a child begs the mother for food, often the mother may reply 'Why are you hankering like a drought-stricken of Chhapan sal'. (Mishra, 1991: 2).

²⁹ This drought reportedly worsened the already poor economic condition of many in the district in the wake of World War One. (Senapati, 1980:141)

During this crisis the State Government reportedly made extensive interventions to relieve the suffering of the affected population. In addition to a comprehensive programme of relief works, eleven midday meal centres were opened in the district. These were attended by upto 1000 children each day. In attempts to compensate for loss of crops, cultivators were encouraged to grow a second crop through a programme of loans in both cash and kind. The state also suspended collection of revenue, as recommended by successive relief codes (as discussed further in chapter 5 of this thesis).

The district was particularly severely hit by drought in 1965-66. The Nawapara subdivision was affected particularly badly. Rains during the previous year virtually failed completely, and it was not until the arrival of the next monsoon that there was any replenishment of the dramatically affected water supply, last boosted during the monsoon of 1964. This drought reportedly led to the loss of nearly three-quarters of total crop production throughout the district as a whole. (Senapati, 1980: 142)

One person in Khariar recounted that from the early morning there used to be long queues to draw from a small pool of water which remained at the bottom of a nearby well.³⁰ This crisis is deeply embedded in the minds of many local people. Firstly, for many this crisis is still in living memory. Secondly, during this period many were forced into distress sales of land and other productive assets to withstand the immediate effects of crisis. For this reason their ability to cultivate or to generate purchasing power was often markedly impaired after the crisis had subsided. Indeed as discussed further in chapter 4, a range of problems faced by many of those most vulnerable to food insecurity in the district may be attributed to land alienation, asset loss, indebtedness, and other factors deriving from this period.

It is reported that the state initiated a range of measures to mitigate the affects of this drought. Labour intensive works and test relief works were launched even in remote pockets in the district. These provided employment to 106, 722

³⁰ Name supplied, interview, Khariar, March 1992.

persons. In 1965-66 and 1966-67 a total Rs. 57,12,000 was spent on employment generation schemes and test relief. Rs.1,37,01,300 was also provided in loans under the Agriculturalist Loan Act and Land Improvement Loan Act. In 228 places, centres were opened to provide gratuitous relief. Food kitchens distributing free food were maintained after July 1966 by the Government of Orissa and by a range of voluntary organisations (ibid).

Again in 1974-75 and in 1976-77 the district was affected by rainfall shortages of lesser severity. The Kalahandi District Gazetteer also reports that the district was hit by heavy flooding between the 9th. and the 13th. September 1977. Heavy rains caused extensive damage, with many of Kalahandi's rivers, including the Tel, the Sundar and their tributaries, in flood. On the 12th. September 275mm. of rain fell in a single day in the Bhawanipatna region, this being more than the 220.9mm. normally expected for the whole month of September, and roughly one fifth of the standard annual rainfall. Twenty people were killed during this flooding, which affected a total 389 villages over an area of 69,606 hectares. and a total population of 1.62 lakh (162,000). This flooding also led to crop loss over an area of 11,828 hectares. Crop damage in value terms was calculated to be Rs.104.16 lakh.

In 1979-80, a reported 211 gram panchayats of Kalahandi were drought affected. In subsequent years drought affected 147 gram panchayats in 1982-83, 25 in 1984, and 156 in 1984. Following a good crop in 1985-86, drought again occurred in the district during the 3 subsequent years. This affected 139 gram panchayats in 1986-87; 128 in 1987-88; and 139 in 1988-89. (Dash,1991:57) In 1990 rains were untimely or excessive, leading to flooding and severe crop damage. Only in 1991 did the district experience its first decent crop in 5 years.

A more comprehensive discussion of drought and food insecurity between 1985 and 1991 is provided in chapter 6 of this thesis. The next chapter gives a more detailed analysis of the roots of food insecurity faced by sections of the population in some parts of Kalahandi.

Chapter 4: The Roots of Food Insecurity in Kalahandi

It has been argued in chapter 2 that a variety of different processes may lead to situations of food insecurity. Those which have sometimes been termed 'natural factors' (such as drought, earthquakes, pest damage, epidemics) may trigger or catalyse a sequence of events which lead to food crisis. However in themselves these are not sufficient to explain why one set of conditions may lead to such a crisis in one society, whilst another society (where for example food reserves may be greater, food may be distributed more equitably, or people are better remunerated for the sale or produce of their labour power) may be able to cope with these environmental variations such that a crisis does not occur.

Indeed famines and food crises are also affected by human action and may be prevented or mitigated by timely interventions or changes in human behaviour. In many situations food crises are 'man made' or are the result of social, political, economic or environmental factors which are influenced by mankind. For example, many pockets in Kalahandi and sections of its population have become more vulnerable as a result of factors such as changes in land tenure, the system of settlements introduced during the colonial period¹, or due to the way they have been incorporated into the market structure.

Therefore in analysing the problem of food insecurity in Kalahandi and the reasons why certain regions and certain sections of the population are more vulnerable than others, it is necessary to examine the nature of the interrelationship between these 'natural' and 'human' factors (to use the terminology used above) in an historical context, identifying how these factors affect the ability of a particular society or group to cope with the stresses placed upon them. This must include an examination of the relationship between physical environment and patterns of social production and

¹ These have been discussed in further detail in chapter 3.

reproduction in the community concerned. Writing in the context of African food shortages in the 1970's Shenton and Watts have argued:

'... this present crisis (cannot) be analysed by recourse to the weather, nor do we believe that it can be understood by a retreat into Malthusian political economy. Hunger is not a natural phenomenon, it is a social one. To the extent that there is a link between environmental fluctuations and famine it is clearly mediated by the development of the means and relations of production of a given society. Taken together, these may ameliorate or amplify the affects of the drought or other disturbance of the human environment'.(1979:54)

Locating the problem in the above framework, the forthcoming chapter attempts to problematise the issue of food security/insecurity in Kalahandi. Where appropriate this draws upon comparative material collected during fieldwork carried out in other areas during this study. These areas particularly include: the Kashipur region of Koraput district, bordering Kalahandi's Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur blocks (which was previously a part of Kalahandi, as discussed in chapter 3); Sambalpur district in Orissa; drought-prone Rayalseema region in Andhra Pradesh; the better irrigated and more agriculturally developed Guntur region of Andhra Pradesh; and Cuttack and Puri districts in coastal Orissa. These comparative insights, often drawing on observational or indicative data, are included to enable the reader to more easily situate the nature and extent of problems of food insecurity in Kalahandi.

4.1 Contextualising the Problem

This study attempts to examine a number of factors in analysing the roots of food insecurity in Kalahandi:

- (1) the range of variables, as introduced in a general context in chapter 2, which interrelate to create the conditions for food insecurity in Kalahandi;
- (2) the degree to which problems of this nature are specific to Kalahandi, or whether these apply more widely in other areas;
- (3) variations in the nature of food insecurity from region to region within Kalahandi;

(4) variations in how different sections of the Kalahandi population are vulnerable to food insecurity in terms of gender, age, caste/tribe, asset ownership, the region in which they live (as per (3) above) and other forms of social differentiation.

Initial research for this study, and an initial pilot study carried out in three villages in Kalahandi's Khariar, Sinapali and Boden blocks, suggest that the following set of variables may be central in explaining the nature of the food security problem in the district and the similarities and differences which this shares with other areas.

(1) Kalahandi possesses an agriculturally based economy on which a large section of the district's population relies to provide both food and employment.

(2) Levels of agricultural development remain low in many areas, with little use of H.Y.V. seed varieties, fertilisers, pesticides, mechanisation and other 'Green Revolution' techniques.

(3) Irrigation represents an important enabling factor for agricultural development and for stable agricultural production. Due to lack of suitable irrigation facilities the success of the harvest in many areas depends heavily on the monsoon arriving at the appropriate time and in adequate quantity. For this reason there is a high degree of risk attached to agricultural production in some regions and a high incidence of crop failure.

(4) Outside of agriculture there is a major shortage of alternative opportunities for employment. Industrialisation in the district has been negligible. Few jobs have been created in sectors such as mining for local people. Instead, when available, these have gone primarily to outsiders.

(4) The set of factors discussed above has contributed to the significant problems faced by sections of the district's population in securing necessary access to food. Referring to the theoretical analysis in chapter 2, in Sen's terms this may contribute to 'entitlement' shortfalls or 'entitlement' failures:

(a) for those with access to land, the component of their entitlement which they are able

to meet from their own production is limited by reduced production in the context of repeated years of drought and crop failure;

(b) following from (a), for those cultivators who are able to produce surplus which they are able to sell, reductions in their harvest due to regular drought and crop failure has reduced the purchasing power which they may generate from sale of this produce, and therefore the component of their entitlement which they can meet from market purchases.

(c) for those who are landless, or with insufficient land to meet household requirement from their own production, regular drought and crop failure has reduced the availability of agricultural employment. This forms the principal source of employment in the district. This trend has therefore undermined the component of their food entitlement which they are able to meet from market purchases (from private or Government-run outlets) with purchasing power generated from waged employment. This represents the principal component of their entitlement for large numbers in the district who are landless or own only small amounts of (often low fertility) land.

(5) People's vulnerability is influenced by the level and nature of their participation in the market; and by the way that market operations are structured in the area concerned.

(6) High levels of illiteracy and numeracy which prevail in Kalahandi, and limited access to satisfactory education facilities, leaves many highly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, particularly through market mechanisms. Lack of adequate training facilities also limits people's suitability for jobs requiring higher levels of education and technical skills. This factor reinforces the dependence of much of the population on the agricultural sector, and limits alternative sources for generating purchasing power.

(7) Linked with (6), people's ability to maintain food security is frequently impaired by poor health, and the reduced efficiency of their body's immune system caused by

inadequate nutrition. This problem is reinforced by poor access to health services and particularly primary health care.

(8) Problems of food insecurity faced by sections of the population in Kalahandi must be linked to the wider social, political and economic context in which the district lies, and the pattern of historical development which has shaped these factors. This must be related to the pattern of administration and rule in the former Kalahandi state and Khariar Zamindari the colonial rule of the British. Since independence this problem must also be related to the continued outflow of resources such as timber and minerals from the district, and the minimal control which large sections of the Kalahandi problem have over key economic and political resources and decision making.

(10) Faced with such a set of problems, those adversely affected have frequently implemented a range of different 'coping mechanisms' or survival strategies' to reduce their vulnerability and to see them through periods of hardship. These may include the following :

(a) making use of social support mechanisms which may exist in the particular village or community concerned. Such relations of co-operation, reciprocity and mutual support may protect those most vulnerable in times of need through assistance given by neighbours or relatives

(b) Making use of traditional and indigenous production methods which have been devised by 'trial and error over periods of centuries' and are therefore well adapted to local conditions. In Kalahandi these 'technical arrangements' may provide added security against the arid, drought prone conditions which prevail here.

(c) Reductions in consumption and changed consumption patterns.

(d) Drawing upon forest produce and other wild foods.

(e) Use of stores of food and other produce, saved during more prosperous times and used up during times of shortage.

(f) Sale of jewellery, ornaments and other household items which are not essential for

work or production.

(g) Distress sale of land and other productive assets.

(h) Borrowing - use of loans and credit.

(i) Migration to other regions.

(j) Looting, rioting and other forms of violent or non-violent collective protest against hunger and impoverishment.

(k) In Kalahandi and other regions it is sometimes argued that families resort to selling their children as such a survival strategy.

It should be noted that some of these coping mechanisms may be used primarily during periods of crisis and food insecurity. However others may represent a standard part of the daily lives of persons within the community concerned, regularly used in meeting food needs and in maintaining economic wellbeing.

It must also be emphasised that these actions are not implemented arbitrarily. Some of these strategies have higher long-term cost than others in terms of their effect on people's lifestyles and future ability to maintain access to food. It appears likely that people tend to first implement strategies with relatively low long-term cost such as drawing on mutual support mechanisms, reducing and changing consumption patterns, using up stores, selling 'disposable' assets, and making use of forest produce and other wild foods. When these strategies are no longer available, or no longer effective, it seems likely that people may resort to coping mechanisms with a more severe long-term effect on their future ability to produce food or to generate income. These may include mortgage or sale of land and other crucial productive assets.

The range of variables listed above represent a broad set of factors which may be seen to affect the nature of the problem of food security in Kalahandi. Initially it may appear that a number of these may be more closely related to the broader issue of

'development' than directly to the issue of food security. However as discussed in chapter 2, these variables may directly influence people's ability engage in activities (own production, waged labour, handicrafts, collecting forest produce and other 'wild foods') which may enable them to maintain access to food. In consequence the issues of 'development' and food security are in many respects crucially interrelated.

This section has attempted to apply the theoretical analysis provided in chapter 2 more specifically to the Kalahandi context. The framework developed in this section will be adopted in the remainder of this chapter to analyse data and indicative evidence collected during fieldwork in Kalahandi.

4.2 Agricultural Production

Nature of Kalahandi's Agriculturally Based Economy The nature of the food security problem in Kalahandi is inextricably linked to the key role which agriculture plays in the district's economy. As can be seen from Figure 3.1, more than 80% of the working population of the district are employed in agriculture, either as cultivators or agricultural labourers. This factor bears direct relevance, for a number of reasons, to the ability of person's living in Kalahandi to maintain food security.

Firstly, for those with access to land, either through ownership or common property rights, this is a determinant of the component of their food entitlement which they are able to meet from their own production.

Secondly, for many people in the district this factor is a crucial determinant of their ability to generate purchasing power which can be used to buy food. This is the case because:

(a) for those who are landless, or who have access to insufficient land to meet their consumption requirements from their own production, agriculture provides the

principal source of employment, and the principal means to generate the purchasing power they require to buy food from market or Government-run outlets

(b) For those able to generate a surplus from their own production, sale of crops and other produce may provide an additional source of purchasing power which may be used to buy food and other commodities.

Agriculture in the district takes a variety of forms. On the plains and flatter lands settled cultivation predominates. In a number places various forms of agricultural development have been introduced, with increased use of new seed varieties, fertilisers and pesticides. Since irrigation tends to be a prerequisite for efficient use of these inputs, such developments have been more prevalent in better irrigated areas such as the Tel basin region. However many areas remain largely unirrigated, and therefore almost entirely monsoon dependent. In these places levels of agricultural development remain generally low, especially in arid or hilly regions. In the latter shifting cultivation, or podu, is common, particularly amongst adivasis (tribals).

The principal cropping season in Kalahandi runs from the arrival of the monsoon in June until harvesting, generally between October and December (depending upon crop type and seed variety used). As is evidenced in Table Fig.4.1 and 4.2, cereals and particularly paddy, represent by far the dominant crop type grown, both in terms of area sown and production during this kharif season.

A second cropping season, known as rabi, runs during the winter months from November through to March. Owing to the lack of irrigation in many areas in the district, this season is of lesser importance. It can be seen from the figs 4.1 and 4.2 that area sown and levels of production during this rabi season are well below those during kharif. Further, it can be seen from fig. 4.1 that crops with lower water requirement such as pulses and oilseeds are grown more widely during this season.

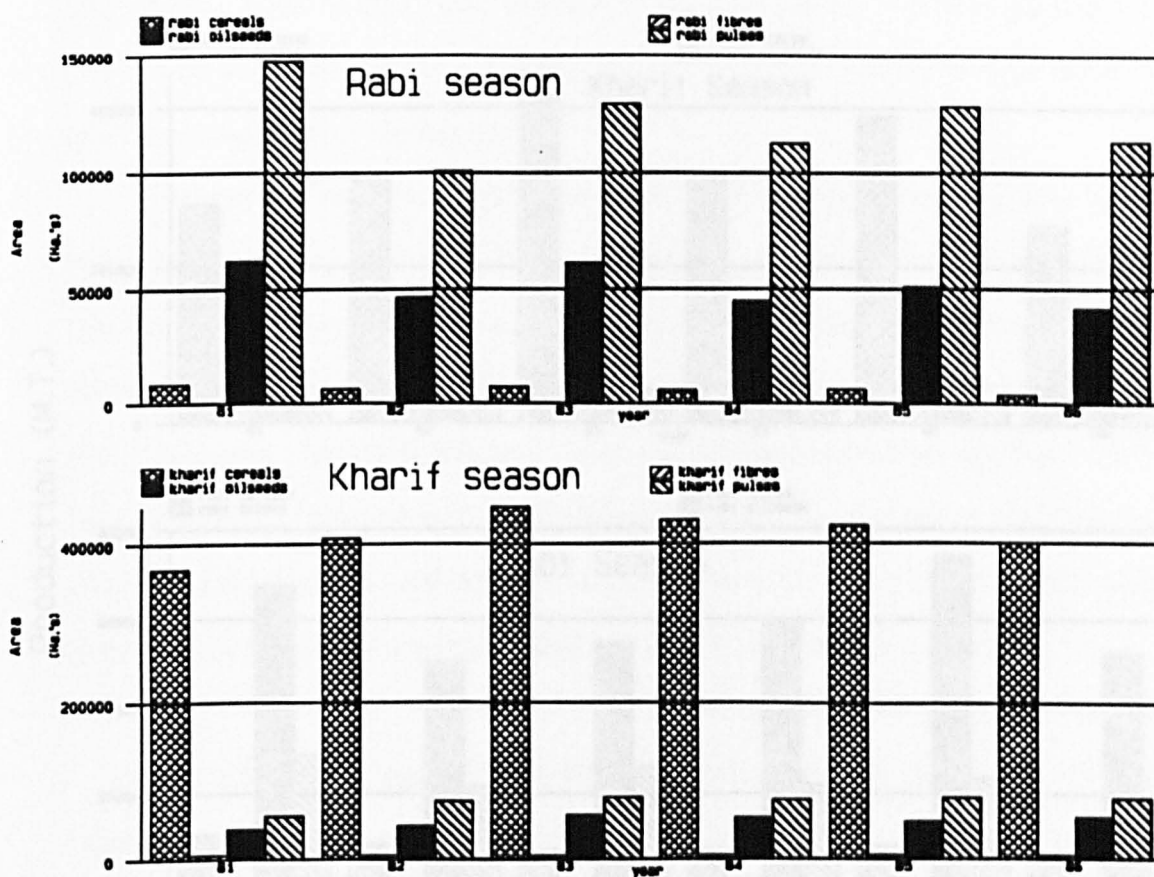


Fig. 4.1

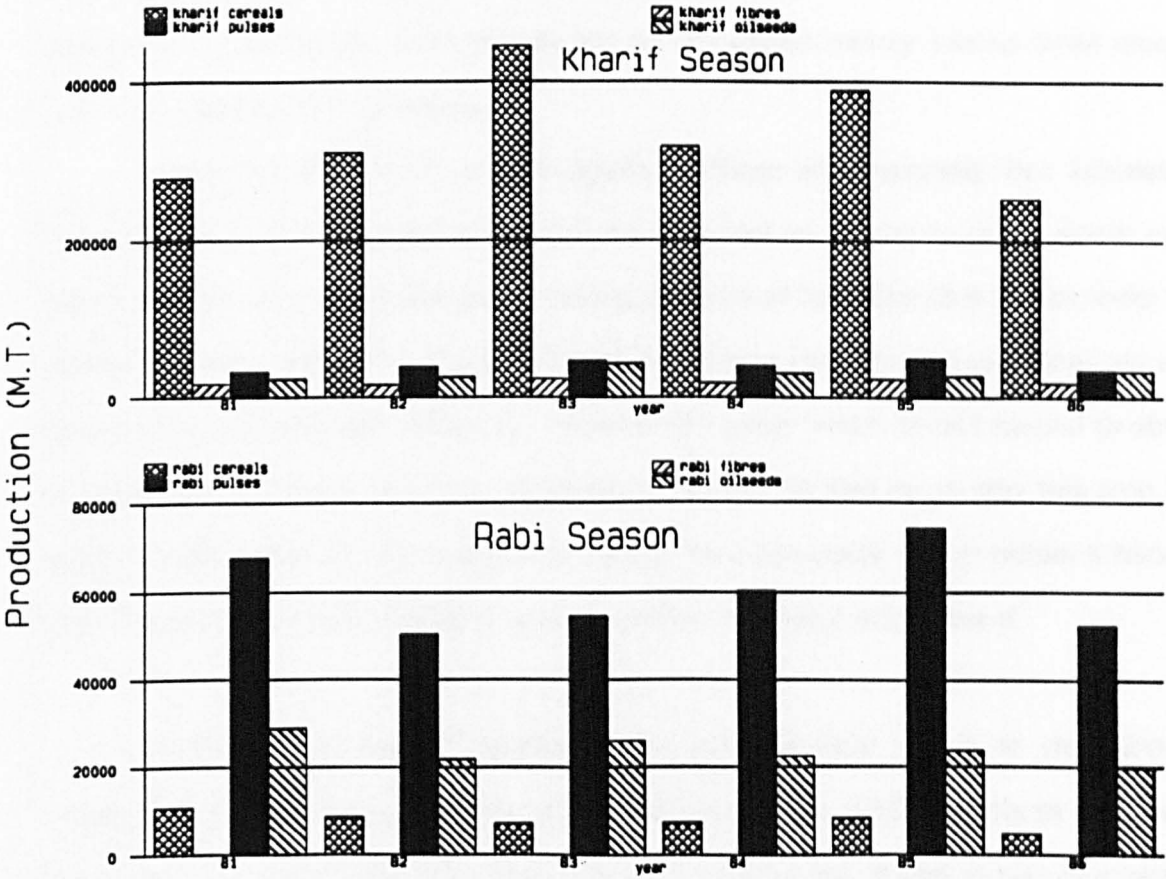


Fig. 4.2

Owing to lack of water availability many cultivators suggested that they do not bother to cultivate their land during the r a b i season. This was particularly the case for farmers owning high lying land. In a number of arid blocks, including Boden, Sinapali, and Khariar, streams and other sources of surface water which may provide possible sources of irrigation are often already dry by November, merely two to three months after the completion of the monsoon.

Indeed for this reason in Chindaguda, a village approximately five kilometres from Khariar, a number of farmers stated that they did not bother to sow a winter crop. One h a r i j a n cultivator interviewed, owning one acre of land allocated to him under the ceiling surplus programme, suggested that in previous years he had experimented with growing winter channa (chickpea). However the yields which he had tended to obtain from this crop had been very poor. Consequently he had decided not to sow this crop this winter, feeling that he was unlikely to recoup his input costs and to obtain a harvest large enough to warrant the labour time and effort necessary to produce it.

As mentioned, paddy represents the principal crop grown in the district. Similarly, rice represents a central component of the diet of many of those living here. H a r i j a n agricultural labourers interviewed in Chinduguda tended to take one meal of rice in the early morning before going to the fields. If sufficient rice was available, they would then take another meal of cooked rice in the middle of the day which their wives brought to them in the fields. In the evening they would then again eat cooked rice or water rice (pokhal). These persons reported that they rarely consumed vegetables, fruits and other foodstuffs, arguing that these were limited in availability and that they lacked the purchasing power to buy them regularly. In Chindaguda there was a reported slight improvement in access to vegetables in past months, since these were being grown on a small scale on land which was newly irrigated with water from a number of recently built wells. However this limited development was inadequate to provide a

significantly improved nutritional balance for many in the village.²

A number of poorer families tended to consume ragi, mandia and other so called 'coarse grains', rather than rice (or in addition to rice), as their staple foodgrain.³ Foods collected from the forest (mahua fruit, roots, berries and other forms of 'wild foods') frequently also represent an important component of the consumption pattern of these families. This is particularly the case for adivasi households.

Ragi and other 'coarse grains' are commonly grown for personal consumption rather than for sale. It is not uncommon for ragi to be grown alongside other produce such as paddy, pulses and vegetables, and for the latter to be sold to generate additional purchasing power, whilst this ragi is used to meet a large share of personal consumption needs. Much of these sales take place at daily or weekly hats (markets).

Principle Land Types Varieties of crops grown, and the yields produced for each crop, are heavily dependent upon the type and quality of land cultivated. Land utilised under settled forms of cultivation has been categorised into three varieties for purposes of assessing land revenue:

1. bahal land - low lying land
2. berana - medium lying land
3. att land - high lying land.

The 5.15 lakh hectares cultivable area in Kalahandi is divided between these land types as follows:

² In consequence the diet of poorer sections in this region frequently lacked an adequate balance.

³ However some of these families may eat rice on festival occasions, marriages and other special days, or when they could otherwise afford it.

Fig.4.3

Land type	Area	Percentage area
high land (att)	2.81 lakh hectares	54.5
medium land (berana)	1.34 lakh hectares	26.1
low land (bahal)	1.00 lakh hectares	19.4
total	5.15 lakh hectares	100.0

Source: Report of the District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 30.5.90

The breakdown of land types for blocks in the Nawapara Subdivision is detailed below:

Fig.4.4

Block	High land (att) (Ha.'s)	Medium land (berana) (Ha's)	Low land (bahal) (Ha.'s)	Total (Ha.'s)
Khariar	12345	9305	6700	28300
Sinapali	14607	11170	3663	29640
Boden	11710	12420	3670	27800
Komna	26280	17820	5000	49100
Nawapara	26245	18975	9060	54280
	91187 (48.2%)	69690 (36.8%)	28293 (15.0%)	189170 (100.0%)

Source: Agricultural Officer, Kalahandi Agricultural District, Khariar.

Similarly, the breakdown for paddy land in Nawapara Subdivision is as follows:

Fig.4.5

Block	High land (att) (Ha.'s)	Medium land (berana) (Ha's)	Low land (bahal) (Ha.'s)	Total (Ha.'s)
Khariar	2100	3100	6700	11900
Sinapali	5387	4100	3663	13350
Boden	3430	3400	3670	10500
Komna	15360	10200	5000	30560
Nawapara	11540	7200	9060	27800
	37807 (40.2%)	28000 (29.8%)	28293 (30.0%)	94100 (100.0)

Source: Agricultural Officer, Kalahandi Agricultural District, Khariar.

Of these three land types, bahal land tends to be of the highest quality since its low lying nature means that water availability is generally greater than for higher lying land. Berana land tends to be less fertile, whilst the quality of att land is often very poor. It can be noted in the Figs. 4.4 and 4.5 and that all low lying bahal land in the 5 blocks is classified as paddy land. However these figures indicate that a lower percentage of berana (40.2%) and particularly att (41.4%) is classified as suitable for paddy cultivation.⁴

It may be noted from fig.4.3 that more than half the total cultivable land area in Kalahandi falls into the less fertile att category (54.5%). Similarly fig.4.4 indicates that in Nawapara, Boden, Sinapali, Khariar and Komna districts, att land forms the largest percentage of total cultivable land and of paddy land (48.2% att, 40.2% att respectively). In contrast the percentage of most fertile, and least arid, bahal land in Kalahandi represents only 19.4% of total cultivable area. In the above five districts, only 15% cultivable land falls into the bahal category.⁵

Long maturing varieties of paddy are frequently used on this greener, better quality bahal land. However on higher land sufficient water is rarely available for a long enough period after the monsoon to allow long maturing paddy varieties to be successfully cultivated. For this reason more rapidly maturing varieties are necessary if paddy is to be grown. In the Nawapara subdivision a range of rapidly maturing varieties are used by some farmers. These include Heera, Kalyani, Pathara, Kaling-III and Parijata.⁶ Owing to the problems of growing paddy on this arid soil, coarser more drought resistant crops such as ragi, pulses and oilseeds are also used more widely on

⁴ As mentioned, many cultivators interviewed in the district, particularly in Sinapali, Boden and Khariar blocks, suggested that they did not bother to cultivate att land at all since the crop obtained on such dry and infertile soil was often very poor and there was high risk of crop failure

⁵ However notably 30% of area sown under highly water dependent paddy was sown on bahal land. Whilst the above figures (fig.4.5) indicate that 40.2% of paddy cultivated in the Khariar, Boden, Sinapali, Nawapara, Komna region was sown on att land, evidence from interviews taken in this region suggest that crop loss on this area sown is likely to be high.

⁶ Source: Agricultural Officer, Khariar Agricultural District.

higher lying land.⁷

Inequalities in access to better quality land are an important variable influencing levels of vulnerability amongst sections of the cultivating population in the district. Frequently more fertile, low lying bahal land is concentrated amongst more affluent farmers with larger holdings; whilst small and marginal cultivators have access only to a small area of higher att or berana land. This factor commonly enables the former to achieve better harvests than poorer cultivators, both due to their larger holdings, and because their land is more fertile and has better water coverage.

This problem is exacerbated because land in many parts of Kalahandi has not been levelled to ensure that water is evenly distributed between fields. In consequence water frequently tends to collect in low lying fields, leaving higher land with insufficient coverage to produce paddy and other crops with high water requirements.

Monsoon Dependence For the set of reasons described above, the central importance of the monsoon dependent nature of Kalahandi's agriculturally based economy in influencing the ability of many people living in the district to maintain food security should be emphasised. From 5.15 lakh hectares of land cultivated in the district, only 70,000 hectares receive irrigation (less than 14%)⁸ It may be noted from fig. 4.6 that the ratio of irrigation potential to gross cropped area is the lowest for any district in Orissa. This lack of irrigation limits many farmers to producing only one crop per year, this being cultivated during the kharif season after the arrival of the monsoon in mid-June.

Such a situation limits levels of production and employment which agriculture can provide. It also presents cultivators with the constant risk of crop failure. One farmer owning 10 acres of land near to Khariar suggested that he felt a plot of this size to be the smallest holding on which production was economically viable in the arid

⁷ These include groundnut, arhar, mung and biri, paddy and arhar mixed crop, arhar and groundnut mixed, arhar and mung or biri. (Agricultural Officer, Kalahandi Agricultural District).

⁸ Chairman of the Planning and Development Office, Bhawanipatna, interviewed 4/4/92.

Fig.4.6 Sourcewise Irrigation Potential by District in Orissa (000's hectares)

District	major / medium		minor (flow)		minor (lift)		other		Total	Total as percent gross cropped area
	kharif	rabi	kharif	rabi	kharif	rabi	kharif	rabi		
Balasore	86.42	18.18	7.52	3.37	42.07	25.24	27.15	27.15	237.10	37.2
Bolangir	52.39	21.65	15.95	2.33	7.06	4.24	44.25	44.25	192.12	30.0
Cuttack	196.72	106.08	17.30	4.91	65.03	39.02	28.42	28.42	485.90	40.9
Dhenkenal	20.16	10.05	32.86	5.21	13.66	8.20	38.73	38.73	167.60	25.7
Ganjam	102.05	5.68	90.43	9.78	19.33	11.60	24.34	17.80	281.01	33.2
Kalahandi	16.58	4.20	24.75	6.03	9.72	5.83	16.65	9.71	93.47	12.3
Keonjhar	23.64	2.39	18.69	3.30	10.81	6.49	8.60	8.60	82.52	19.6
Koraput	42.19	17.75	28.09	5.94	20.16	12.10	20.87	15.42	162.52	15.4
Mayurbhanj	25.62	8.57	33.47	3.46	12.07	7.24	25.37	25.37	141.17	25.8
Phulbani	22.26	3.22	16.65	3.84	6.08	3.65	5.59	5.59	66.88	18.7
Puri	168.58	114.55	29.55	4.12	12.10	7.26	34.59	34.59	405.34	54.3
Sambalpur	126.56	85.76	32.70	4.33	12.86	7.71	35.97	35.97	341.86	38.0
Sundargarh	7.88	4.28	20.57	3.26	8.28	4.97	20.83	13.47	83.54	20.2

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991 and personal calculations

Boden, Sinapali and Khariar blocks. This would at least enable a farmer to grow a small range of crops, including more drought resistant varieties which may yield some harvest in a dry year if other crops failed.⁹ With less than 10 acres he argued that in a bad year it was likely that crop failure may be total.

Indeed a number of persons suggested that after repeated years of drought, flood and crop failure, even farmers with plots of 10 acres are frequently severely impoverished in Kalahandi. The cycle of social deprivation to which these factors have contributed has constantly exacerbated the difficulties which people in the district face in maintaining food security, as a result of uncertainties in their production and difficulties in generating purchasing power.

The importance of this factor may be better placed in context if comparison is made with conditions for agricultural production in the Guntur region of Andhra Pradesh. Here the wider availability of irrigation facilities, utilising water from the Krishna and Godaveri rivers, reduces the vulnerability of agricultural production to the vagaries of the monsoon. In a village roughly 5km. from Mangalagiri¹⁰, farmers interviewed suggested that from plots of three or four acres in size they were able to produce two or more crops of paddy each year, along with six months of vegetables and other items. It is evident that from these plots farmers were frequently able to secure a better and more regular harvest, and more stable income, than farmers owning ten acres or greater in Kalahandi.

Agricultural Development and Land Improvement Such comparisons with the Guntur region of Andhra Pradesh highlight the low levels of agricultural development which have been introduced in many parts of Kalahandi. With the principal exception of parts of the Tel basin region, agriculture in the region is often still practised using seed

⁹ Indeed it was suggested that a plot of 10 acres may be sufficiently large to enable a crop to be successfully harvested on a least one part of the plot. (Name supplied, interview Khariar, March 1992)

¹⁰ A town lying between Guntur and Vijaywada.

Fig.4.7 Consumption of Fertilisers and No. of Tractors by district in Orissa

District	Gross cropped area (including fruits) (000's has.)	Fertiliser consumption (000 M.T.)	Fertiliser consumption per hectare cultivated (000 M.T / ha.)	No. of tractors in district	No. of tractors per million hectares cultivated
Balasore	637	16.58	26.30	5	7.85
Bolangir	640	12.07	18.86	107	167.19
Cuttack	1187	34.39	28.97	52	43.81
Dhenkanal	653	5.91	9.05	10	15.31
Ganjam	847	30.56	36.08	95	112.16
Kalahandi	762	3.24	4.25	181	237.53
Keonjhar	421	4.33	10.29	6	14.25
Koraput	1058	11.01	10.41	191	180.53
Mayurbhanj	547	5.44	9.95	31	86.59
Phulbani	358	2.00	5.59	15	41.90
Puri	746	19.81	26.55	73	97.86
Sambalpur	899	49.23	54.76	392	436.04
Sundargarh	414	7.37	17.80	30	72.46

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991 and personal calculations

varieties and techniques which have been used for decades.

It may be noted from figure 4.6 that irrigation potential per unit area cultivated in Kalahandi is the lowest for any district in Orissa. Figure 4.7 similarly demonstrates that use of fertiliser per unit cultivated area in Kalahandi is lower than for any other district in the State. Use of tractors in Kalahandi was by comparison high by Orissa standards. However it must be recognised that use of this machinery is concentrated heavily amongst larger landholders, particular in the central Tel basin region of the district.

In contrast, in Guntur use of HYV seeds, pesticides, fertilisers and other forms of agricultural development is more widely evident. Introduction of these factors has been facilitated by the wider availability of irrigation potential in the region. Further, there is considerable enthusiasm, even amongst farmers owning only several acres, to make use of such inputs. Many of those interviewed bemoaned the failure of the Government to make these more widely available at cheaper subsidised rates.¹¹

In a number of other regions extension of irrigation and 'modern' agricultural practices has produced significant improvements in yields. For example, in parts of Sambalpur and Bolangir districts of Orissa which receive irrigation water from the Hirakud system, a Government grain procurement agent interviewed in Kalahandi argued that paddy yields are sometimes as high as 25 or 30 quintals per hectare, whilst they have remained as low as 10 quintals per hectare in Kalahandi. (see figs.4.8 to 4.16) This may also be compared with the Guntur region, where extension of irrigation and other agricultural developments have in many instances enabled farmers to annually cultivate two or more paddy crops, and a range of vegetables and other crops. Whilst this factor *per se* has not reduced the vulnerability of all inhabitants of these regions¹²,

¹¹ Indeed after rapidly rising wage rates which these farmers suggested they had to pay to agricultural workers (see further in section 4.4), they stated that the failure of the Government to provide adequate incentives and grants in this area was one of the principal barriers preventing them increasing their production and profits further.

¹² For many of those displaced when the Hirakud dam was constructed in Orissa's Sambalpur district levels of food insecurity have increased. Further whilst production of foodgrains may have increased in the region, for reasons discussed in chapter 2 this does not ensure that all members of the population of the region necessarily have

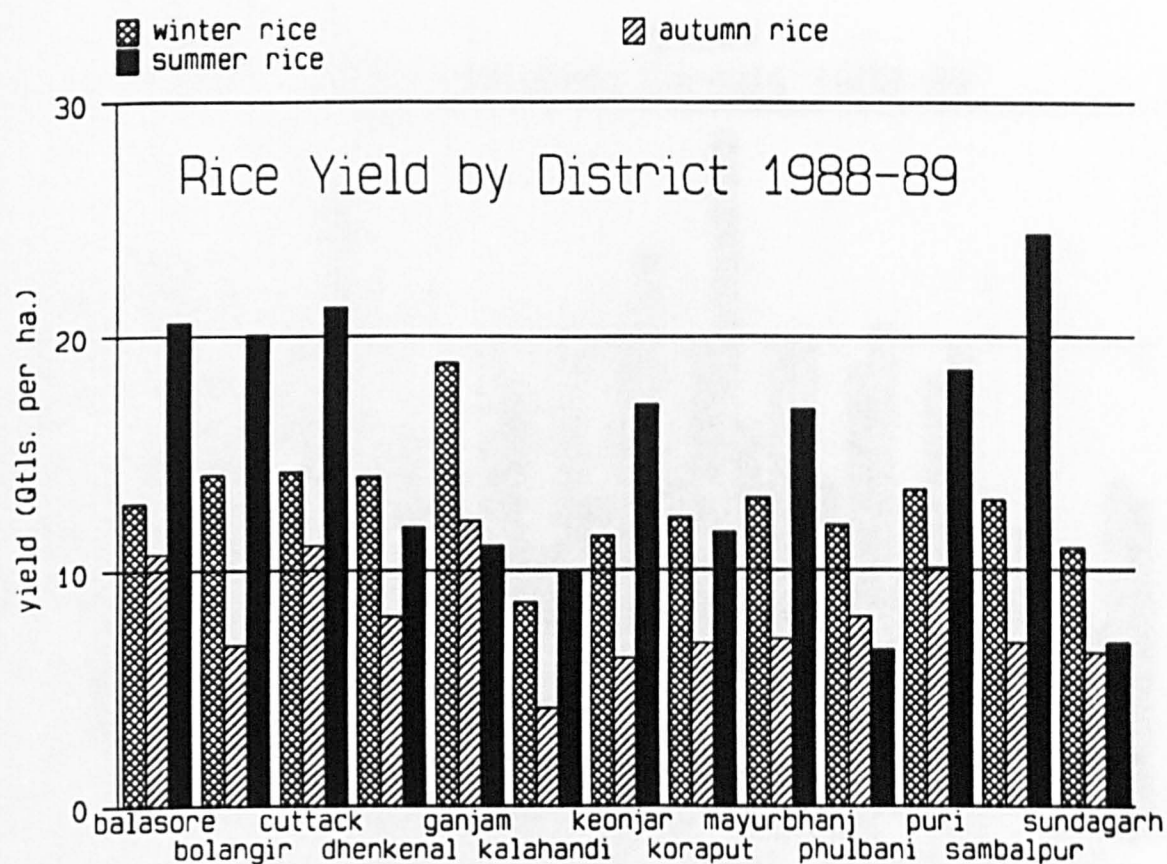


Fig. 4.8

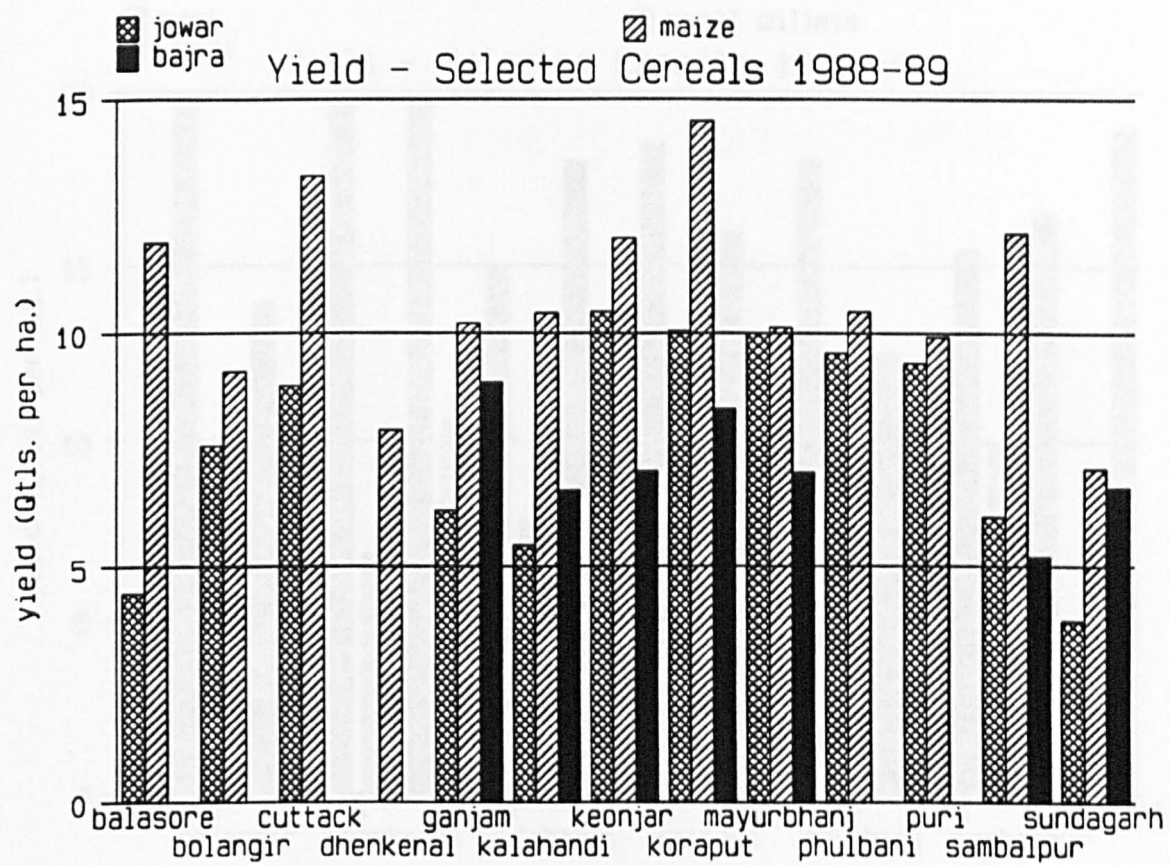


Fig. 4.9

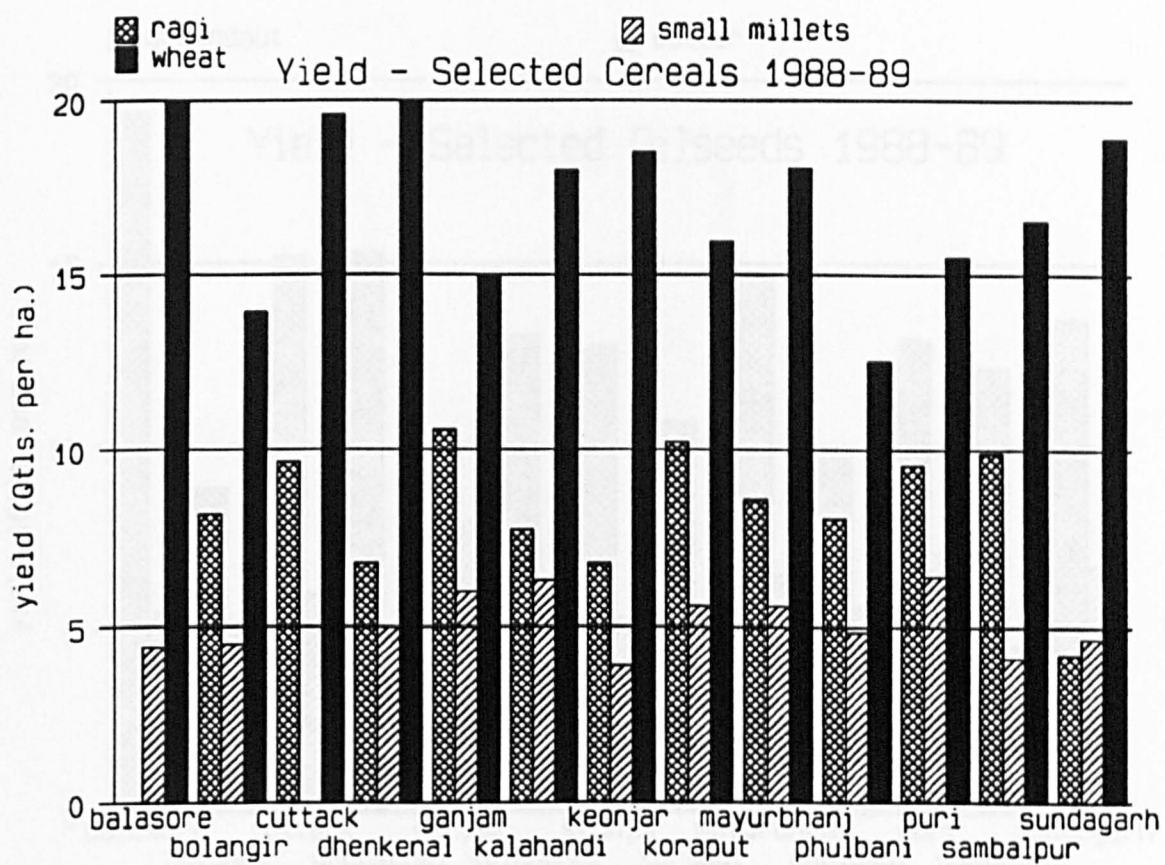


Fig. 4.10

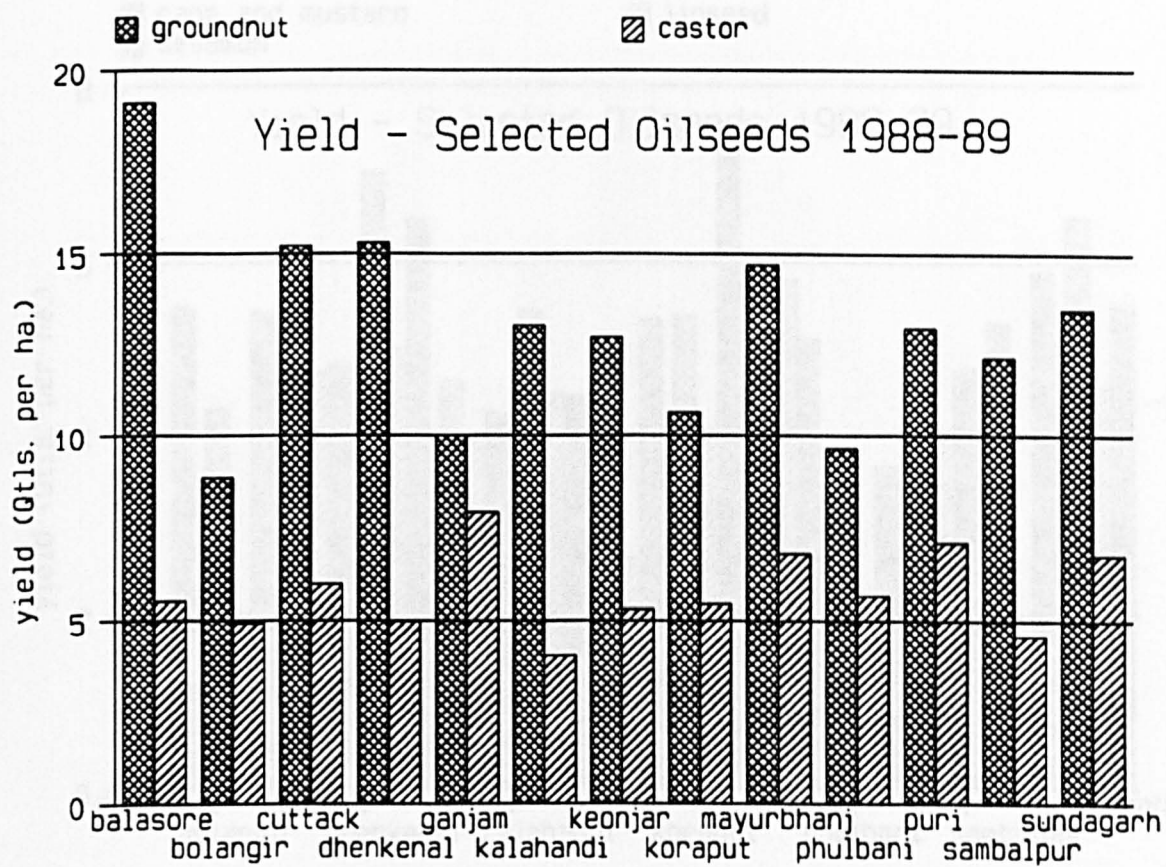


Fig. 4.11

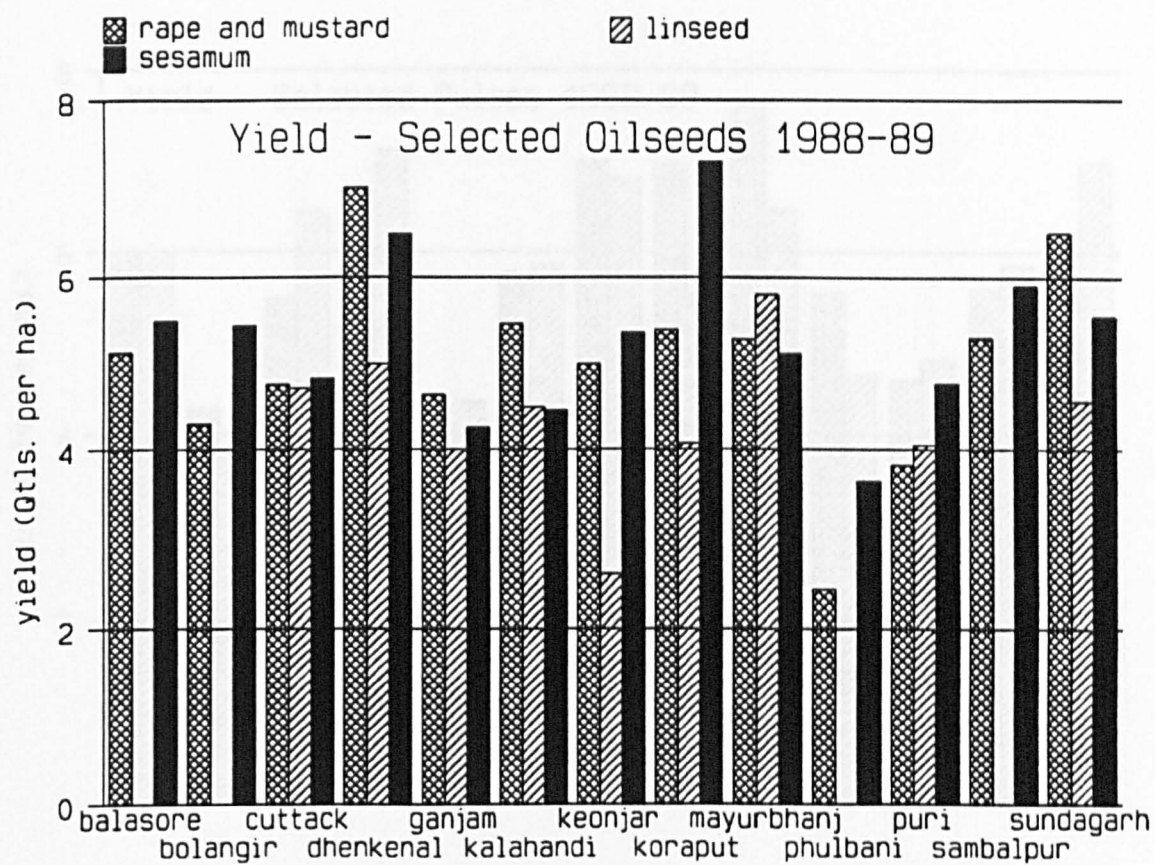


Fig. 4.12

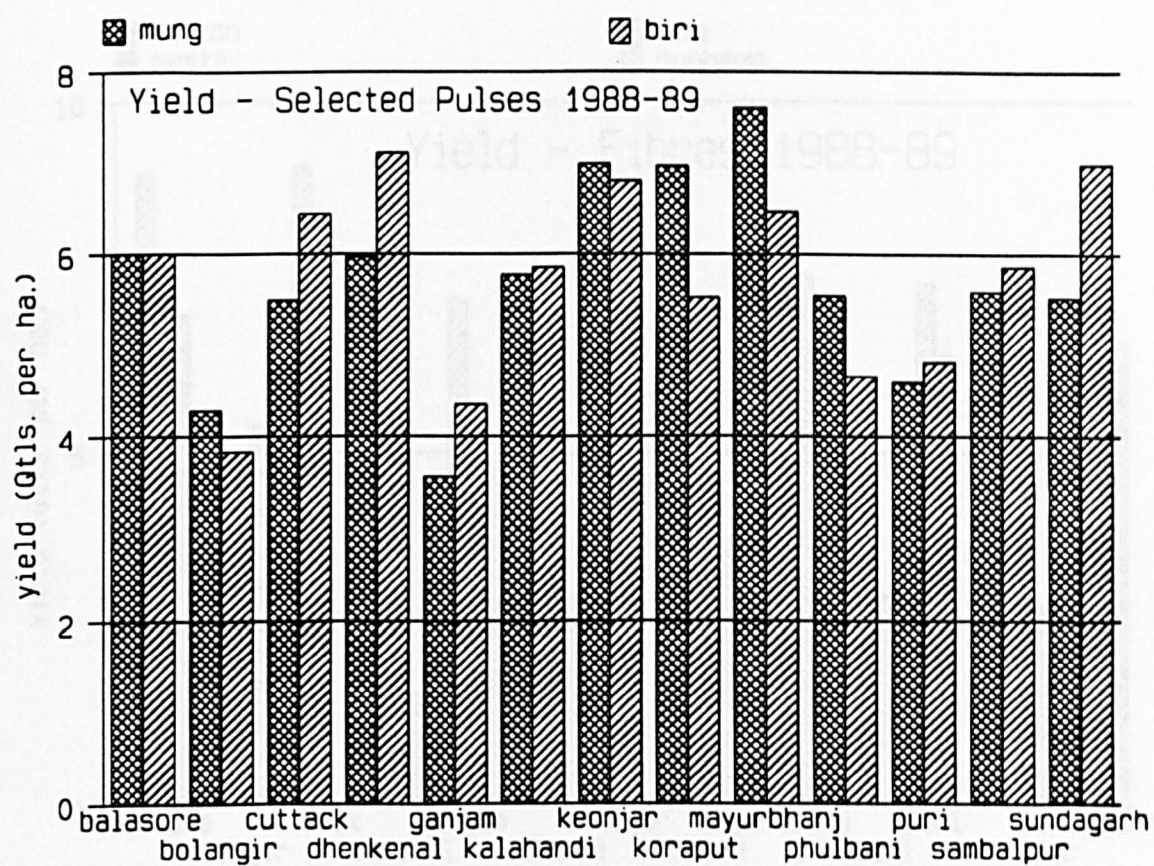


Fig. 4.13

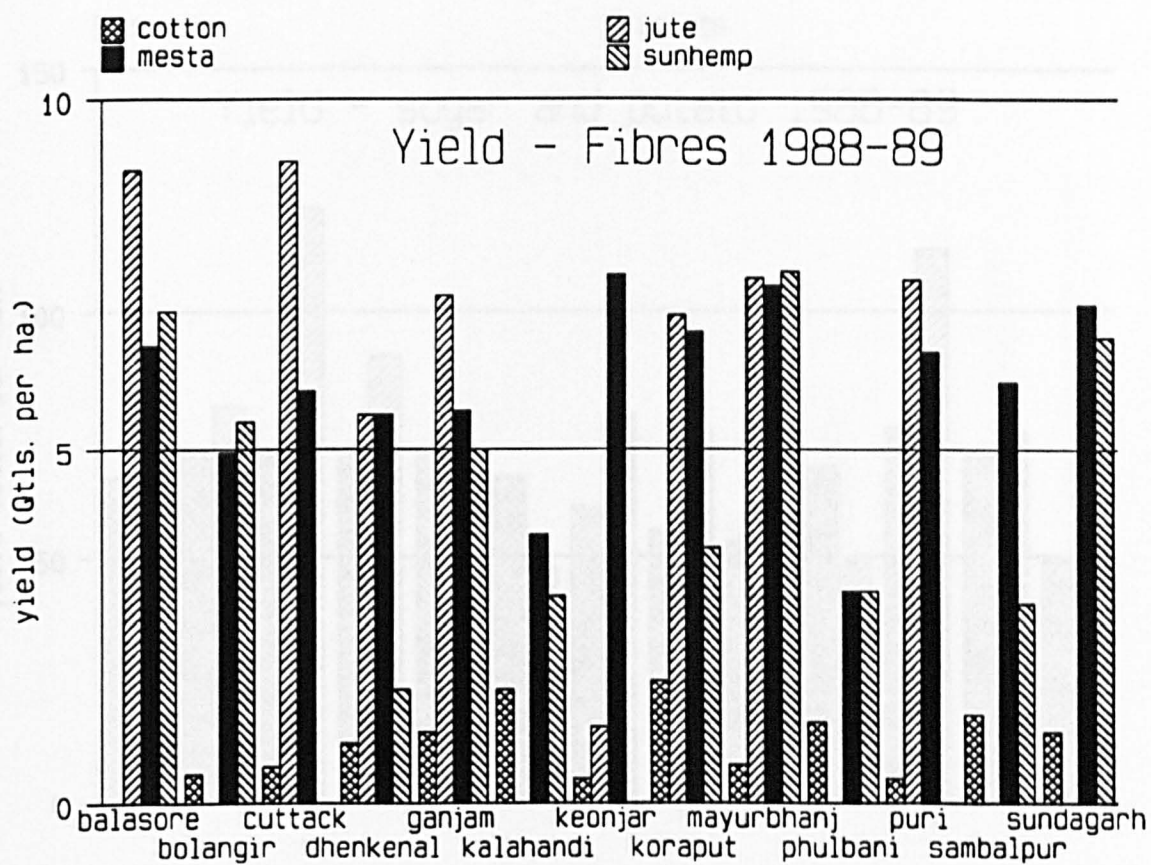


Fig. 4.14

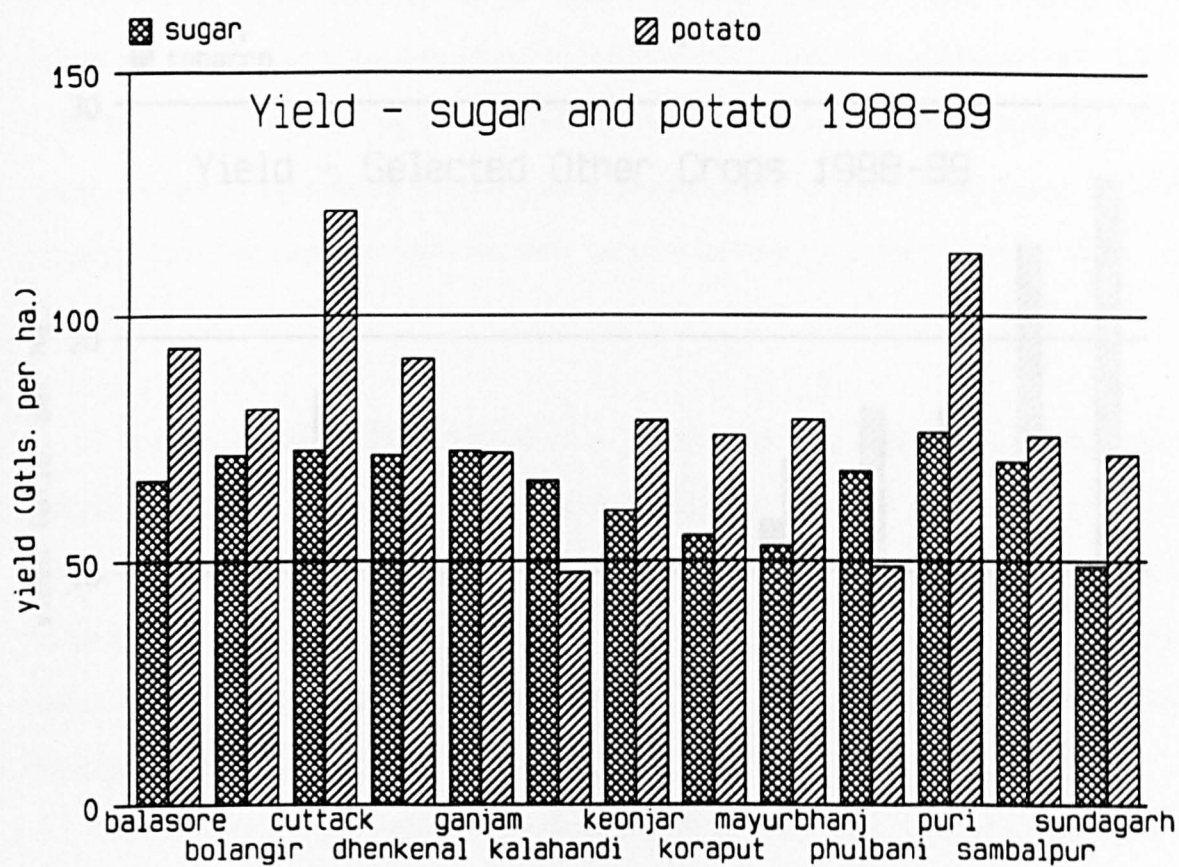





Fig. 4.15

 chilli
 tobacco
  ginger

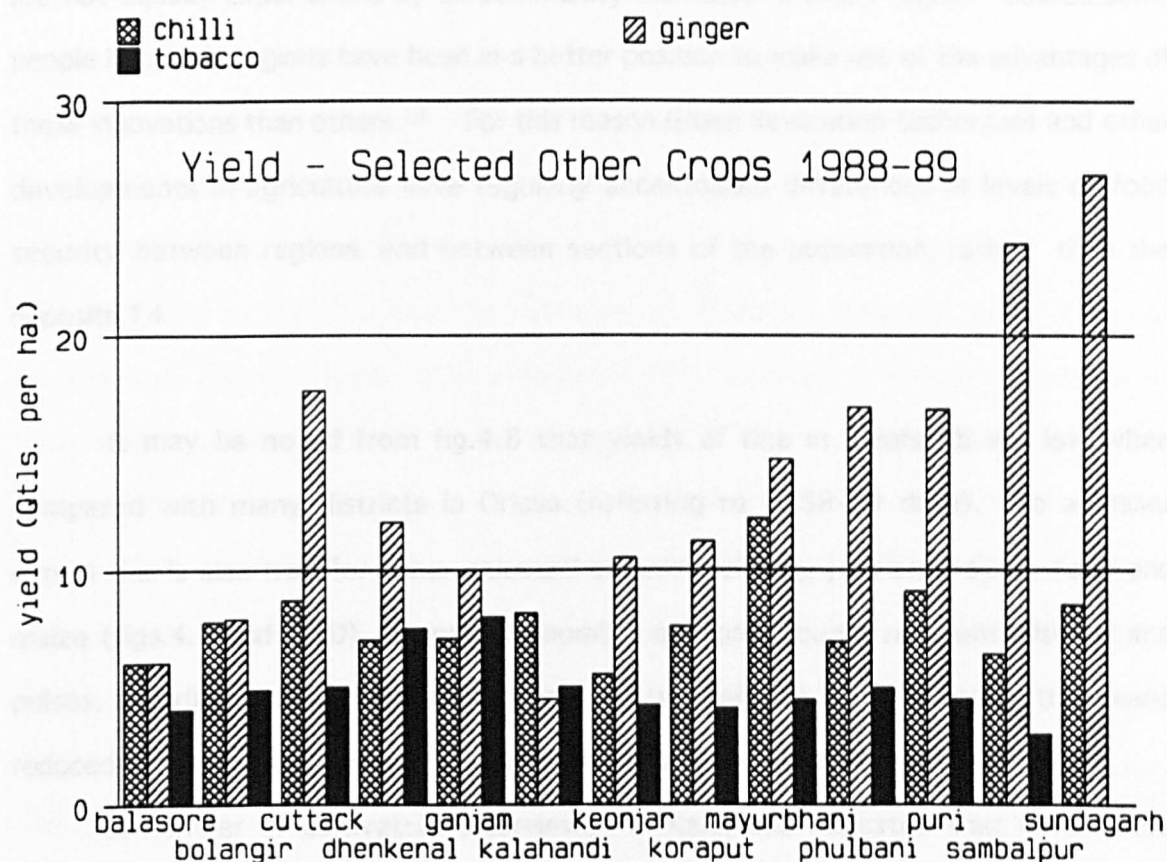


Fig. 4.16

it has produced significant improvements in the ability of some cultivators to maintain access to food.

However it must be recognised that regularly the benefits of such developments are not equally experienced by all community members in every region. Instead some people in certain regions have been in a better position to make use of the advantages of these innovations than others.¹³ For this reason Green Revolution techniques and other developments in agriculture have regularly accentuated differences in levels of food security between regions, and between sections of the population, rather than the opposite.¹⁴

It may be noted from fig.4.8 that yields of rice in Kalahandi are low when compared with many districts in Orissa (referring to 1988-89 data). To a lesser extent this is also true for other selected cereals including jowar, bajra, ragi and maize (figs.4.9 and 4.10). However a number of more drought resistant oilseeds and pulses, including rape and mustard, mung and b i r i show a lesser tendency to provide reduced yields when compared with other districts in the State (figs.4.12 and 4.13)

A number of cultivators interviewed in Kalahandi indicated that yields have tended to be low, despite the district's excellent potential for growing good quality crops.¹⁵ One grain merchant interviewed in Khariar argued that the soil in the region is very rich, capable of producing best quality scented paddy, black gram and horse

access to this food. These arguments have been clearly laid out by Sen and others.

¹³ Taking India as an example, in 1965 the Indian government adopted a strategy to promote the use of Green Revolution technology and techniques. This particularly included new seed varieties, fertilizers, pesticides, weed control and irrigation. Whilst some have argued that virtually all of India's classes have benefited from these changes, (Frankel, 1972) it is evident that the gains from this new technology have been unevenly distributed. This has often increased polarisation in rural areas. Byres indeed argues, in Lenin's terms, that this has led to increased levels of 'differentiation of the peasantry.' (Byres, 1981: 429-30) See also for example in Lenin 'On the so called Market Question' and 'Capitalism in Agriculture' in Desai (ed.) (1989).

¹⁴ For example, Byres suggests that the introduction of new technology has resulted in the transfer to larger farmers of considerable areas of the land previously operated by poor cultivators. The latter are accordingly increasingly being pushed out of self employment into wage labour. This process is accentuated by the labour saving nature of mechanisation in agriculture. This mechanisation is biased towards rural classes which possess the large land holdings required to reap the full benefits of the use of the new machinery; and towards those with the substantial resources required for its initial purchase and maintenance. It has also increased the dependence of peasants on the market, and their vulnerability to price fluctuations and problems of supply. (Byres, 1983 :31-2)

¹⁵ Names supplied, interviewed, Feb/Mar. 1992

gram, along with a range of other crops such as mustard, linseed, groundnut and ginger.¹⁶ There is a high potential for cultivating red gram, millet, ragi, maize, papaya, onion and a range of fruits. Fruits produced in the district, including mango, guava, orange, lemon and limes, were said to be of the highest quality. The area also possesses 'good black cotton soil', suitable for production of cotton, pineapples and tel. Until three or four years ago this merchant suggested that much of the tel produced in the district was exported to outside markets, including those in Tamil Nadu. Owing to the high quality of this produce, this could be sold at high prices.

In this context the need for extension of irrigation potential is of particular importance. This is of value both to reduce the risks attached to agricultural production, and as an enabling factor to accelerate opportunities for agricultural development. Already there are limited signs of improvement in some places. In April 1992, 13,349 hectares of cultivable land in the Nawapara subdivision, were irrigated from a range of different sources (although this represents only 7.1% of total cultivable land in this area).¹⁷ These sources can be broken down as follows:

Fig.4.17

Source	No.	Area (Ha.)
Medium irrigation	2	3760
Minor Irrigation	40	5795
Lift irrigation (Govt.)	105	1841
Lift irrigation (private)	54	230
Dug wells	6502	1723
Total		13349

Source: District Agricultural Office, Khariar Agricultural District

The following area has been covered under irrigation by a range of sources:

¹⁶ Interview, Khariar, March 1992.

¹⁷ In the irrigated area within the Nawapara subdivision crops predominantly grown are paddy, wheat, groundnut, mustard, sugarcane and vegetables. The non-irrigated area is utilised largely for oilseeds such as linseed and jhain mung, using available soil moisture after the harvest of the kharif paddy. (District Agricultural Officer, Khariar).

¹⁷ Chairman of the Planning and Development Office, Bhawanipatna, interviewed 4/4/92.

Fig.4.18

Block	Area Covered under Irrigation (Kharif)				
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Khariar	673	1458	1750	2481	3590
Sinapali	604.25	1910	1120	2056	1295
Boden	600.60	375	560	752	829
Komna	3429.00	4400	3560	5916	5683
Nawapara	1813	2935.16	2520	2207	2100
Total	7119.85	11177.16	9510	13412	13507

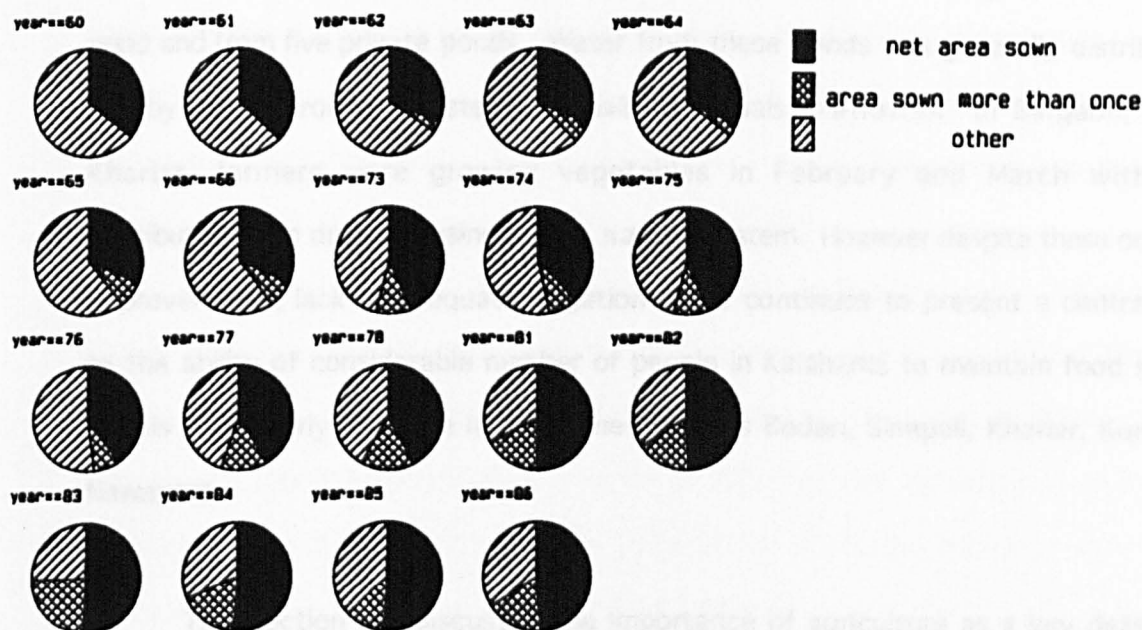
Source: District Agricultural Office, Khariar Agricultural District

The Jadamunda irrigation project, 40 kms. from Khariar has provided some increase in access to irrigation water. Despite the serious social upheaval created by its construction, the Upper Indravati project is expected to irrigate a further 1,90,300 hectares of agricultural land on its completion. This includes the whole of the Dharamgarh subdivision, and part of Bhawanipatna subdivision. The Upper Jonk medium irrigation project under construction in Nawapara subdivision is designed to add 9000 hectares of irrigation potential. A number of minor, rainfall dependent, irrigation projects are also in progress.¹⁸

Limited extensions in irrigation potential in Kalahandi, including those detailed above, have allowed some increase in area sown under crops and area sown more than once. This is demonstrated in the time series representation of cropped area and multiple cropping in fig.4.19.

There was sporadic evidence of agricultural developments in a number of villages visited during fieldwork for this study. In Chindaguda, close to Khariar, 13 wells had been built with money provided through grants and loans. In this village much of this money originated from the Government of Orissa. This was distributed through an overseas based voluntary organisation, the Lutheran World Service, which had an office

¹⁸ Chairman of the Planning and Development Office, Bhawanipatna, interviewed 4/4/92.



Pattern of Land Utilisation in Kalahandi

Net area sown and Area sown more than once

Fig. 4.19

in Khariar. On land supplied with water from these wells, farmers were beginning to experiment with a winter sowing of channa, tobacco and onion, planted in January. This was the first year that they had planted such a winter crop.

In addition, some irrigation water was supplied in this village from a common pond and from five private ponds. Water from these ponds was generally distributed to nearby lands through a system of small dug canals (nallahs). In Bargaon, close to Khariar, farmers were growing vegetables in February and March with water distributed from dugwells using such a nallah system. However despite these occasional improvements, lack of adequate irrigation water continues to present a central barrier to the ability of considerable number of people in Kalahandi to maintain food security. This is particularly the case in arid zones such as Boden, Sinapali, Khariar, Komna and Nawapara.

This section has discussed the importance of agriculture as a key determinant variable in the process of maintaining food security for many persons in Kalahandi. The next section examines in greater detail the effect which regular years of inadequate or untimely rainfall, and improvements made through agricultural development, have had on agricultural production in the district. It also examines the extent to which farmers utilise coping mechanisms such as reducing sown area, diversifying cropping patterns, and making increased use of less water dependent crop types to reduce the risk attached to agricultural production in these conditions.

4.3 Changing Patterns of Agricultural Production in Kalahandi

1. Land Utilisation It is commonly argued in food security literature that repeated years of drought and crop failure regularly lead to a trend of declining cropped area in the region concerned. Having suffered a number of years of crop loss, some farmers may

opt not to cultivate sections of their land on the grounds that they may be unable to recoup the effort and costs of planting if harvest fails in the forthcoming year. Alternatively, they may consider themselves better able to meet their food security needs through other means such as waged employment, migration and so on. Thirdly, some farmers may be no longer able to cultivate on the grounds that they have been forced during times of food crisis to sell off crucial assets such as land, draught animals and productive implements. For this reason they may no longer have access after the crisis to the necessary means of production to cultivate.

In their recent study of Khariar block, Ali and Dash suggest that during the past decade there has been a trend of declining gross cropped area in the region. Their study suggests that as a result of repeated years of crop failure, large tracts of land are being left fallow. This has reduced land under the plough. For this reason gross cropped area has fallen from 2,80,238 hectares in 1982-83; to 2,76,665 hectares in 1985-86; and further to 2,18,807 in 1989-90.(1992:58)

Whilst these figures support the hypothesis suggested above that repeated years of crop failure lead to reductions in land area cultivated, it is necessary to examine this trend over a longer time scale if firm and identifiable trends are to be established. To examine such trends in the context of regular years of drought, harvest failure and food crisis, this section attempts to piece together a time-series for land use and cropped area statistics over a period of approximately three decades, utilising data held by the Dept. of Agriculture, Govt. of Orissa. Similar time-series analysis of this data has not been carried out in other studies of food security in Kalahandi. This study aims in particular to examine the following hypotheses:

- (a) repeated years of drought and crop failure are likely to produce a reduction in sown area in the district.
- (b) Cultivators make short-term adjustments during years of drought which include reducing area sown under highly water dependent crops such as paddy, and sowing larger

areas under more drought resistant crops such as millets and coarser cereals, oilseeds, pulses and fibres. Such trends may therefore be expected in years known through interviews to have been years of drought such as 1965-66, 1975-76 and a number of years during the 1980's.¹⁹

(c) Cultivators similarly adjust to repeated years of drought and crop failure by making longer-term adjustments away from paddy and other water dependent crops into more drought resistant varieties.

As can be seen from Fig.4.19, there has been a noticeably changing pattern of land use in the district in recent decades. However in contradiction to hypothesis (a), and the trends identified by Ali and Dash. during the 1980's, this data suggests that there has been an increase in net sown area and in the area sown more than once during this thirty year period.

This conclusion may be attributed to a range of factors. Firstly, reductions in sown area in Kalahandi in response to repeated years of drought and crop failure, may have been offset by limited levels of agricultural development (as discussed in chapter 4.2 above) which have taken place in the district. In particular, minor improvements in irrigation potential may have produced limited increases in area under the plough and opportunities for double cropping. From Fig.4.19 it may be concluded that any noticeable decrease in sown area in response to food crisis, may have been more than counterbalanced by the effects of increases in sown area permitted through various elements of agricultural development.

Secondly, in some instances reductions in sown area are likely to be counterbalanced by land transfers which have taken place in the district during years of hardship. A number of smaller landowners have been forced into distress sales of land and other productive assets to larger landholders and 'marwaris', whose greater

¹⁹ See further in chapter 2.

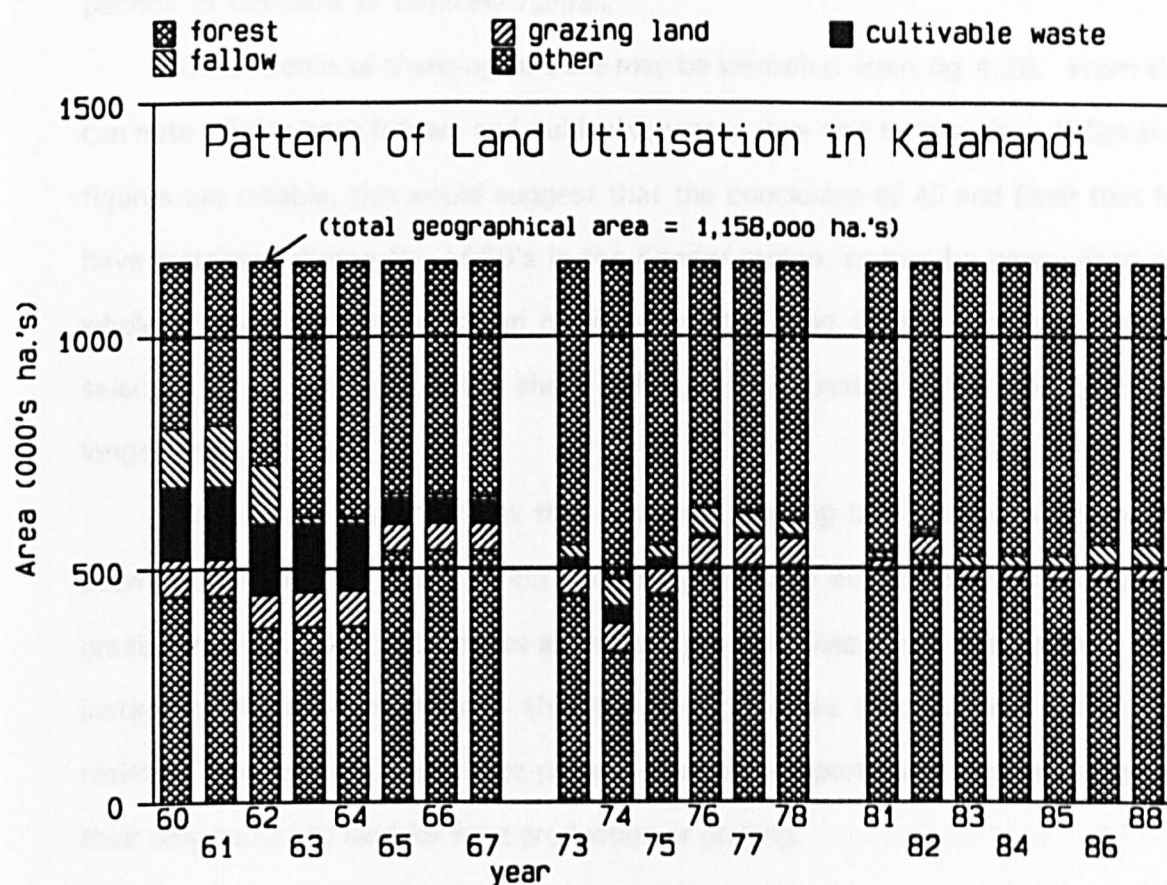


Fig. 4.20

Fig. 4.21

Year	Forest (000's ha.)
1970-71	450
1971-72	450
1972-73	450
1973-74	450
1974-75	450
1975-76	450
1976-77	450
1977-78	450
1978-79	450
1979-80	450
1980-81	450
1981-82	450
1982-83	450
1983-84	450
1984-85	450
1985-86	450
1986-87	450
1987-88	450

affluence may place them in a better position to cultivate even in repeatedly bad years. The latter regularly have greater access to irrigation, rapidly maturing paddy varieties, and other agricultural innovations which may make them better able to cultivate during periods of deficient or untimely rainfall.

Other trends of changing land use may be identified from fig 4.20. From this we can note a fall in both fallows and cultivable waste over the time series. If Government figures are reliable, this would suggest that the conclusion of Ali and Dash that fallows have increased during the 1980's in the Khariar region, cannot be generalised for the whole district over the duration of the complete time series. However, the period selected by Ali and Dash is too short to be able to establish clear and generalisable longer-term trends.

Graph 4.20 also indicates that access to grazing land and cultivable waste has been falling during the study period. This may be partly explained by reduced access to grazing and cultivable land held as a common property resource in the district. In many instances this has undermined the ability of landless and marginal cultivators to maintain food security. For these persons common property land frequently represents their only access to land for food production or grazing.

2. Changes in Cropping Patterns Figures collected by Ali and Dash indicate that in the Nawapara subdivision area under rice has declined since 1975. Figures for rice coverage during selected years are as follows:

Fig.4.21

Year	Percent Cultivated Area under Rice
1975-76	54
1978-79	49
1982-83	41
1989-90	33

Source: Ali and Dash(1992)

Figures provided by these authors also indicate gross cropped area under cereals in the Khariar region has declined from 73% in 1975-76, to 47% in 1989-90. During this period cropped area under pulses rose from 14% to 47%. These figures clearly support the conclusion, suggested in hypothesis (c), that in this region cultivators have responded to harvest failures and years of food shortage by reducing area planted under water intensive rice, and sowing a larger area under pulses having a lower moisture requirement.

In turn, this data supports the hypothesis made at the start of the chapter that farmers frequently change the pattern of crops sown during periods of recurrent low rainfall and crop failure. Such diversification of cropping patterns represent an important coping mechanism through which farmers in drought prone areas reduce the risks attached to agricultural production. Cultivators may in some instances adopt this strategy, even at the cost of possible reductions in yields.

Time series data for area sown under different crops is demonstrated in figs.4.22 to fig.4.28. As indicated in Fig.4.22, cereals cover by far the largest area sown under any crop type in the district. More than twice as large an area is sown under cereals than under pulses, the next highest sown area by crop type. However as previously indicated in fig.4.1, whilst rice is dominant during the kharif season, during the rabi season less water intensive oilseeds and pulses occupy a larger sown area.

This data reveals that during the period of study there has been a slightly rising trend in area sown under cereals upto 1983. This has been followed by a downturn in sown area during subsequent years. Because a large percentage of this area is sown under kharif rice, such a trend may be expected from hypothesis (b) or (c), given that a number of years since 1983 have been years of untimely or deficient rainfall.(fig. 4.22 and 4.24)

Area sown under oilseeds has increased more progressively during this period.

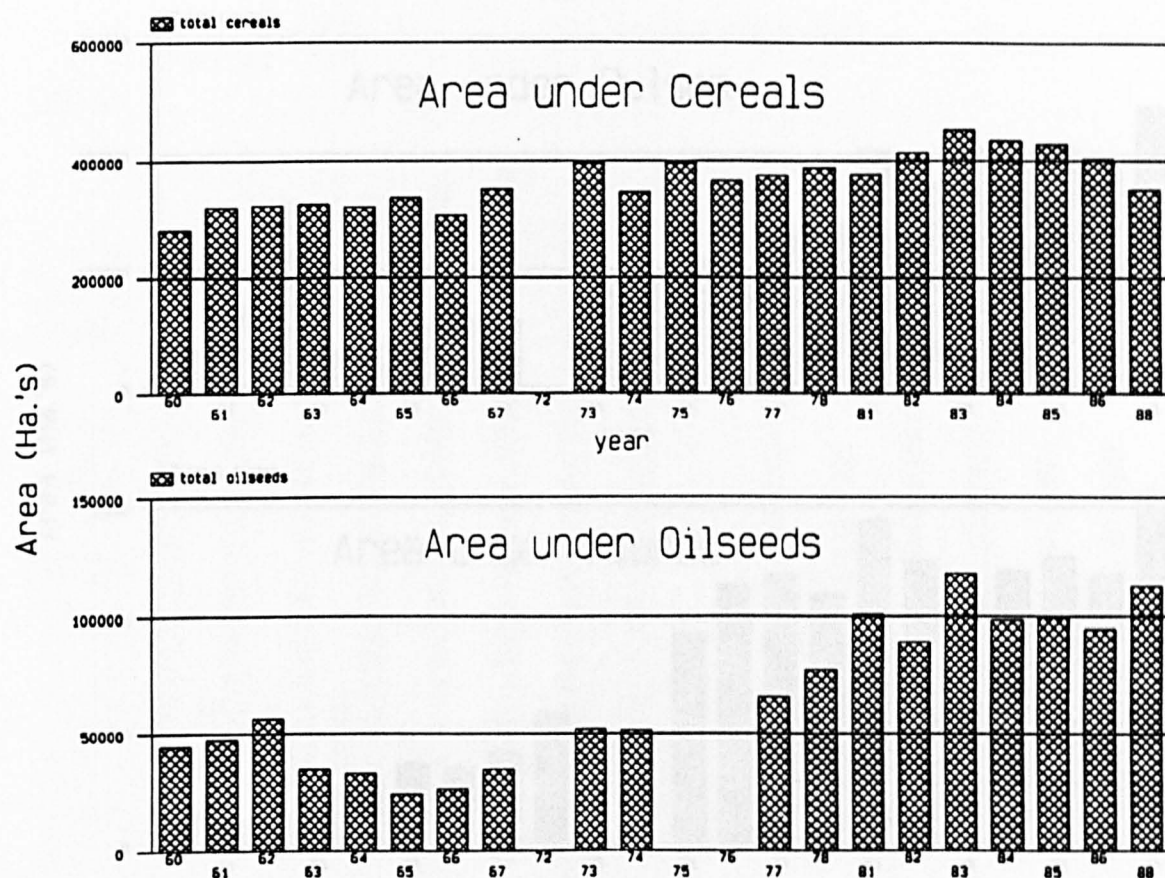


Fig. 4.22

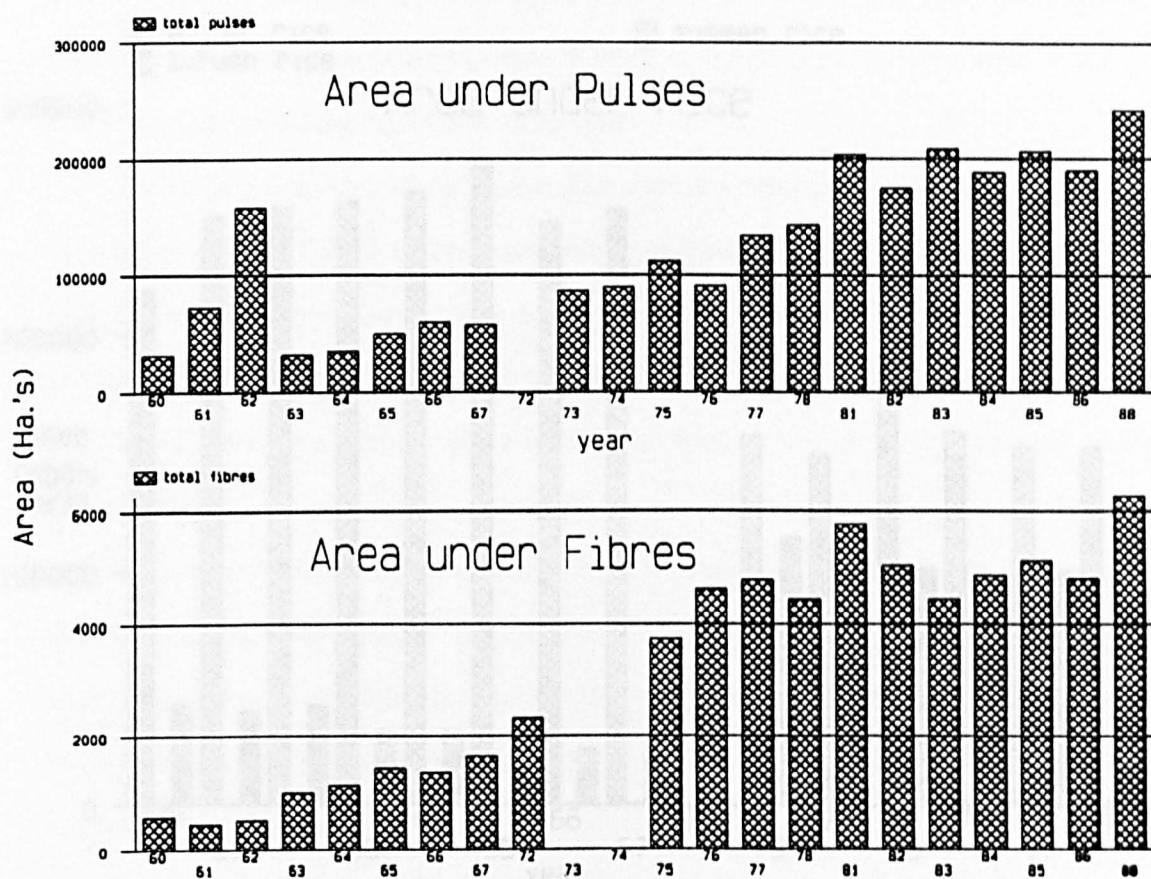


Fig. 4.23

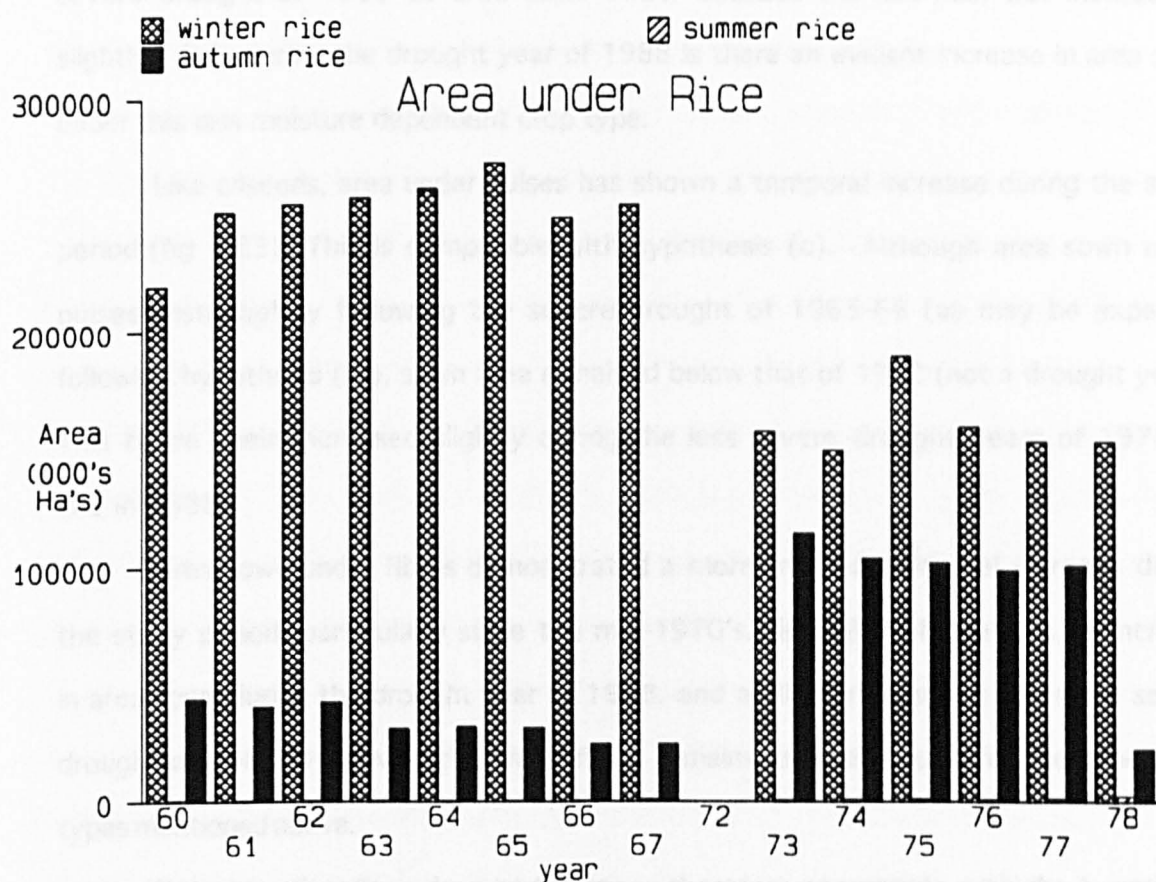


Fig. 4.24

Such a temporal increase would support hypothesis (c). However there is little indication that farmers have tended to make short-term shifts into oilseed productions as a coping mechanism to cope during drought years (as per hypothesis (b)). During the severe drought of 1965-66 area sown under oilseeds did not rise, but instead fell slightly. Only during the drought year of 1988 is there an evident increase in area sown under this less moisture dependent crop type.

Like oilseeds, area under pulses has shown a temporal increase during the study period.(fig 4.23) This is compatible with hypothesis (c). Although area sown under pulses rose slightly following the severe drought of 1965-66 (as may be expected following hypothesis (b)), sown area remained below that of 1962 (not a drought year). This figure again increased slightly during the less severe drought years of 1975-76 and in 1988.

Area sown under fibres demonstrated a more marked temporal increase during the study period, particularly since the mid-1970's.(fig 4.23) There was an increase in area sown during the drought year of 1988, and a slight rise during the more severe drought of 1965. However area under fibres remains lower than that for the other crop types mentioned above.

Data for oilseeds, pulses and fibres is therefore compatible with the hypothesis (c), inferring that farmers will tend to progressively increase the area which they cultivate under these more drought resistant crop types in response to regular years of inadequate and untimely rainfall. In some instances this data also indicates that farmers will tend to sow larger areas under crops with low moisture requirement during specific periods of drought. Such a conclusion is compatible with hypothesis (b).

Evidence to support the assertion (as hypothesis (c)) that farmers may make a progressive move away from highly water dependent crops such as paddy, into crops with a lower moisture requirement such as those described above, is further supported by the time series for area sown under rice in fig 4.24. In this time series it may be

noted that area sown under winter rice is reduced during the 1970's from its 1960's level. This may indicate such a shift in cropping pattern. However this data gives little indication that farmers make similar short-term shifts during years of drought. In this time series there is no evident decrease in area sown under rice during the severe drought of 1965-66, as may be expected under hypothesis (b).

Figs 4.25 and 4.26 indicate an upward trend in area sown under small millets, ragi and jowar during the 1970's and 1980's from their 1960's level. Such an increase under these more drought resistant cereals may be expected according to hypothesis (c). However area under these crops fell during the severe drought of 1965-66. This contradicts the assumption from hypothesis (b) that a larger area would be sown under cereals with lower moisture requirement during years of drought, in place of crops such as paddy with high water dependence. Notably area sown under small millets demonstrated a marked increase during 1967, following the drought of 1965-66. Areas under these crops have also shown a downward trend during the drought years since 1985. This is again contrary to expectation under hypothesis (b) or hypothesis (c).

A number of reasons may explain why there is not a more marked trend in the above time series for farmers increasing the areas which they sow under crops with low moisture requirement during years of drought.²⁰ Firstly, rice remains a central component of the diet of many persons living in the district. For this reason although paddy may be more prone to harvest failure than other less water intensive crop types, many farmers may persist with rice production during dry years because it is central to their dietary needs. Many are therefore reluctant out of cultural preference to change into production of ragi and other 'coarser' cereals instead of rice. These remain primarily a staple foodgrain for poorer sections.

Secondly, there is little adequate system for providing early warning of drought

²⁰ Such a trend would be expected, under hypothesis (b), to be accompanied by a reduction in area sown under water dependent paddy during these years. As noted in fig. 4.24, there has been no apparent decline in area sown under rice during the 1965-66 drought year.

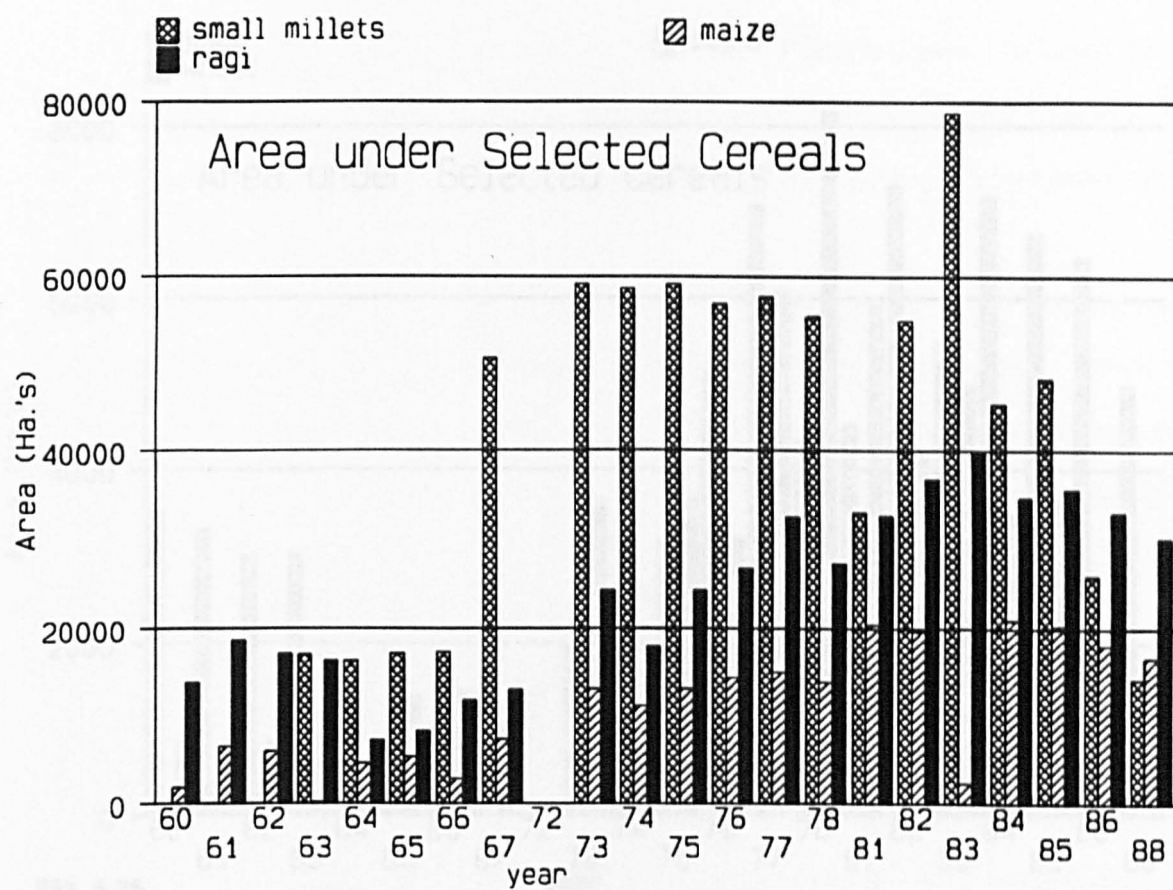


Fig. 4.25

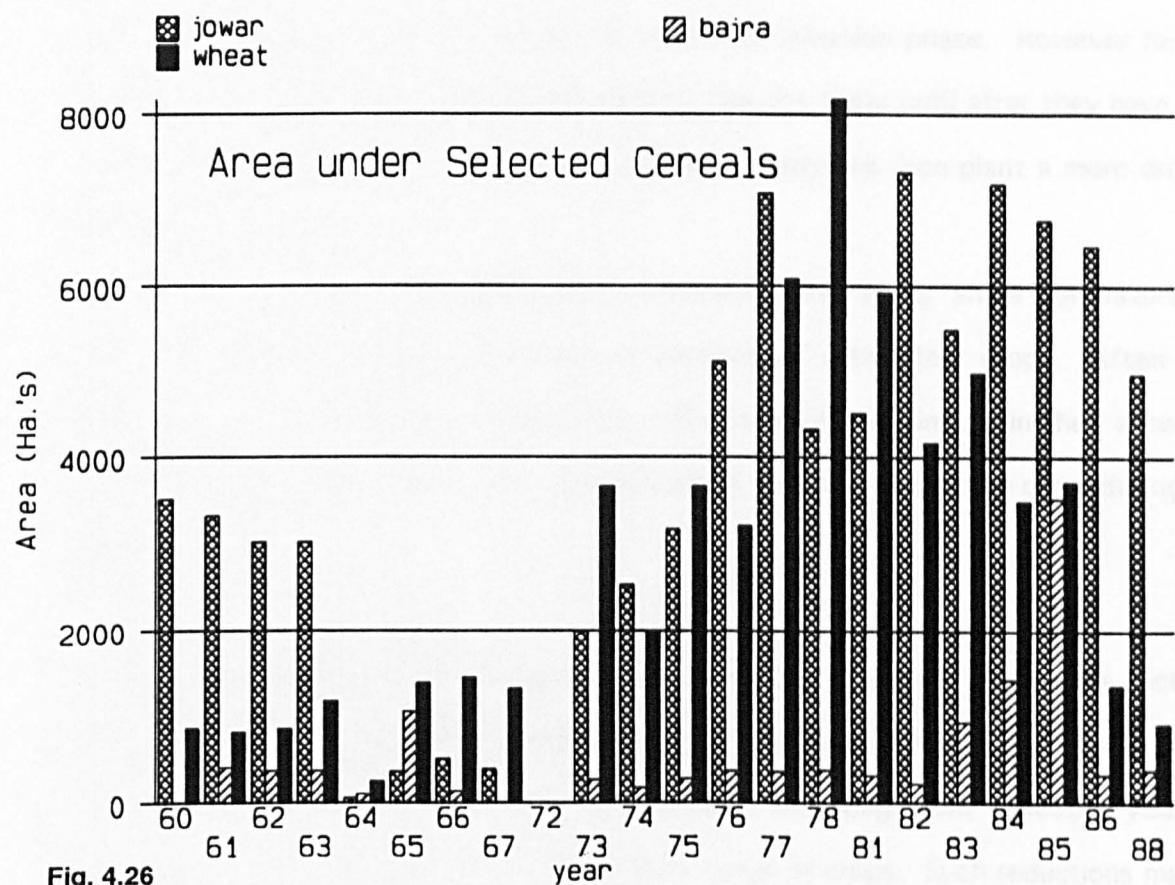


Fig. 4.26

or monsoon failure in the district. Farmers generally sow their seed after the arrival of the first rains. They are then dependent upon the monsoon continuing in sufficient quantity and at the right time for the success of their crop. If further rains are late, then risk of reduced yields or crop failure is high. This is particularly the case if insufficient water is available during the crucial germination phase. However farmers have little indication that such rainfall deficiencies are likely until after they have sown their crop. By this time it is regularly too late for them to then plant a more drought resistant crop type.²¹

Thirdly, some have suggested in Kalahandi that many small cultivators are relatively limited in their willingness to experiment with other crops. Often their knowledge of diversified cultivation is low. They may also be limited in their access to seeds and other inputs which would enable them to cultivate alternative crops during dry years.

3. *Changes in Productivity* In the context of factors described in previous sections, crop productivity in Kalahandi may be expected to be influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, reduced soil moisture and land fertility, resulting from repeated years of drought, may lead to reductions in yields for a range of crops. Such reductions may be expected to be more marked for crops such as paddy, with high water dependence, than for other crops with lower moisture requirement such as pulses and oilseeds and 'coarse' cereals such as ragi and other millets.

Secondly, whilst sharp reductions in productivity may be expected during periods of drought, smoother secular reductions in productivity over a longer time scale may be expected for some crops in response to repeated years of rainfall failure.

Thirdly, upward trends in productivity may be expected in regions where improvements have been made in irrigation potential, use of new seed varieties,

²¹ Alternatively there have been a number of years (1990 being one example) when rains have again been delayed after sowing and then arrived in such a large quantity that the resulting floods have damaged the crop.

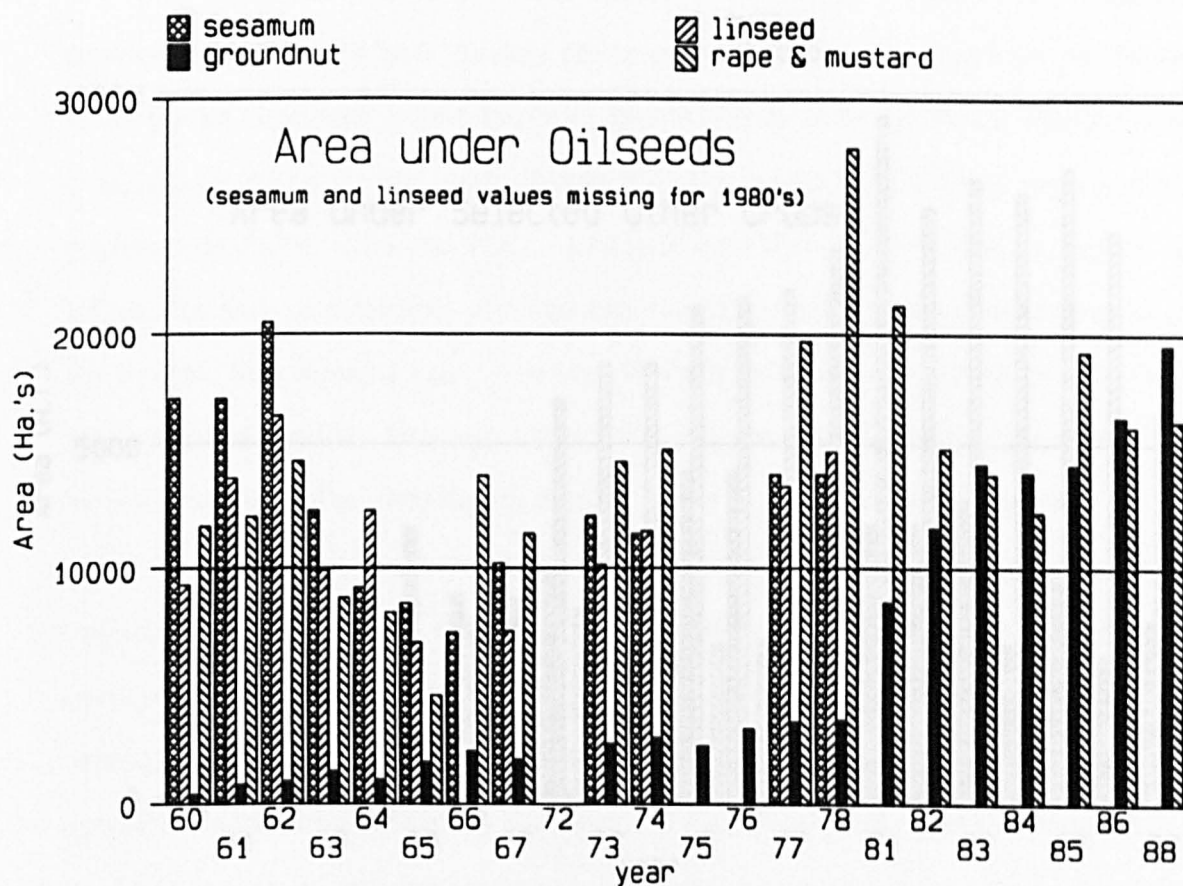


Fig. 4.27

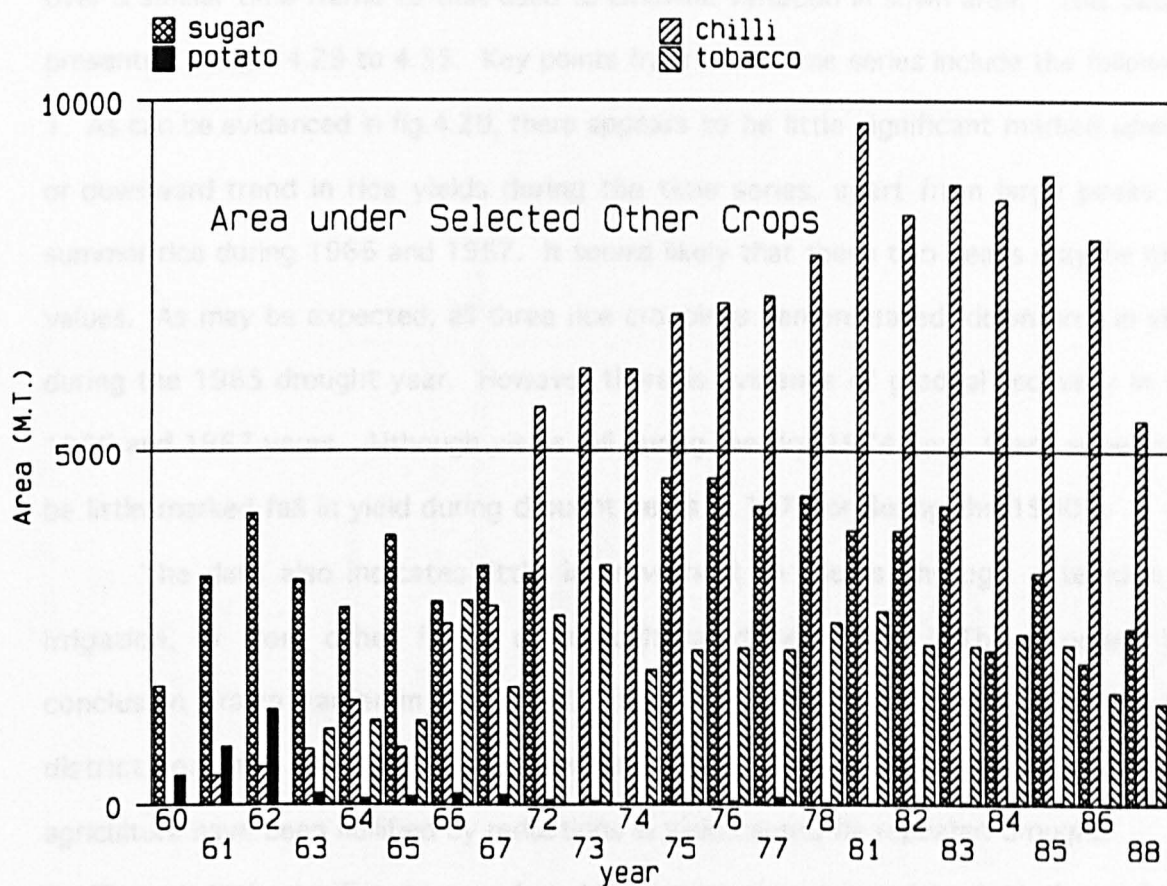


Fig. 4.28

fertilisers and through other forms of agricultural development.

To investigate examine temporal variations in crop productivity in Kalahandi, time series based on Government of Orissa, Dept. of Agriculture data have been prepared over a similar time frame to that used to examine variation in sown area. This data is presented in Figs. 4.29 to 4.35. Key points from these time series include the following:

1. As can be evidenced in fig.4.29, there appears to be little significant marked upward or downward trend in rice yields during the time series, apart from large peaks for summer rice during 1966 and 1967. It seems likely that these two peaks may be error values. As may be expected, all three rice croppings demonstrated downturns in yield during the 1965 drought year. However there is evidence of gradual recovery in the 1966 and 1967 years. Although yields fell during the dry 1974 year, there appears to be little marked fall in yield during drought years in 1975 or during the 1980's.

The data also indicates little improvement in yields through extension of irrigation, or from other forms of agricultural development. This supports the conclusion drawn earlier in this chapter that such developments are limited in the district, or that any such improvements in yield from technical developments in agriculture have been nullified by reductions in yield caused by repeated drought.

2. There is little significant upward or downward longterm trend in yields for ragi and small millets during this period.(fig.4.30) Yield for ragi fell during 1963, 1964 and during the severe drought of 1965. However yields rose sharply for both these crops in 1966 and 1967. Similarly during drought years in 1975 and from 1985 onwards, the absence of marked downturns in yields for these crops supports the assertion that these crops demonstrate greater resistance to drought than paddy and other crops with higher water requirements. Yields for small millets and ragi demonstrate little upward or downward longer-term temporal variation during the period of the time series.

3. From graph 4.31 there is evidence of a gradual increase in yields for wheat through

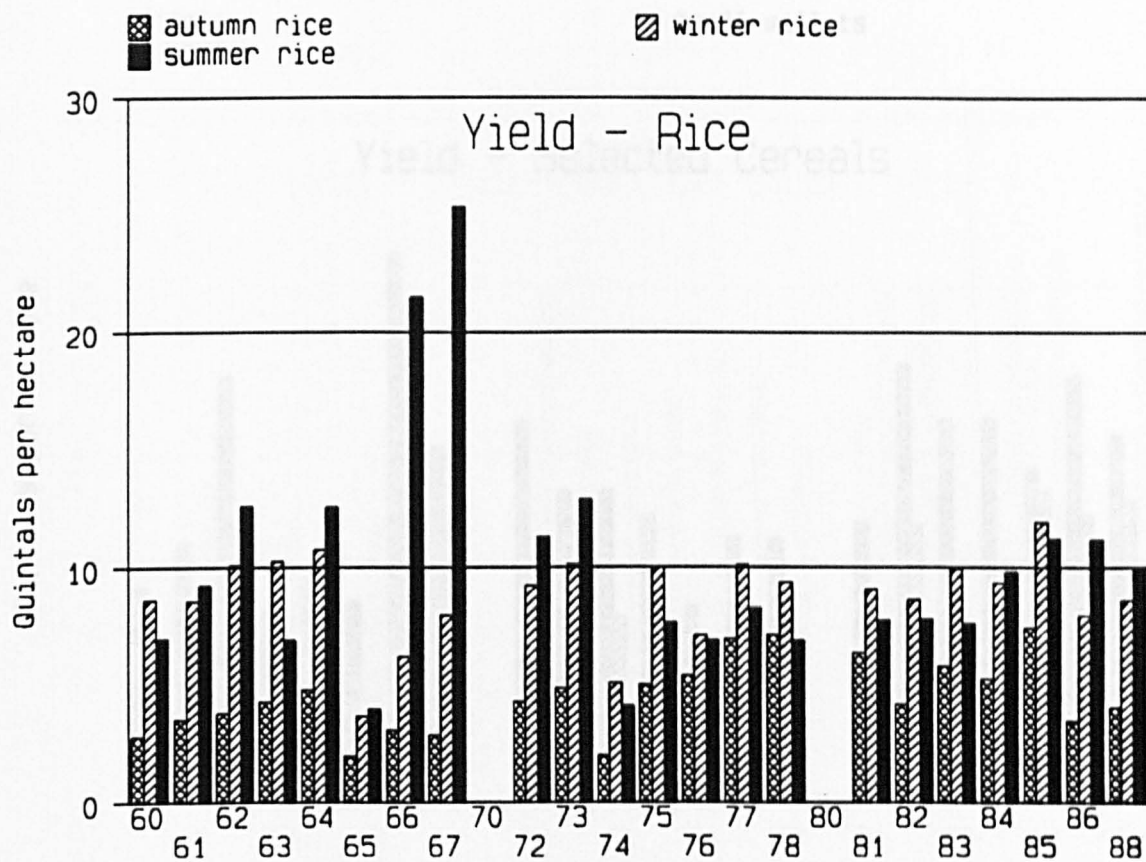


Fig. 4.29

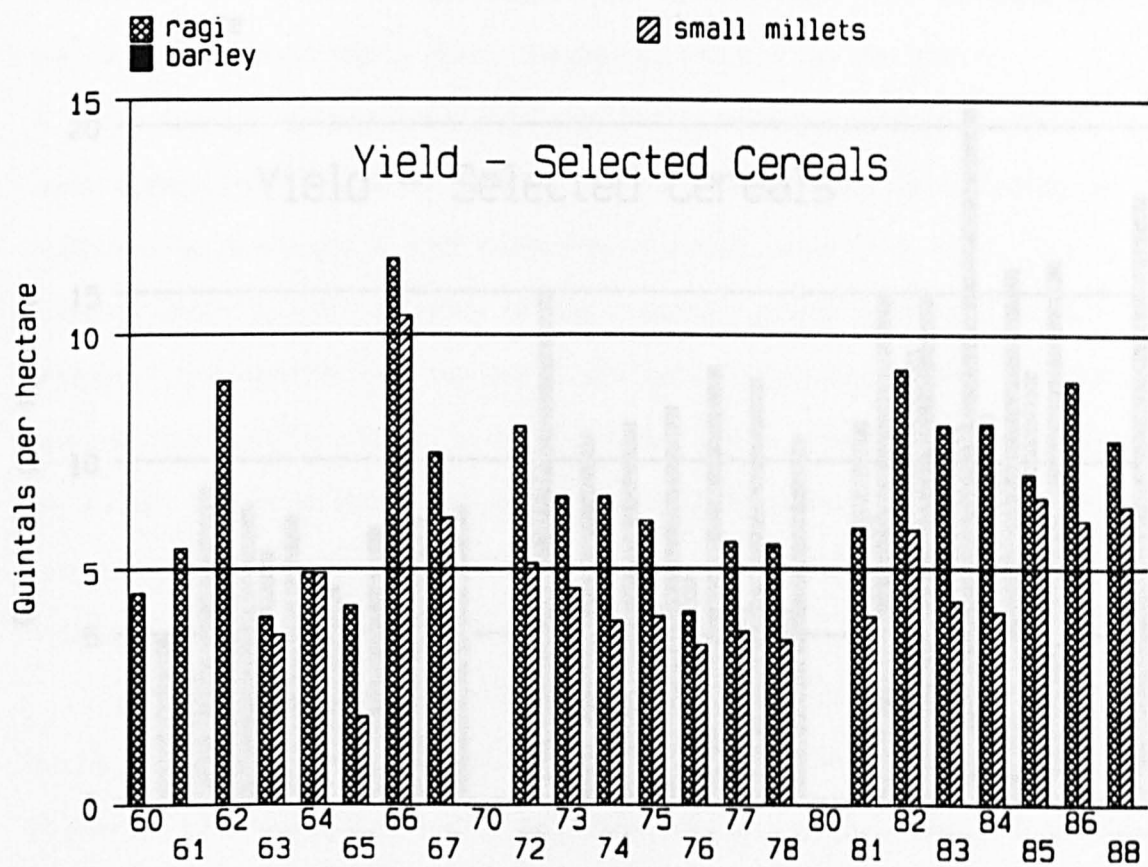


Fig. 4.30

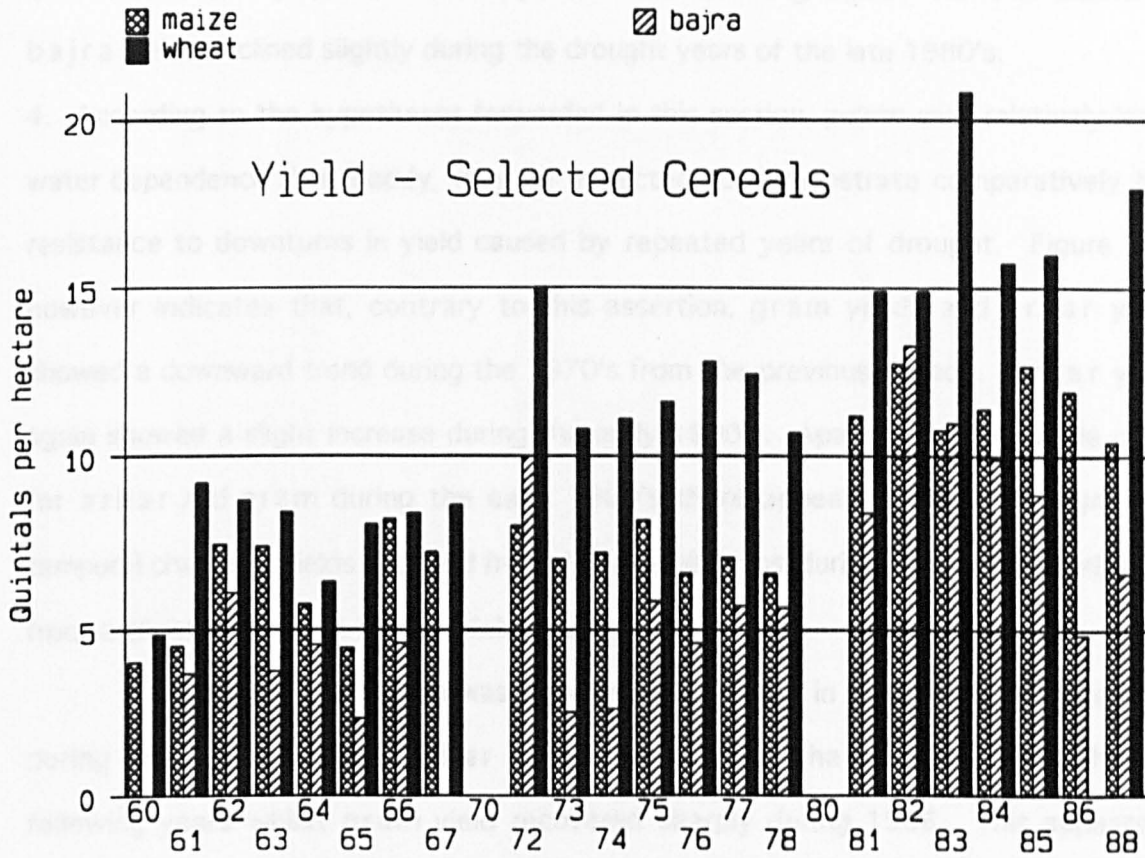


Fig. 4.31

the 1970's and 1980's.²² A similar trend may be noted for yields of bajra and wheat during this period. It is noticeable that yields fell slightly for maize and bajra during the drought year of 1965, although no such decline was noted for wheat. There is little evident decline in yield for these crops in the 1975 drought year. However maize and bajra yields declined slightly during the drought years of the late 1980's.

4. According to the hypotheses forwarded in this section, pulses with relatively lower water dependence than paddy, may be expected to demonstrate comparatively high resistance to downturns in yield caused by repeated years of drought. Figure 4.32 however indicates that, contrary to this assertion, gram yields and arhar yields showed a downward trend during the 1970's from the previous decade. Arhar yields again showed a slight increase during the early 1980's. Apart from observable peaks for arhar and gram during the early 1960's there appears to be little significant temporal change in yields obtained from these pulse crops during the time period, apart from a slight increase in arhar yields during the 1980's.

It can be seen that there was an observable decline in yield for both these crops during the 1965 drought, arhar yields remaining at the same level for the two following years whilst gram yield recovered sharply during 1966. This appears to indicate that the 1965 drought was sufficiently severe to significantly reduce yields even for these pulse crops with relatively low water dependence. Few sharp falls in yields are revealed for other years of rainfall shortage in 1975 or during the 1980's.

5. Yields for a range of oilseeds during this time period are demonstrated in figs.4.33 and 4.34. Linseed, castor, and rape and mustard have shown little fluctuation in yield during this period. However a decline can be noted in yields for all three crops during the 1965 drought year, before a recovery in 1966 and 1967. This again appears to indicate that the 1965 drought was sufficiently severe to markedly reduce yields for

²² However it must be recognised that in this primarily rice consuming state wheat is a less important food crop than rice. However it is relatively common in Western Orissa for households to prepare roti for one meal a day (often for the evening meal).

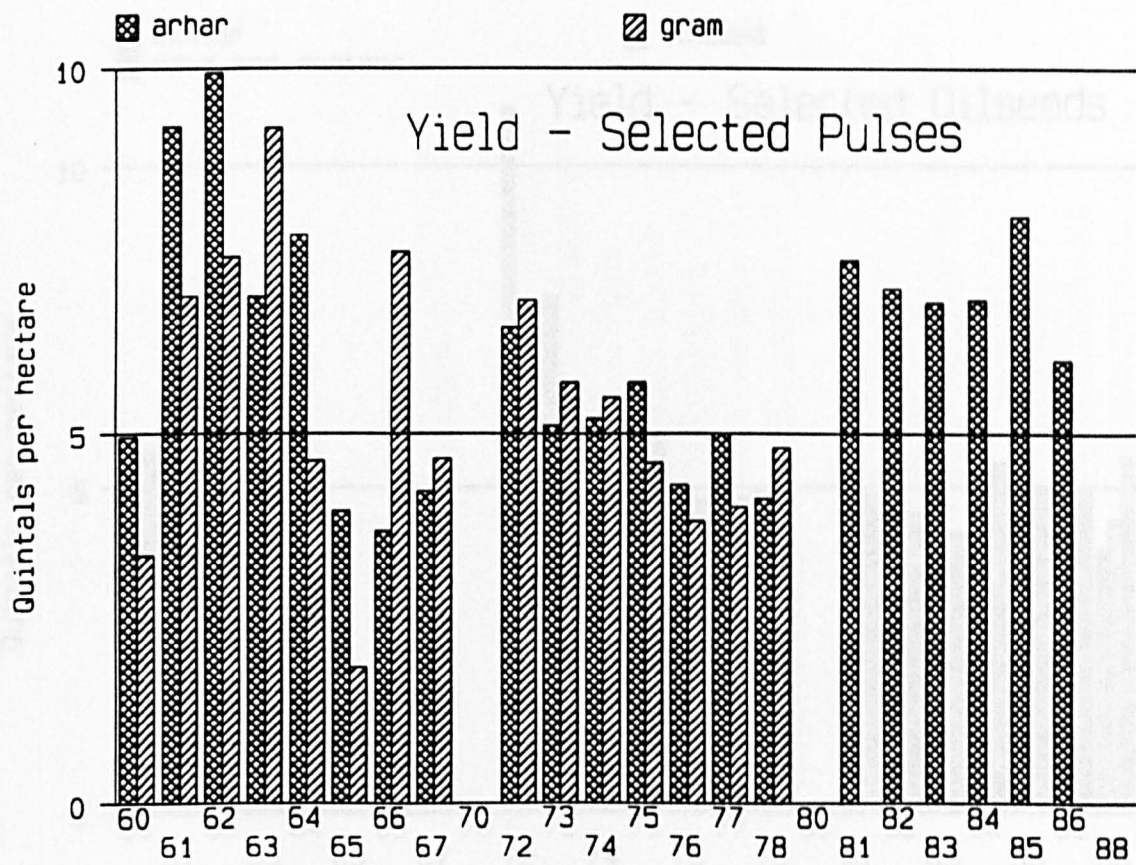


Fig. 4.32

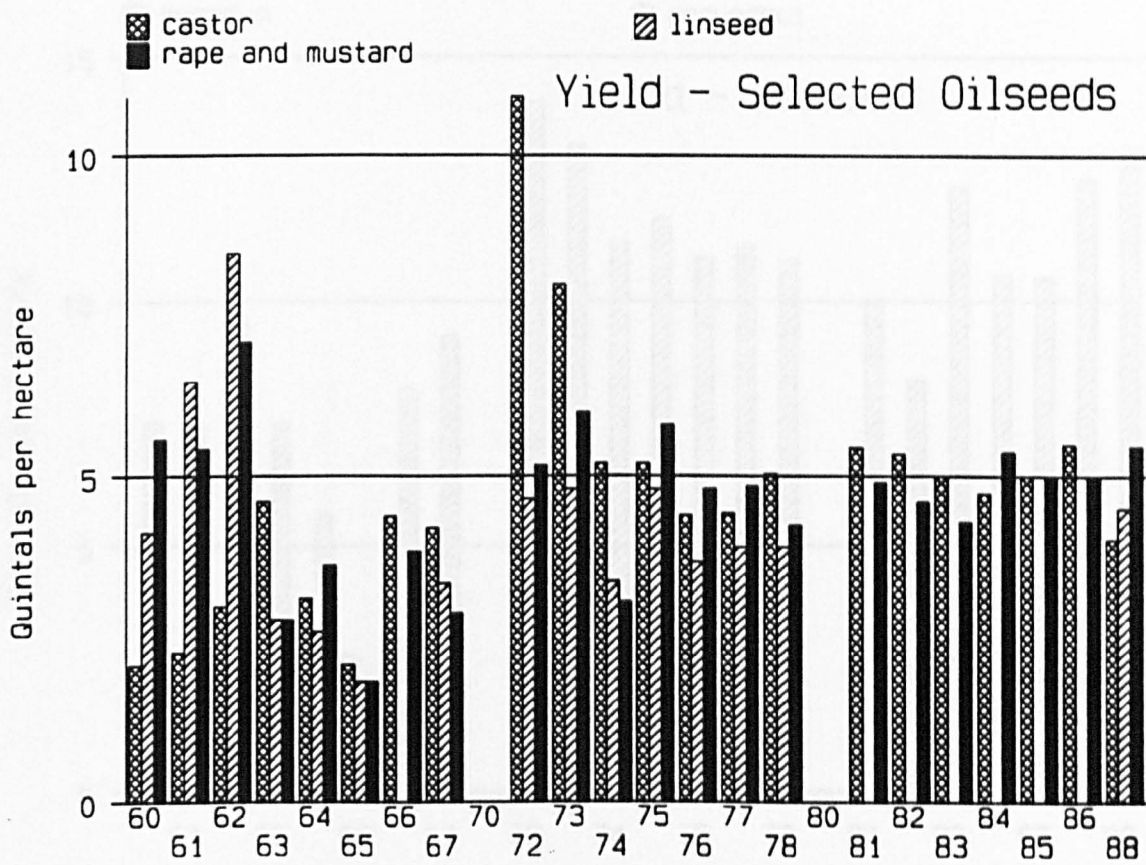


Fig. 4.33

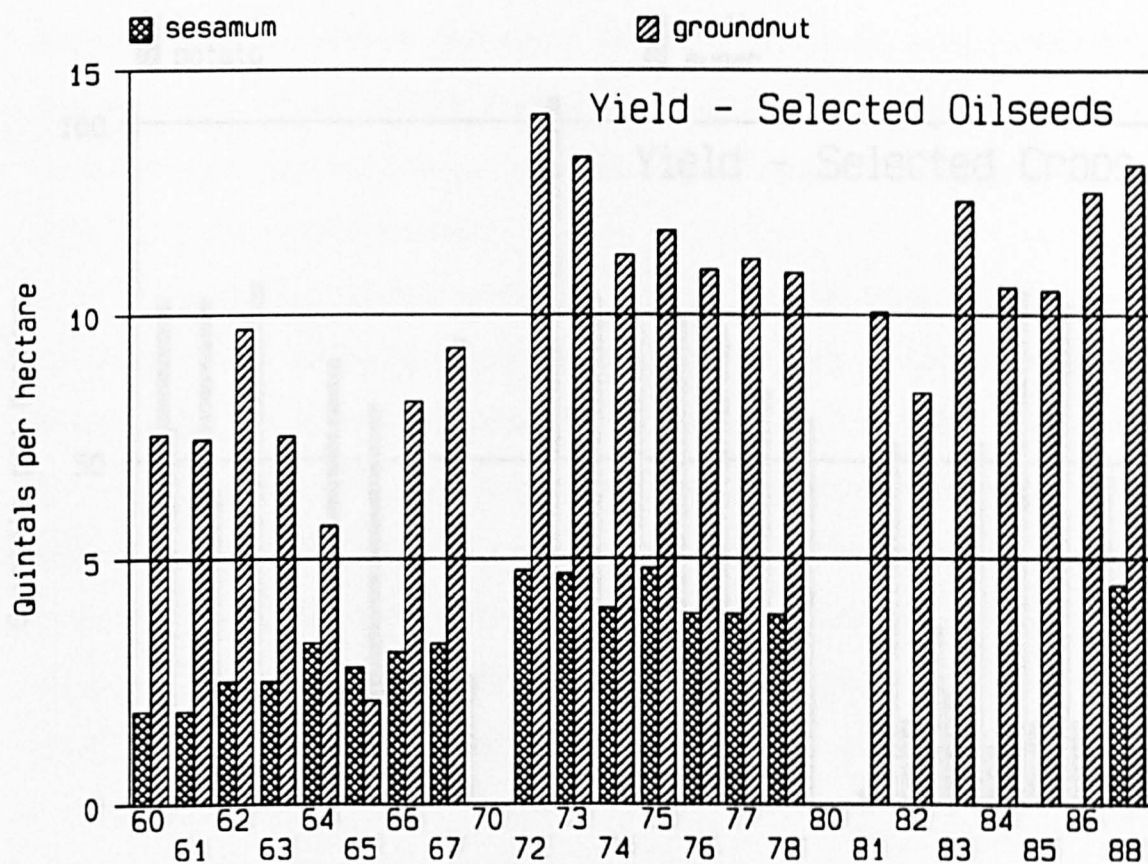


Fig. 4.34

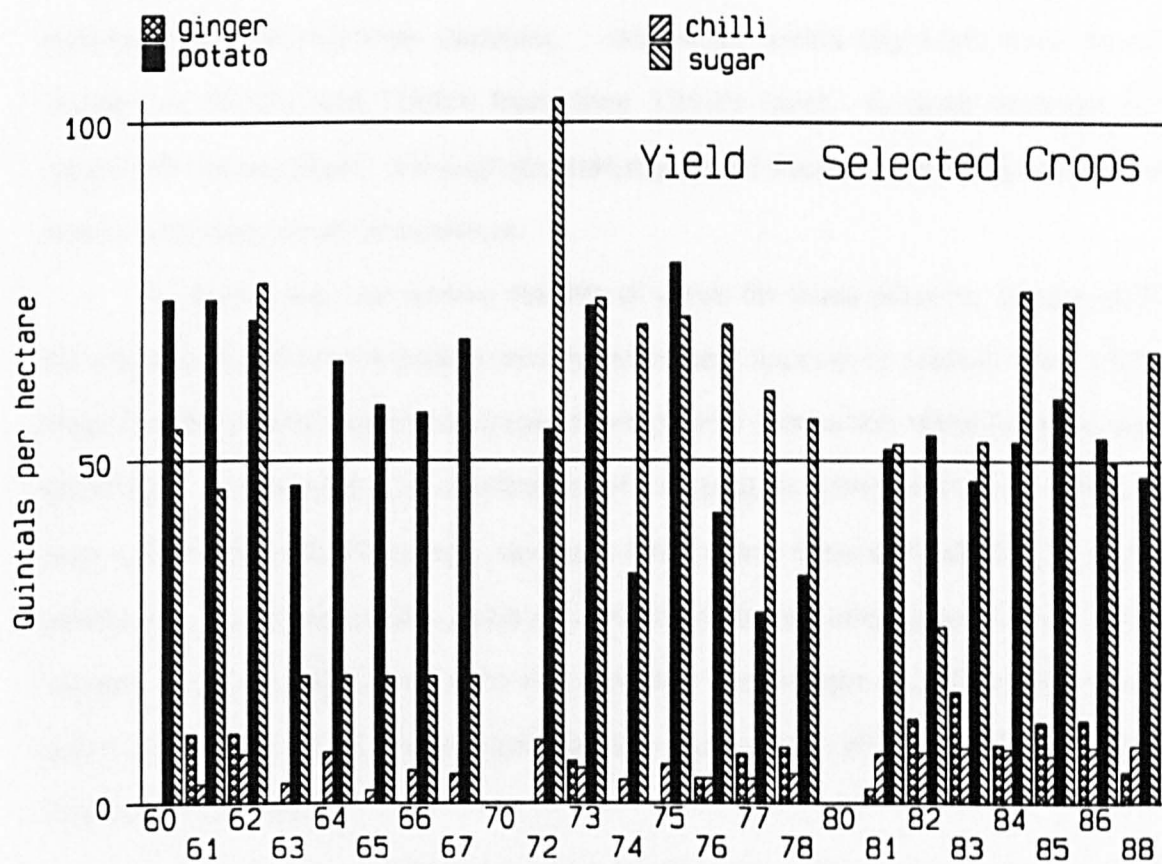


Fig. 4.35

relatively drought resistant oilseeds.

Some decline in yield is also observable for rape and mustard, and for linseed in 1974. However there was little further decline during the drought year of 1975. Although data is missing for linseed during the 1980's, yields for these other two oilseeds remained relatively constant. Groundnut yields (fig.4.34) have increased during the 1970's and 1980's from their 1960's level. A slight increase is also observable for sesamum. Although groundnut yield did decline observably during 1965, little change was noted for sesamum.

To summarise, the relative stability of yields for these oilseeds, along with those for the pulses and for the coarse cereals mentioned, appears to support the hypothesis that these less water dependent crops afford greater production stability during periods of drought. Consequently diversification of cropping patterns to include a mixture of ragi, millets, oilseeds and pulses, alongside more water dependent paddy (or instead of paddy) is a coping mechanism which may afford greater security to production for many farmers. However the above data indicates that the drought of 1965 appears to have been sufficiently severe to produce marked reductions in yields of relatively drought resistant crop types.

It should be noticed that 'coarse foodgrains' such as ragi and small millets represent an central component of the consumption pattern of many poorer persons in Kalahandi. It should also be noted that introduction of non-foodgrains such as oilseeds may represent an important means through which cultivators in the district can generate purchasing power. However because these crops must be sold or exchanged in order to access food and other essentials, production of such crops may increase the influence of market mechanisms in the process of meeting food security needs for these people.

4. Changing Levels of Crop Production Drawing upon earlier discussion in this chapter,

changing trends in levels of crop production in Kalahandi are likely to be a function of factors which include: (a) changes in area sown in the district under given crop types (b) changes in crop yields, influenced by the set of factors discussed in the previous sections. Again downturns in crop production may be expected to be more marked for water dependent crops such as paddy, than for crops with lower moisture requirements such as ragi and small millets, oilseeds and some pulses. However downward trends in crop production may be counterbalanced by extension in irrigation and other agricultural developments which may increase production levels in some regions of the district.

To examine these hypotheses time series data for crop production in Kalahandi has been prepared, again using data collected by the Dept. of Agriculture, Government of Orissa. A range of trends or conclusions are indicated by these time series:

1. If these categories are examined more closely in terms of individual crops it can be seen that winter rice is by far the most significant rice crop in the district in terms of Megatonnes produced.(fig.4.38)
2. It may be observed in fig.4.36 that there is little observable upward or downward secular trend in cereals production between 1960 and the late 1980's. However it may be noted that there is a significant fall in overall cereals production and in paddy production during the severe drought year of 1965.(fig 4.36 and 4.38). Whilst such a trend may be expected, according to the above hypotheses, for water dependent paddy, it is significant that a marked fall is also evident in production of more drought resistant small millets.(fig.4.39) Again this supports the conclusion drawn in the last section, that the 1965 drought was sufficiently severe to produce a significant downturn in production of this comparatively drought resistant variety of 'coarse' cereal. This reduction is not explained by reduced area sown under small millets during this year.
3. Some observable fall is also noted for production of ragi during 1964 and 1965.(fig 4.39) This traces a reduction in area sown under ragi during these years. Wheat

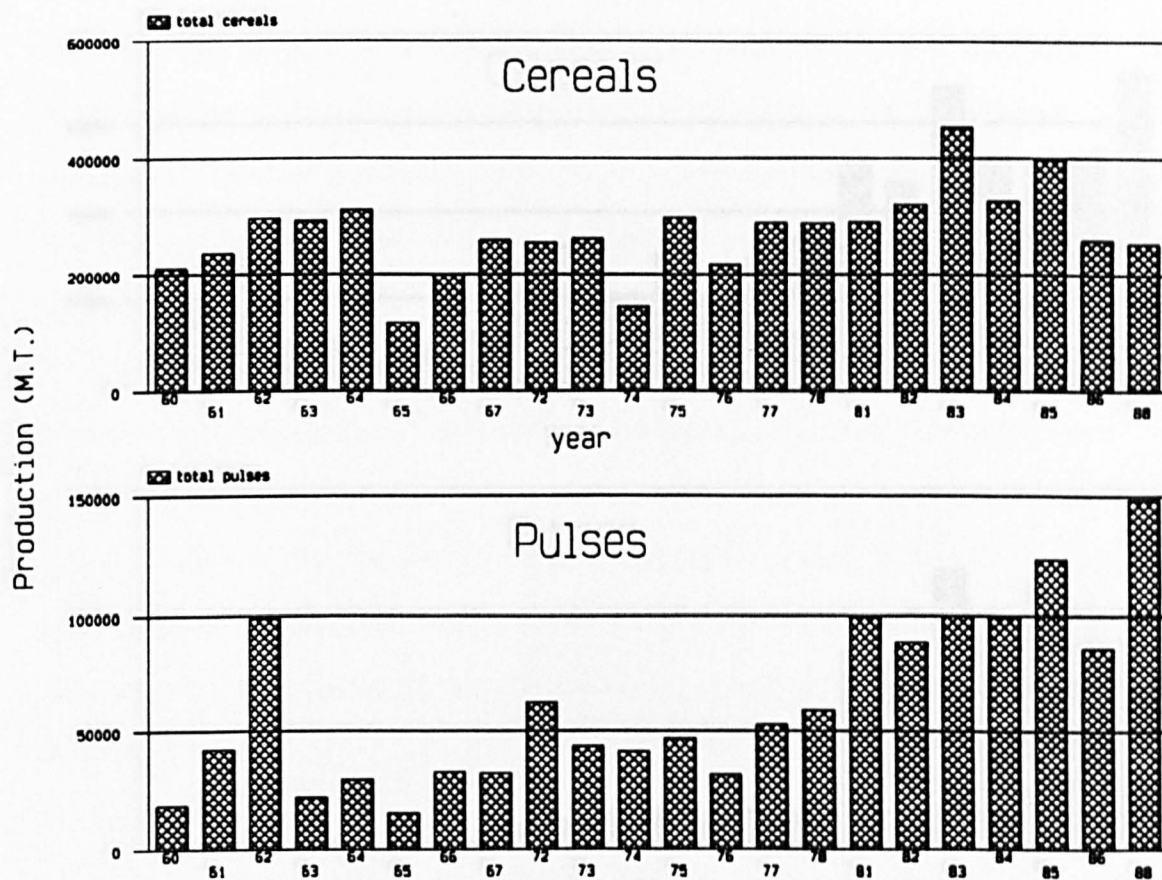


Fig. 4.36

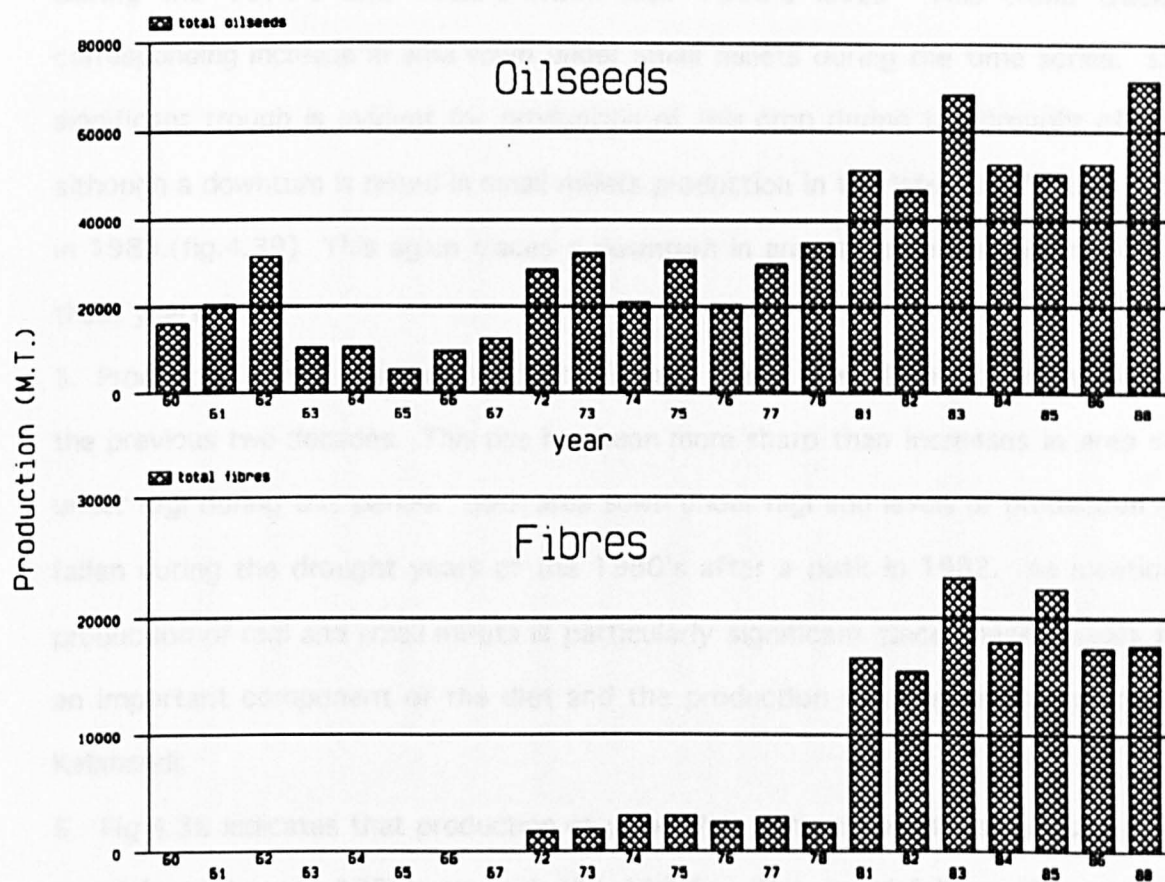


Fig. 4.37

production actually increased after a low in 1964 following a similar trend in area sown.

4. During this period there is a noticeable upwards shift in production of small millets during the 1970's and 1980's from their 1960's level. This trend traces a corresponding increase in area sown under small millets during the time series. Little significant trough is evident for production of this crop during the drought of 1975, although a downturn is noted in small millets production in the late 1980's from a peak in 1983.(fig.4.39) This again traces a downturn in area sown under this crop during these years.

5. Production of ragi has increased significantly during the 1980's from levels during the previous two decades. This rise has been more sharp than increases in area sown under ragi during this period. Both area sown under ragi and levels of production have fallen during the drought years of the 1980's after a peak in 1982. As mentioned, production of ragi and small millets is particularly significant since these cereals form an important component of the diet and the production of many poorer sections in Kalahandi.

6. Fig 4.36 indicates that production of pulses has demonstrated a significant upward trend from the mid 1970's through the 1980's. This trend follows the pattern of increased area sown under pulses during this period. Production fell noticeably during the drought year of 1965. This fall is not accounted for by a reduced area sown under pulses during this year.

Again this would indicate that despite their relatively low water requirement pulses have been affected adversely by deficient and untimely rainfall in the district. This is particularly marked during the severe drought of 1965. No marked reduction in pulses production is evident during the dry year of 1975 or during the 1980's, with the exception of 1986. Again during this year reduction in production was more marked than any reduction in area sown under pulses.

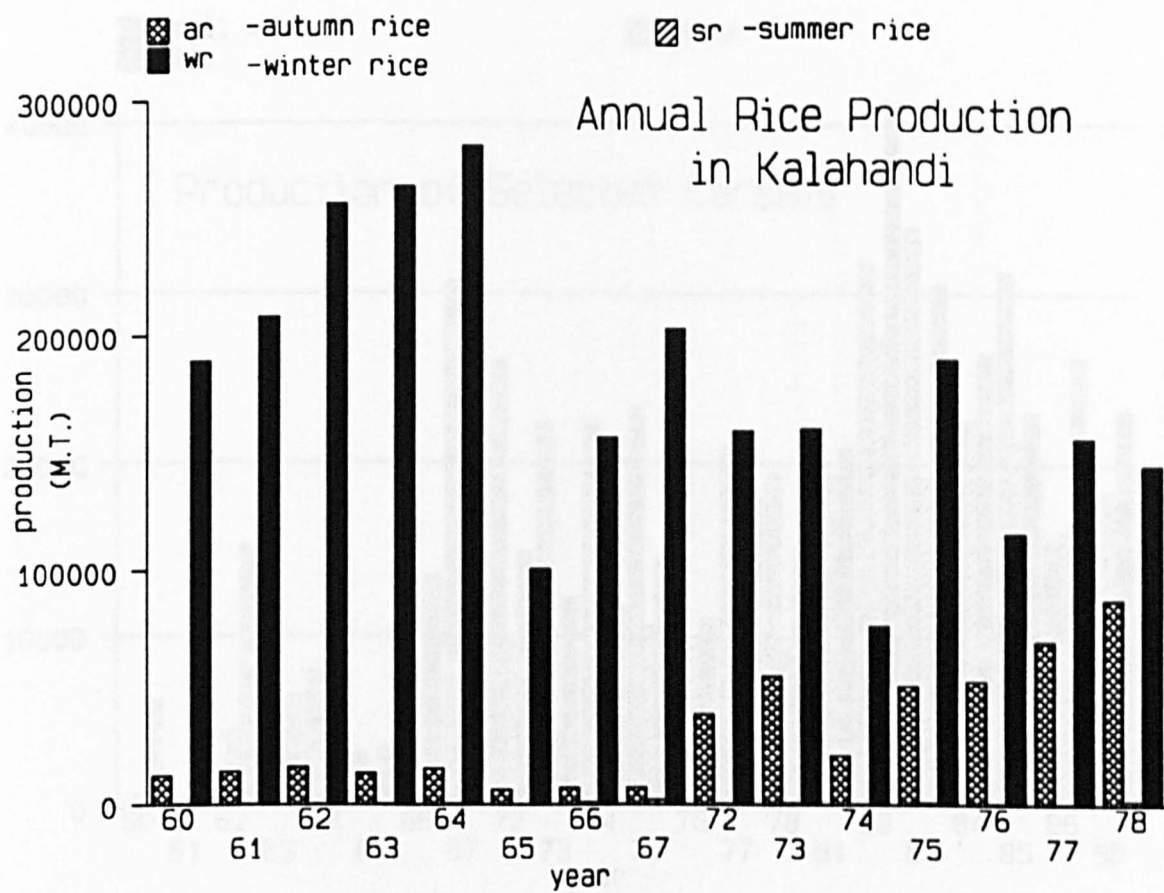


Fig. 4.38

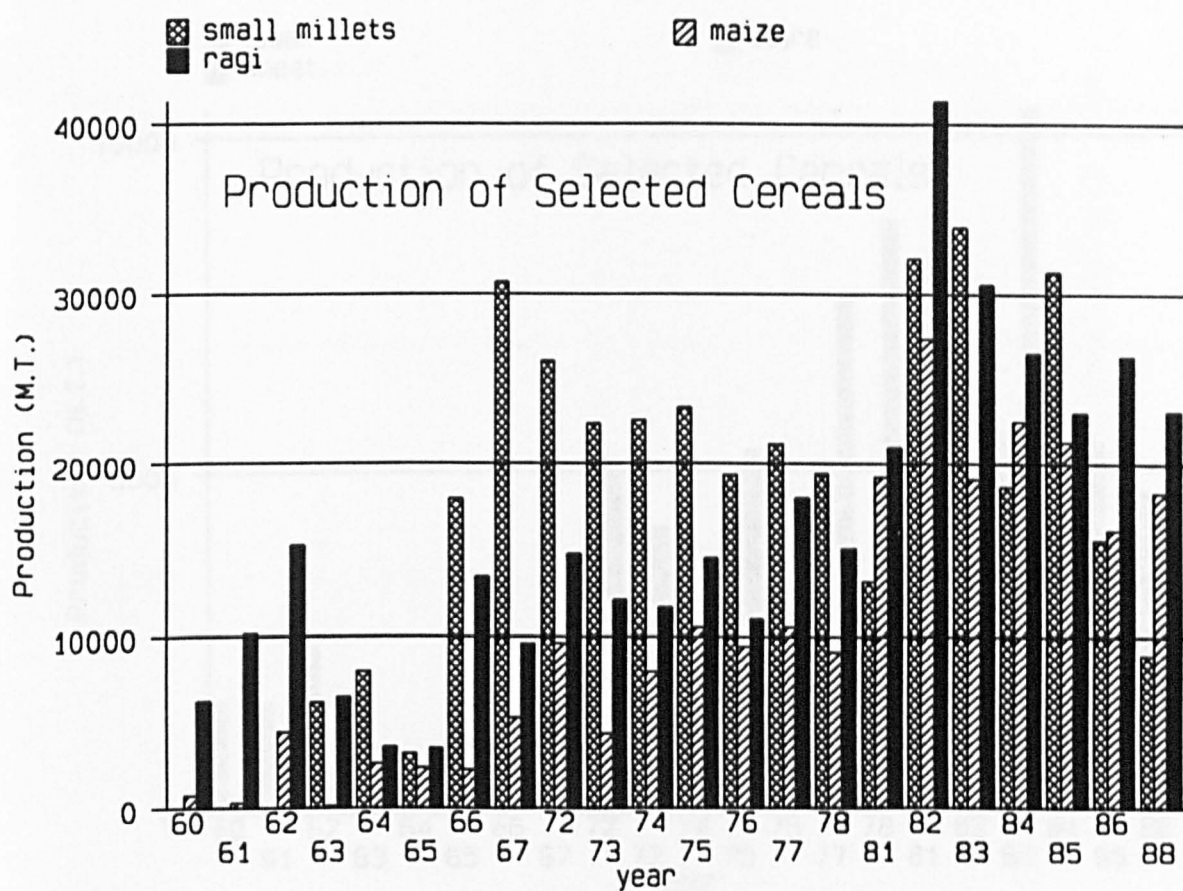


Fig. 4.39

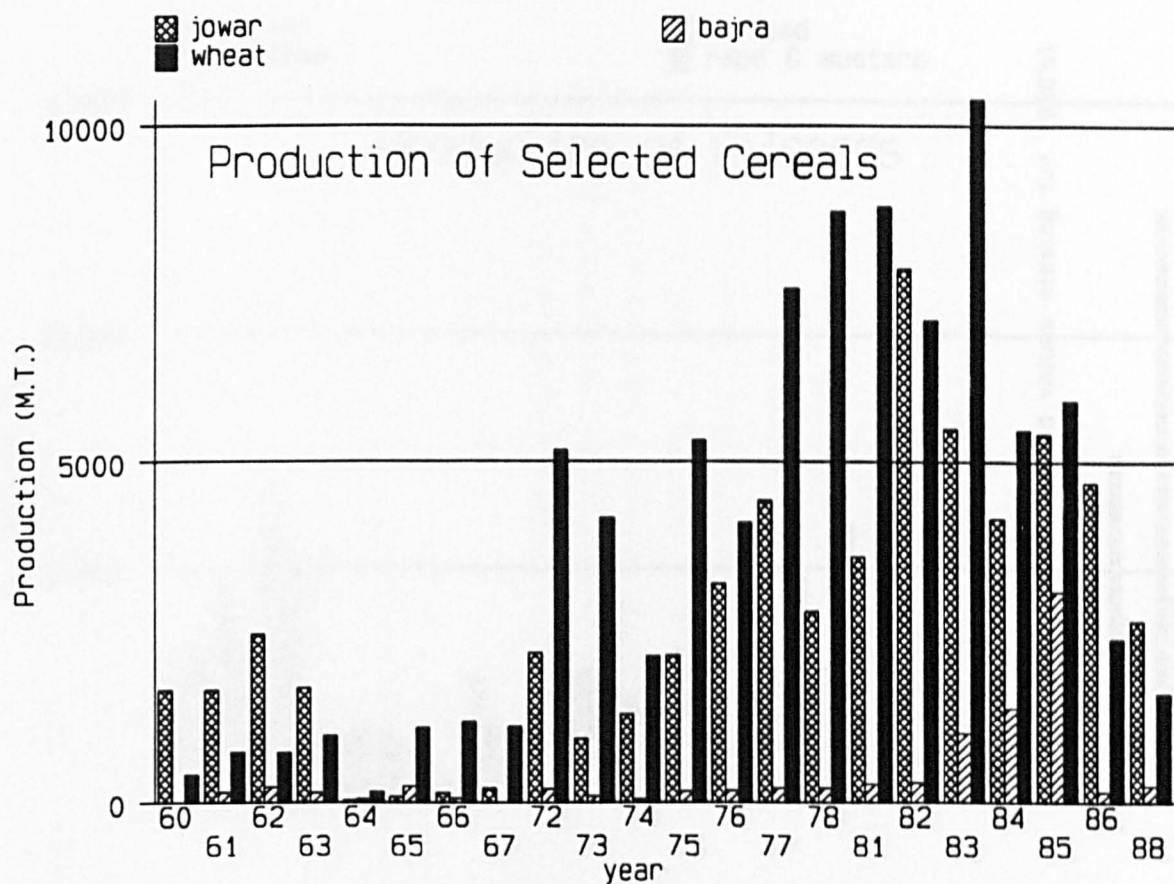


Fig. 4.40

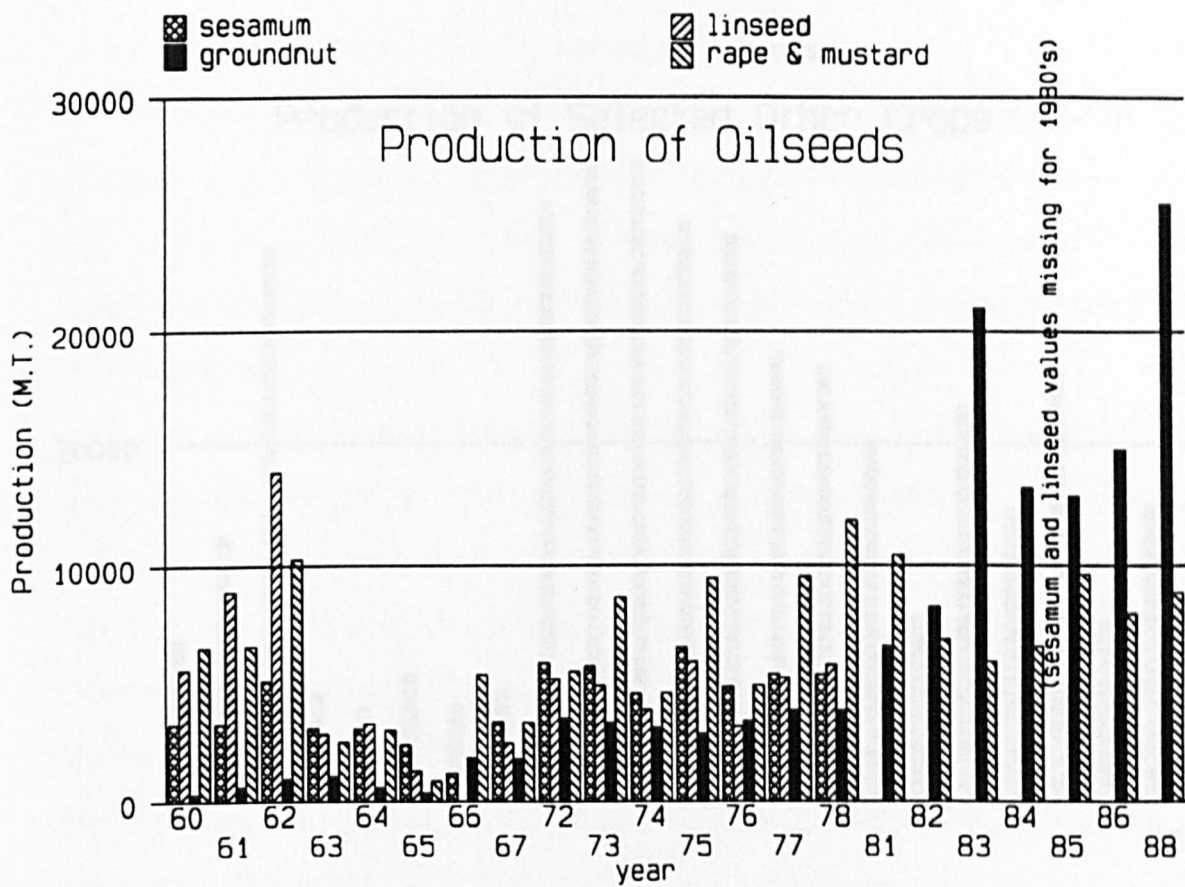


Fig. 4.41

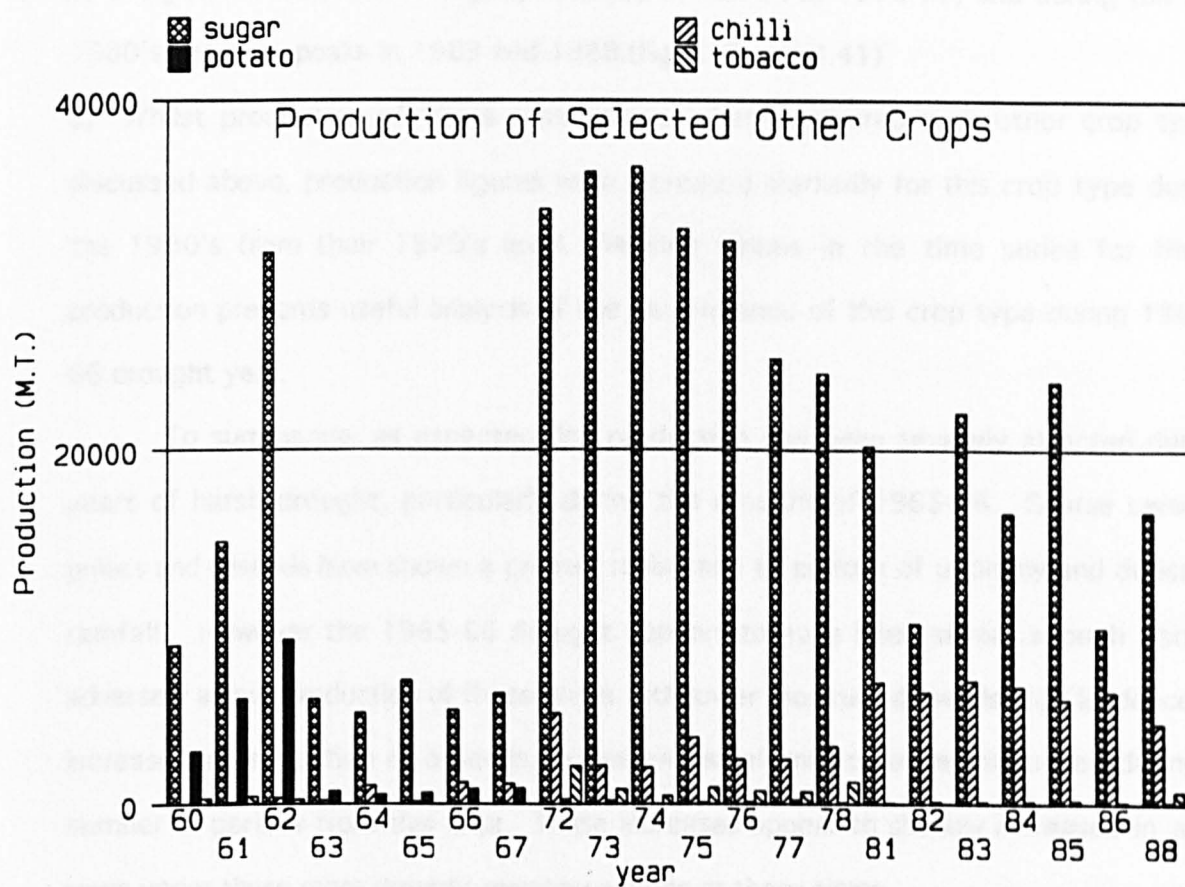


Fig. 4.42

7. Oilseeds have shown a similarly rising trend in production during the study period, following a rising trend of area planted under this crop type. A trough in production is observable in the 1965-66 drought year, again tracing a fall in area sown under pulses in this year. Production is slightly reduced in 1974-75, 1976-77, and during the mid 1980's between peaks in 1983 and 1988.(fig.4.37 and 4.41)

8. Whilst production of fibres remains low when compared with other crop types discussed above, production figures have increased markedly for this crop type during the 1980's from their 1970's level. Missing values in the time series for fibres production prevents useful analysis of the performance of this crop type during 1965-66 drought year.

To summarise, as expected rice production has been severely affected during years of harsh drought, particularly during the drought of 1965-66. Coarse cereals, pulses and oilseeds have shown a greater resistance to periods of untimely and deficient rainfall. However the 1965-66 drought appears to have been severe enough also to adversely affect production of these crops with lower moisture dependence. Evidence of increases in production of oilseeds, pulses and small millets is demonstrated during a number of periods from this data. These increases appear to shadow increases in area sown under these more drought resistance crops at these times.

This section has discussed the importance of the agricultural economy in Kalahandi in providing a part or full component of many people's food entitlement in the district. The next section discusses the importance of the component of their entitlement which people are able to meet through food bought from market outlets with purchasing power generated in waged employment, or obtained directly through wages in kind.

4.4 Access to Employment

As demonstrated in fig. 3.1, a large percentage of the Kalahandi's population rely upon agricultural employment to meet their cash needs and to generate purchasing power. According to provisional figures for the 1991 Census of India, in addition to 48.7% of the district's population which are classified as cultivators, a further 38.5% of this population are listed as agricultural labourers. As the principal source of employment in the district, agricultural labour commonly provides the principal access of landless persons to food, either through wage payments in kind, or more commonly by using cash wages to purchase food from market outlets. Small and marginal cultivators, who may be unable to meet household requirements for food and other essentials from their own production, may also rely on supplementary employment to generate purchasing power required to meet this shortfall.²³

Frequent years of drought and crop failure which have prevailed in Kalahandi in recent decades have produced a severe deterioration in the food security position of agricultural labourers, as well as that of cultivators owning land. As discussed in chapter 4.2, the insecurity attached to agricultural production in some parts of the district is such that farmers with plots of 10 acres or more are facing difficulties when the rains fail. Faced with rising input costs and little assurance that their costs can be recovered in the incidence of crop failure, the latter often expressed unwillingness to take on labour at the state-directed minimum wage of Rs.25 per day. Consequently they are tending to reduce the number of labourers they employ, or continuing to pay below this minimum in breach of the law. Both courses of action hold obvious adverse effects for agricultural labourers.

²³ Indeed Kautsky argues that::

'the same development which in the one hand creates a demand for wage labourers, creates, on the other hand, these wage labourers themselves. It proletarianises masses of peasants, cuts down the size of the peasant family and throws the redundant members onto the labour market. Finally this process enhances the peasants' dependence on subsidiary sources of income: as they find it impossible to earn an income from the sale of agricultural produce, they sell their labour power.' ('The Agrarian Question,' translated in Banaji, 1980:48)

This factor has meant that in many instances minimum wage provisions have had little effect in the agricultural sector. Wages in the district commonly remain very low, sometimes Rs.10 per day or less.²⁴ As demonstrated in figs.4.43 and 4.44, Government of Orissa published statistics indicate that although wage rates have slowly increased, daily wages for field labourers as recently as 1987 remained at Rs.8 or below.²⁵ This problem is accentuated because cultivation often only extends for four months of the year. The lack of double-cropping in most districts limits availability of agricultural employment outside of this period. During the remaining months of the year little alternative source of purchasing power may be available without migrating to other regions in search of work.

The severity of this situation becomes more apparent if comparison is again made with the Guntur region of Andhra Pradesh. Here the possibility of producing two paddy crops per year, along with additional crops of vegetables and other produce, enables many labourers to obtain virtually year-round employment. Further, labourers in Guntur have tended to have greater bargaining power than their counterparts in Kalahandi. Firstly, farmers' incomes have tend to be higher in Guntur due to the lower incidence of crop failure and the higher yields obtained in this region. Secondly, multiple cropping, and the consequently longer cropping season, has created a higher demand for labour. For this reason agricultural employees in Guntur have tended to be in a stronger position to press for higher wages and improved working conditions.

Indeed, it is perhaps significant that a number of farmers interviewed in Guntur suggested that the most important factor which limited their ability to make higher profits from farming was the rapidly increasing wage rates paid to agricultural labourers. Farmers claimed to pay male labourers Rs.30 for working a 6am. until noon day. Even since the introduction of the Orissa minimum wage provision, this rate remains far higher than that paid in Kalahandi. For this reason

²⁴ Indeed in 1982 the Kalahandi Investigative Commission (The Panda Commission) appointed by the speaker of the Orissa Legislative Assembly reported average wages to be only Rs.3 per day in this sector.

²⁵ Figures compiled using data from Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics (including Statistical Abstracts, various years)

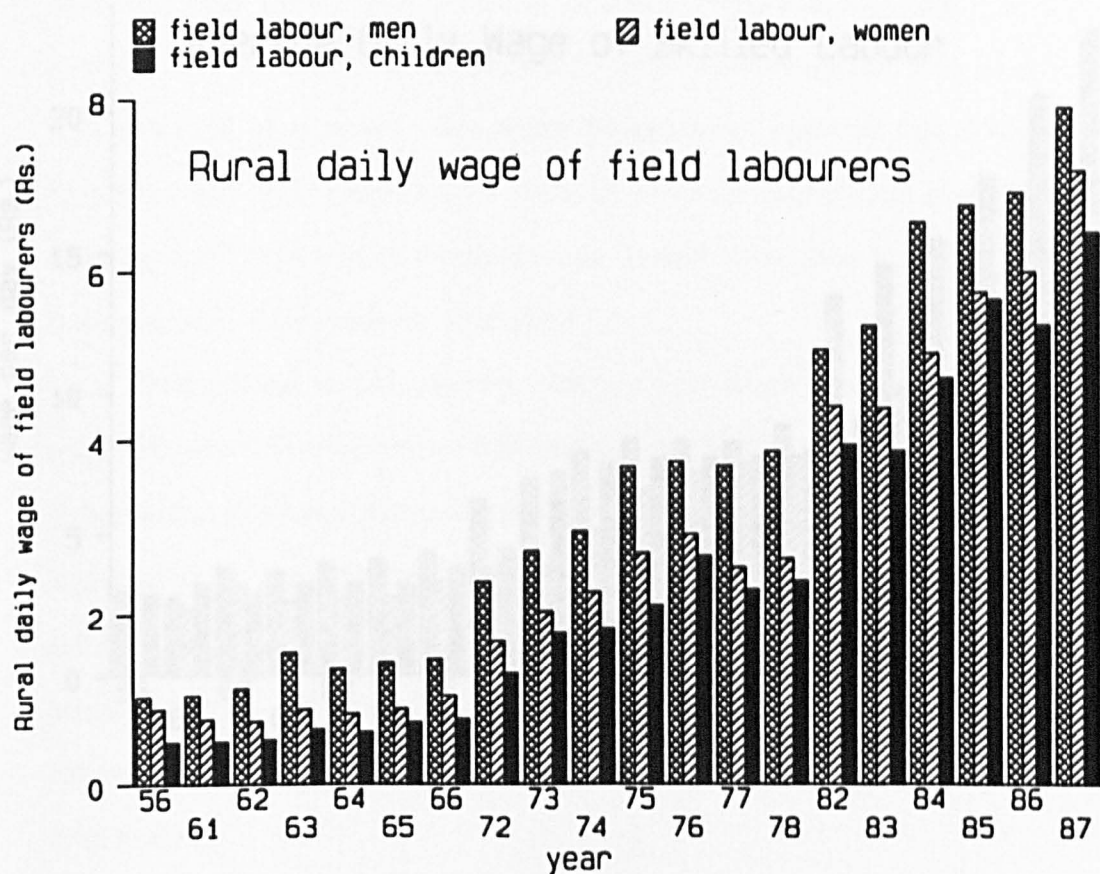


Fig. 4.43

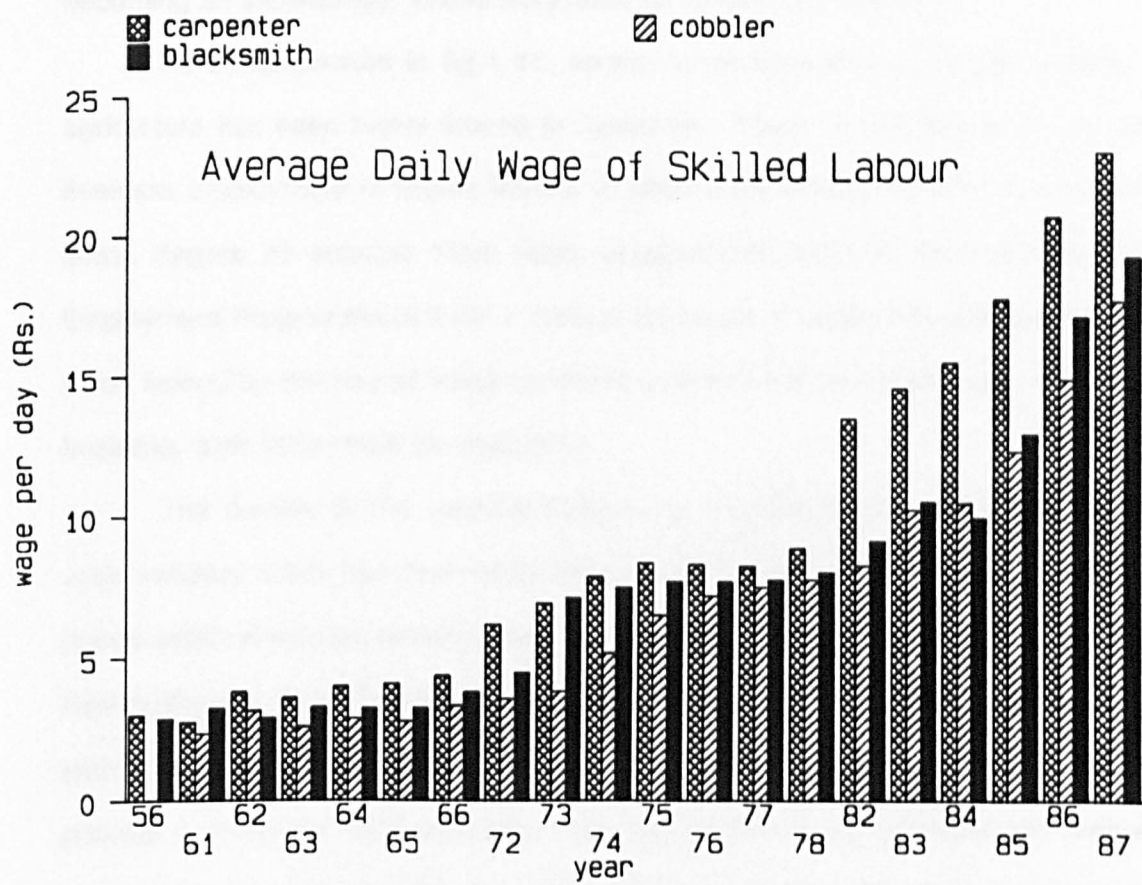


Fig. 4.44

female labourers, who were only being paid Rs.13 for working the same hours, were becoming an increasingly valued workforce for employers in Guntur.

As demonstrated in fig.4.45, access to employment in sectors outside of agriculture has been highly limited in Kalahandi. There is no industry of any size. Business employment is largely limited to small scale employers who have received some degree of support from state programmes such as the National Rural Employment Programme.(N.R.E.P.) Also, employment creation has commonly tended to be limited by the size of these concerns to little more than five or six persons per business, with little room for expansion.

The decline in the weaving industry in Sinapali is one example of a small scale industry which has been badly affected in the district. The market for woven goods within Kalahandi remains low, in part because many have been forced during repeated years of food crisis to reduce their expenditure on such commodities. The external market for handicrafts has been insufficient to protect employment and to provide a living for local weavers. For this reason many amongst the weaving community are becoming deeply impoverished and finding difficulties in maintaining food security.

A similar predicament was faced by weavers in Guntur, amongst whom a number of starvation deaths had been reported in recent years.²⁶ Interviews carried out amongst weavers in Mangalagiri in May 1992 revealed that despite the relative agricultural prosperity in the region, the reduced market for woven goods has meant that many weavers have difficulty in securing employment at reasonable wage rates. For this reason, although there was no lack of food availability in the district, many were facing difficulties in maintaining adequate access to food due to their limited opportunities for generating purchasing power.

Opportunities for employment in wider sectors in Kalahandi are limited or non-existent. The proposed opening of a Rs.250 Crore sugar plant at Dharamgarh in

²⁶ The market for woven goods in Andhra Pradesh had been badly affected by the reduced distribution of saris and other clothing through the P.D.S. which had been maintained by N.T. Rama Rao's Telugu Desam State Government.(Dr.K.C. Suri, Nagarjuna University, personal correspondence).

Fig. 4.45 Registered Factories in Kalahandi by Block

District	Covered	Closed/ extinct	Defaulter	Reported	Total employees	Value of output (Rs. lakh)	Value added by manufacture (Rs. lakh)
Balasore	134	32	8	94	4	7181	-65
Bolangir	70	26	5	39	3	1220	108
Cuttack	361	127	31	203	19	32827	3762
Dhenkenal	76	21	3	52	7	22208	1912
Ganjam	156	44	14	98	4	2600	272
Kalahandi	62	28	5	29	1	445	-20
Keonjhar	29	7	2	20	4	9808	1367
Koraput	131	48	10	73	7	15444	4395
Mayurbhanj	93	43	7	43	2	4462	548
Phulbani	7	3	.	4	negligible	25	1
Puri	381	74	41	266	48	33114	3346
Sambalpur	238	79	12	147	17	28679	6073
Sundargarh	243	63	12	168	40	130302	23457

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Kalahandi may extend job availability for local people, and may also offer an opportunity for cultivators to reduce their current reliance on paddy production by diversifying into production of sugar cane. However other proposed industries of a more technical nature, even if industrialists are prepared to establish in the district, may generate few opportunities for local people.²⁷ The lack of access which people in the area have to technical training creates a situation where technical and administrative jobs will be filled primarily by outsiders, leaving only jobs as labourers and peons for the local population.²⁸

Further, recruitment in such industries is generally controlled by people from coastal Orissa and from other states, who may feel little responsibility to meet local employment requirements. Even if some reservation quota is included to ensure that a section of 'better' jobs fall to local people, in the current circumstances and without corresponding changes in the educational structure to ensure that required training is available, these people are unlikely to be adequately equipped to perform the jobs that they are given.

For these reasons the range of sources for generating purchasing power remains highly limited in Kalahandi. For many, their lack of access to land leaves them highly vulnerable to food insecurity, since they are unable to meet even a small part of their need for food and other essentials from their own production. Much of the district's population continues to rely upon employment in agriculture to generate cash to buy food from market outlets. Consequently, the nature of people's contact with market mechanisms may be an important determinant of their ability to maintain a food secure position. This factor is explored further in the next section.

4.5 Market Structure

²⁷ This has already been seen in other areas. In Bargomunda, in Bolangir district, few local people found jobs when a cement works was opened. Instead employees came primarily from coastal Orissa and other districts. In Rourkela jobs at the steel works have similarly often gone to outsiders. A similar trend has also to some extent been experienced in industries created in Koraput. (Dr. Fanindem Deo, personal communication.)

²⁸ Already in Kalahandi there is a rule that Class 4 jobs (such as peons etc.) must be given to people coming from the district. However in practice it was suggested that this frequently does not operate since Tahasildars, B.D.O.'s and other officials frequently come from coastal Orissa and other places and continue to give these jobs to outsiders.

The ability of many people to maintain food security in Kalahandi is strongly influenced by the nature and the extent of their contact with market mechanisms. As mentioned, for many cultivators and petty commodity producers sale of their produce in market outlets represents an important source of purchasing power which can be used to buy food and other essentials. For the landless, or those with marginal holdings, market purchases with wages generated in waged employment may represent the principal component of their food entitlement.

As discussed in chapter 4.4, wages paid in employment in Kalahandi remain low in many instances. This is in spite of the Rs.25 state enforced minimum wage which has been introduced in the district. Interviews made during fieldwork for this study in Kalahandi indicate that many persons relying on purchases of food and other essentials have faced reductions in their purchasing power due to rising retail prices for these goods. Variations in retail prices for a range of commodities are detailed in figs 4.46 to 4.49.²⁹

Participation in market mechanisms regularly has contradictory affects. The growing commoditisation and monetisation of the local rural economies, and the opening up of these economies to outside traders, has on one hand often increased the opportunities for outsiders to exploit local communities, and to make profits at their expense. On the other hand, increased access to market outlets may produce an additional avenue through which people can meet their food needs by increasing the availability of food and other essentials which are not produced locally.³⁰ However increased rates of market transactions in these villages does not necessarily guarantee that local people have sufficient money to buy the wider range of foodstuffs

²⁹ A more complete analysis of the effect of variations in purchasing power on people's ability to maintain food security demands a more complete study of wages and costs than have been possible in this study. Such a study is intended as part of a forthcoming follow-up study in these regions. Information of wages and prices at Orissa level was available from National Sample Survey material. However marked inter-district variations within Orissa and intradistrict variations within Kalahandi make these a poor indicator of purchasing power of persons living in Kalahandi.

³⁰ Previously people may have had to undergo considerable inconvenience to gain access to these goods, or may have been forced to pay highly inflated prices if these goods had to be transported into interior areas from elsewhere.

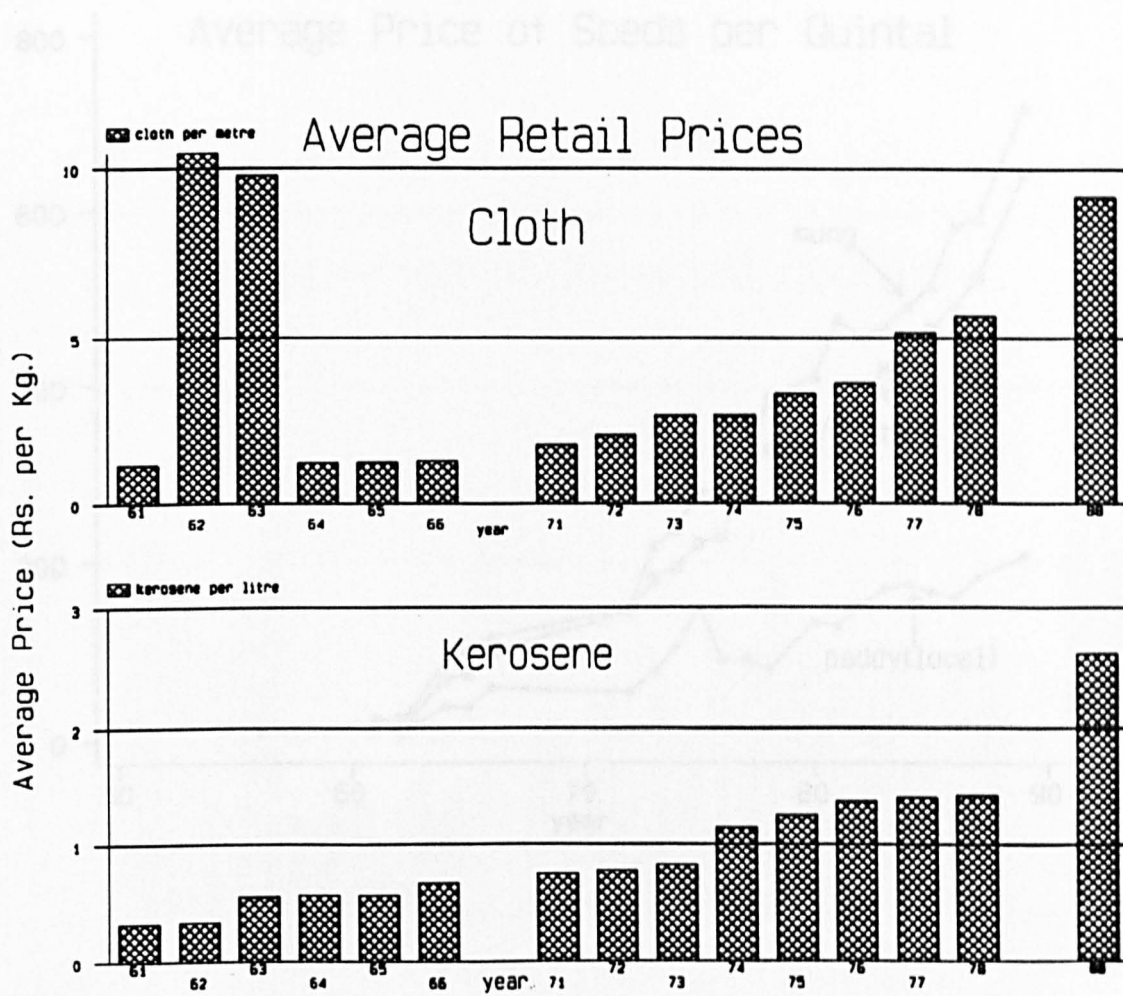


Fig. 4.46

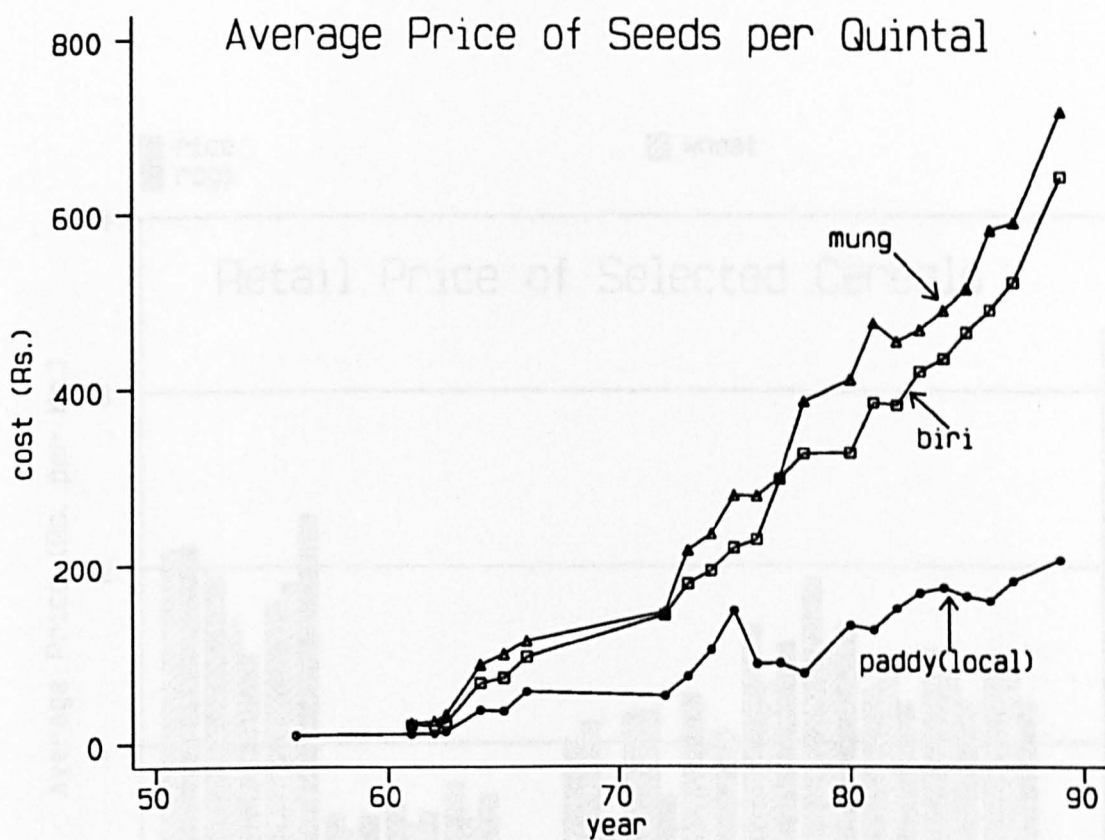


Fig. 4.47

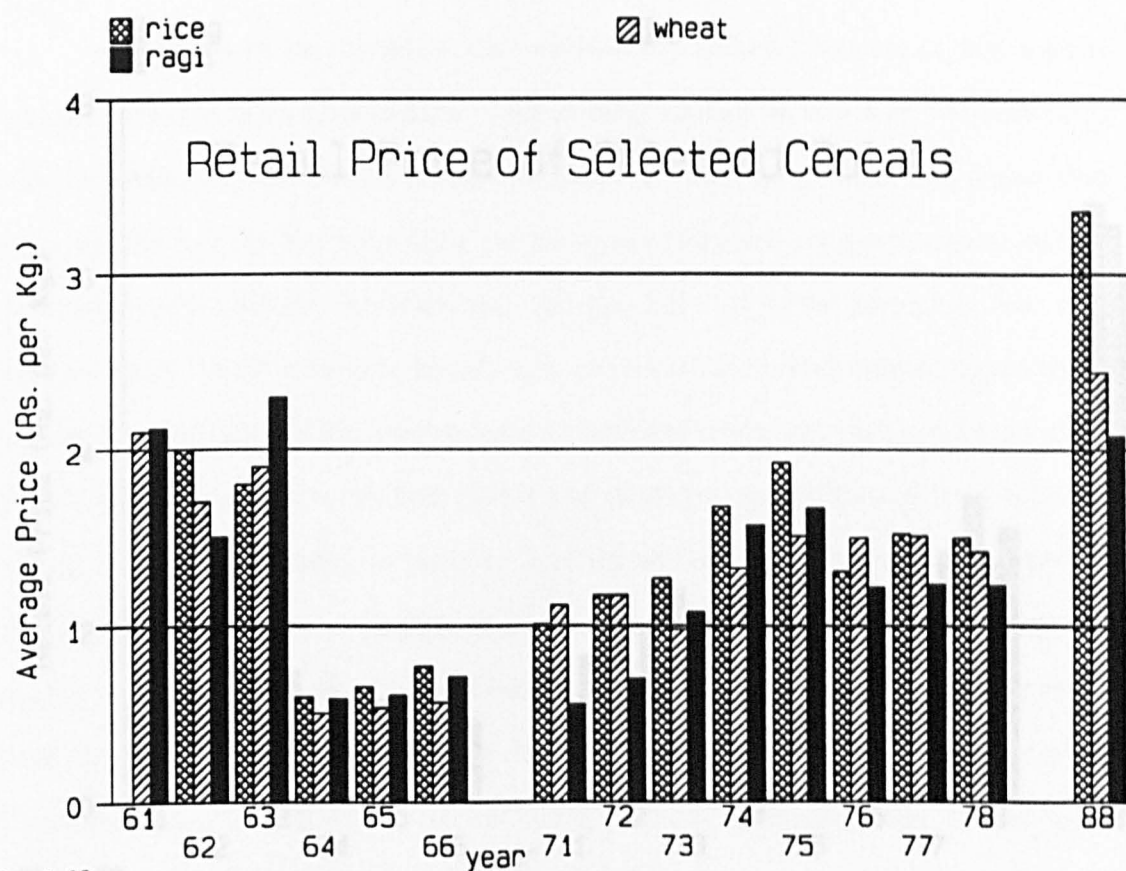


Fig. 4.48

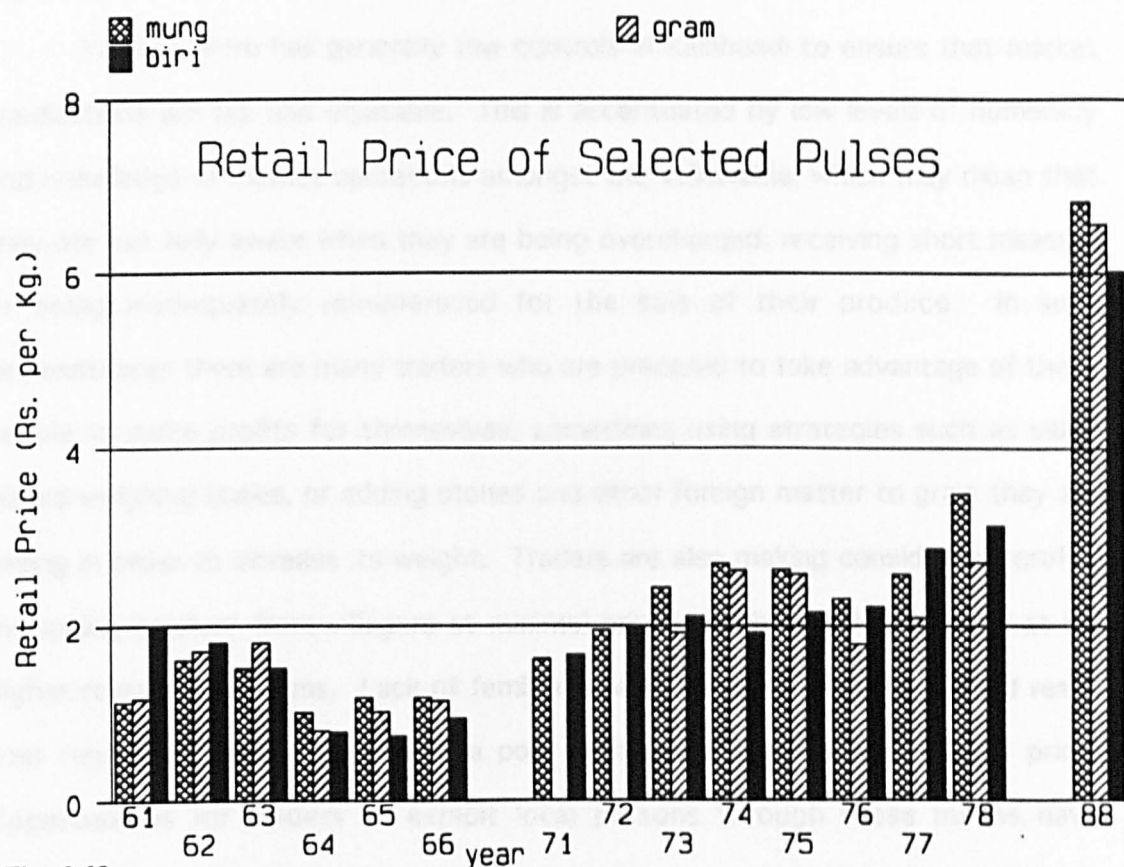


Fig. 4.49

and other goods which may become available. Instead this process may have the contradictory affect of increasing the availability of food and other commodities in the market, but without improving their access to the purchasing power required to buy them.

Further there has generally few controls in Kalahandi to ensure that market transactions are fair and equitable. This is accentuated by low levels of numeracy and knowledge of market operations amongst the vulnerable, which may mean that they are not fully aware when they are being overcharged, receiving short measure or being inadequately remunerated for the sale of their produce. In such circumstances there are many traders who are prepared to take advantage of these people to make profits for themselves, sometimes using strategies such as using biased weighing scales, or adding stones and other foreign matter to grain they are selling in order to increase its weight. Traders are also making considerable profits by buying produce from villagers at minimal prices which can then be sold at far higher rates in the towns. Lack of familiarity with what these goods should really cost regularly leaves the seller in a poor position to bargain for a higher price. Opportunities for traders to exploit local persons through these means have increased as roads and communications have been extended to villages lying in interior pockets in the district.

This trend was clearly visible in Thuamur Rampur, where roads and tracks built to provide access for construction equipment for the Upper Indravati Dam project have had the affect of opening up remote areas to outsiders. In some villages inhabitants shortly to be displaced on completion of the dam had been paid large lump-sum payments to meet the costs of their resettlement. However many have already used a large share of this cash to buy liquor or luxury goods (such as 'two-wheelers'³¹ or 'two-in-ones'³²), rather than keeping this to build a new house and meet other costs after they have been resettled. This sudden increase in liquidity

³¹ ie. motorbikes or scooters.

³² ie. radio-cassette recorders.

within the community has created tastes for new commodities which these people can often ill afford. Outside traders have been able to take advantage of this trend to make rapid profits out of these villagers.

Indeed there are many instances where for those with the resources and the knowledge to take advantage of them, market operations in the district provide good opportunities for making windfall profits. In Boden block a number of 'marwaris' have established well developed networks in many villages for buying mahua flower picked by local people. Agents living in the villages are paid by the marwaris to purchase the flower from the latter at low prices. This is then sold elsewhere at a higher rate, bringing profits to the marwaris, and a commission and respect to the agent. As mentioned, it has frequently been harijans (Doms as they may be called in Kashipur area) who have played this role of intermediary. By maintaining such a system marwaris are able to minimise their direct interaction with villagers, and are able to make use of agents who may be well connected in the village to procure commodities efficiently at low price.³³

In contrast, for those who do not have the resources or knowledge of market operations to take advantage of these opportunities, the way that the market is structured may be an important explanatory variable in their low ability to maintain food security. In the Kashipur region, a lack of an adequate marketing channels for forest products collected by tribals (such as incense, honey and brushwood) means that these people are frequently forced to sell this produce for between one tenth and one twelfth of the proper price to middlemen and Government agencies. (Aragamee,b) Again these transactions often take place through Doms. Low levels of education and social consciousness in this region mean that people have little voice when it comes to protesting against the exploitative nature of this market structure.

³³ One further avenue for profit making which was encountered in Boden block involved the sale of petrol. Since there was no petrol station in the village a number of *marwaris* (to use the term used by the person interviewed) were able to make considerable profit by transporting petrol from the garage at Kharlar (purchased at Rs.17.50 per litre) and selling this in Boden itself at a rate of Rs.20 per litre. It was also suggested that the profits from this venture were further increased by mixing the petrol with kerosene oil before it was resold.

For others vulnerability may be strongly influenced by seasonal variations in market conditions. For many food producers, a lack of suitable storage facilities means that produce has to be sold shortly after it is harvested. This is particularly the case for perishable commodities such as tomatoes and other vegetables. This may create a situation where local markets become flooded with certain commodities at particular times of year. This oversupply forces down prices which are paid to producers.

Such a situation was apparent in the Boden area during February and early March. At this time many people were trying to sell their tomato crop in local markets. High supply to the market forced down the price which producers could obtain for their product to a low level. However two months later when this crop had been finished and locally produced tomatoes were no longer available in the region, consumers were having to purchase tomatoes which had been transported from Khariar Road at inflated prices in local markets. Market bottlenecks and lack of storage facilities therefore prevent produce being released into the market evenly throughout the year.

The effect which season fluctuations in market condition may have on people's ability to maintain purchasing power in Kalahandi may be evidenced in the case of a group of Paharia tribals living close to Mahalpadar in Boden block.³⁴ These people do not own any agricultural land and have little knowledge of how to cultivate. Instead the inhabitants rely primarily on purchasing power generated from basket weaving to purchase their food from local markets. Their diet is supplemented with minor forest produce collected in nearby forest. Forest produce also helps to meet requirements for firewood and other needs.

The baskets produced by these people are sold primarily in the local Sunday and Monday hats³⁵, and also to traders who come to their village from outside, often from Madhya Pradesh. At the time of my visit they suggested that in the previous

³⁴ This hamlet was composed of nine Paharia families.

³⁵ ie. In local weekly markets in nearby villages.

week they had sold about Rs.80 worth of baskets and other products. For this time of the year, they argued that this level of sales was good in terms of the number of baskets sold. However the price they had received for these baskets was low due to reduced demand in the early months of the year.³⁶ In the cultivating season they suggested that the price that would be paid for these products would increase, since farmers required baskets and other receptacles for collecting harvested produce and other tasks. At this time the same sales would therefore probably have earned Rs.120

This example again illustrates the extent to which people's difficulties in maintaining food security at certain times of the year may be heightened by seasonal market fluctuations. The minimal purchasing power created by this form of production is also evident. Average family size in this village is roughly six persons. This indicates that if a household is able to generate Rs.120 per week during the cultivating season, then the average daily income for each household member would be only Rs.3. In the winter months the situation becomes more acute, with household weekly income falling to only Rs.80 per week. At this time daily average per capita income therefore falls to Rs.2. From these figures it is evident that the purchasing power of such families is severely limited, and insufficient to enable them to meet all their food needs from market purchases. For this reason forest produce and wild foods form an essential component of their diet and other basic needs.

It should be stressed that for many such households use of wild foods and forest produce is not a coping mechanism utilised only in times of 'food crisis'. These practises are commonly used on a daily basis throughout the year to meet their food requirements. It should also be recognised that since they do not cultivate themselves, these people become particularly vulnerable during periods of shortage. At such times the demand for products such as baskets tends to be dramatically reduced, as households minimise their expenditure on 'non-essential' items. Consequently, the principal source of purchasing power for Paharia families at these times may be

³⁶ This interview was conducted in February.

virtually eliminated. For these reasons it is perhaps unsurprising that this community was considered to be one of the poorest and most vulnerable in the block.

4.6 Education and Literacy

These problems are undoubtedly accentuated by the low levels of education and literacy which remain a significant and well publicised barrier to the development of the district and its people. It can be seen from unpublished provisional figures from the 1991 Census of India that total literacy rates in Orissa remain amongst the bottom eight amongst India's States(Fig 4.50)

The overall literacy rate for Kalahandi, according to the 1981 census, stood at less than 20%, with this rate being only 8% for women.(Fig.4.50) This figure was the second lowest, after Koraput, for any district in the state. Provisional figures for the 1991 Census indicate that overall literacy rates have slightly improved to 25.3% during the past decade, although for women the figure was still as low as 12.4%.(Fig.4.51) These figures again remain, after Koraput, the second lowest for any district in Orissa. Levels of literacy are found to be particularly low in rural areas, especially in interior pockets and predominantly tribal areas such as Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur.(Fig.4.52) In addition, a number of persons involved with education in Kalahandi suggested that in many instances the quality of 'literacy' which these figures indicate implies little more than person being familiar with the alphabet and being able to write their name. This did not necessarily provide evidence of higher standards of training.

According to personal calculations using Government of Orissa data listed in fig.4.53, availability of primary schools in Kalahandi, at 1.71 schools per 1000 population, is comparatively high by Orissa standards. This figure was the fourth highest for any district in Orissa. However figures were less favourable for numbers of middle schools and secondary schools per 1000 population. From all districts in Orissa, only Ganjam and Koraput demonstrated lower figures than

Fig. 4.50 Statewise Literacy Rates for 1981 and 1991 - 1991 Census Provisional Figures

India/State/Union Territory	Percentage of Literates to estimated Population aged 7 years and above					
	1981			1991		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
INDIA	43.56	56.37	29.75	52.11	63.86	39.42
States						
Andhra Pradesh	35.66	46.83	24.16	45.11	56.24	33.71
Arunachal Pradesh	25.54	35.11	14.01	41.22	51.10	29.37
Assam				53.42	62.34	43.70
Bihar	32.03	46.58	16.51	38.54	52.63	23.10
Goa	65.71	76.01	55.17	76.96	85.48	68.20
Gujarat	52.21	65.14	38.46	60.91	72.54	48.50
Haryana	43.85	58.49	26.89	55.33	67.85	40.94
Himachal Pradesh	51.17	64.27	37.72	63.54	74.57	52.46
Jammu and Kashmir	32.68	44.18	19.55			
Karnataka	46.20	58.72	33.16	55.98	67.25	44.34
Kerala	81.56	87.74	75.65	90.59	94.45	86.93
Madhya Pradesh	34.22	48.41	18.99	43.45	57.43	28.39
Maharashtra	55.83	69.66	41.1	63.05	74.84	50.51
Manipur	49.61	64.12	34.61	60.96	72.98	48.64
Meghalaya	42.02	46.62	37.15	48.26	51.57	44.78
Mizoram	74.26	79.37	68.60	81.23	84.06	78.09
Nagaland	50.20	58.52	40.28	61.30	66.09	55.72
Orissa	40.96	56.45	25.14	48.55	62.37	34.40
Punjab	48.12	55.52	39.64	57.14	63.68	49.72
Rajasthan	30.09	44.76	13.99	38.81	55.07	20.87
Sikkim	41.57	52.98	27.35	56.53	64.34	47.23
Tamil Nadu	54.38	68.05	40.43	63.72	74.88	52.29
Tripura	50.10	61.49	38.01	60.39	70.08	50.01
Uttar Pradesh	33.33	47.43	17.18	41.71	55.35	26.02
West Bengal	48.64	59.93	36.07	57.72	67.24	47.15
Union Territories						
A & N Islands	63.16	70.28	53.15	73.74	79.68	66.22

Chandigarh	74.81	78.89	69.31	78.73	82.67	73.61
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	32.70	44.69	20.38	39.45	52.07	26.10
Daman & Diu	59.91	74.45	46.51	73.58	85.67	61.38
Delhi	71.93	79.28	62.57	76.09	82.63	68.01
Lakshadweep	68.42	81.24	55.32	79.23	87.06	70.88
Pondicherry	65.14	77.09	53.03	74.91	83.91	65.79

Source: Government of India, 1991 Census of India: Paper 1, Provisional Population Tables

Fig. 4.52 Blockwise Number of Literates and Literacy Rate in Kalahandi - 1981 Census Figures

Subdivision/ Block		No of literates			Literacy rate		
		Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Kalahandi	Total	260053	208374	51679	19.42	31.28	7.68
	Rural	223543	184041	39502	17.76	29.47	6.23
	Urban	36510	24333	12177	45.33	58.50	31.26
Bhawanipatna Subdivision	Total	104962	81734	23228	22.13	34.42	9.81
	Rural	81460	66063	15397	19.16	31.19	7.21
	Urban	23502	15671	7831	48.01	61.05	33.63
Bhawanipatna		18119	14911	3208	17.97	29.91	6.30
Kesinga		17260	13940	3320	23.44	38.17	8.95
Naria		18456	14539	3917	24.41	38.42	10.37
Madanpur - Rampur		9814	7867	1947	20.85	33.51	8.26
Karlamunda		8553	6953	1582	23.03	37.87	8.46
Lanjigarh		6033	5009	1024	12.32	20.34	4.21
Thuamur-Rampur		3243	2844	399	7.69	13.45	1.90
Dharamgarh Subdivision	Total	86559	71322	15237	18.32	30.53	6.38
	Rural	83077	68955	14122	17.97	30.17	6.04
	Urban	3482	2367	1115	34.16	46.73	21.74
Dharamgarh		15456	12959	2497	18.19	30.70	5.84
Junagarh		21056	17490	3566	18.31	30.86	6.11
Jaipatna		13283	10932	2351	17.88	29.78	6.25
Kokasara		13253	11181	2072	18.57	31.72	5.73
Kalampur		8953	7051	1902	23.50	37.73	9.80
Golamunda		11076	9342	1734	14.11	23.96	4.39
Nawapara Subdivision	Total	68532	55318	13214	17.45	28.36	6.69

	Rural	59006	49023	9983	15.89	26.61	5.34
	Urban	9526	6295	3231	44.53	57.97	30.67
Nawapara		14498	11797	2701	15.85	26.07	5.84
Komna		12761	10641	2120	14.46	24.22	4.79
Khariar		11972	9837	2135	17.56	29.14	6.20
Sinapali		12557	10486	2071	17.50	29.40	5.74
Boden		7218	6262	956	14.00	24.44	3.69

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Fig.4.53 Numbers of Schools and Colleges by District

District	Primary schools	Primary schools per 1000 population	Middle schools	Middle schools per 1000 population	Secondary schools	Secondary schools per 1000 population	General Education colleges
Balasore	2870	1.27	1125	0.50	524	0.23	49
Bolangir	2568	1.76	447	0.31	180	0.12	17
Cuttack	6078	1.31	1880	0.41	968	0.21	98
Dhenkenal	2282	1.44	562	0.36	283	0.18	27
Ganjam	3579	1.34	652	0.24	317	0.12	40
Kalahandi	2294	1.71	348	0.25	160	0.12	17
Keonjhar	1740	1.56	465	0.41	243	0.22	20
Koraput	4875	1.96	559	0.23	156	0.06	18
Mayurbhanj	2755	1.74	654	0.41	298	0.19	21
Phulbani	1890	2.64	255	0.36	74	0.10	7
Puri	3275	1.12	967	0.33	497	0.17	56
Sambalpur	3215	1.40	751	0.33	350	0.15	40
Sundargarh	1872	1.40	459	0.34	189	0.14	23

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991 and personal calculations

Kalahandi for numbers of middle schools per 1000 population (0.25 per 1000 persons in Kalahandi). Further, only Phulbani(0.10) had fewer secondary schools per 1000 persons than Kalahandi(0.12), and fewer General Education Colleges.

In these terms it may be evident that levels of literacy and access to education remain low in Kalahandi, both by Orissa and all-India standards. The above figures are again likely to overestimate *de facto* access to schools in the district, for the reason that although schools may be listed as in operation by Government figures, in many instances teachers fail to attend to take classes. This problem is particularly prevalent in remote pockets in the district, which are hard to access for teachers and where monitoring of staff attendances by Government schools inspectors may be limited.

Inadequate access to this essential 'intermediate need' in many cases limits the ability of persons in the district to maintain food security. Education and training is therefore of central importance in promoting people's ability to maintain food security in Kalahandi. This must be of a form which not only gives people the ability to read and write, but also heightens their self confidence, self-reliance, and their ability to counter situations in which they are being exploited. 'Non-formal education', which provides training in a wider range of skills which enhance people's ability to generate purchasing power (eg. horticulture, goat keeping, bee keeping) is also of central importance in achieving this objective. The need to enhance the capabilities of women, adviasis and wider sections of the vulnerable through this training must be emphasised. These issues are discussed in further detail in chapters 6.4 and 7.1.

4.7 Health Care

The issue of health is closely bound up with problems of food security in the district, access to effective health facilities representing an important component of a person's 'capability'. Adequate knowledge of how best to maintain health and hygiene,

in the context of the limited access to food and purchasing power faced by the most vulnerable in Kalahandi, is also an important determinant of food security..

Figure 4.54 indicates that access to health facilities remain poor in Kalahandi. Along with Bolangir and Keonjhar, numbers of Public Health Centres (P.H.C.'s) in the district (37 in number) were fewest for any district in Orissa except for highly undeveloped Phulbani (33 in number). Total numbers of allopathic hospitals in Kalahandi (19 in number) were fewer than any other district in the State except Bolangir (18 in number).

Access to homeopathic and ayurvedic hospitals in Kalahandi are also limited (133 and 22 in number respectively). Only Bolangir (94 in number) and Phulbani (125 in number) had fewer homeopathic hospitals; whilst Kalahandi had fewer allopathic hospital than any other district in Orissa.³⁷

High crude death rates and infant mortality rates in many districts in Orissa, particularly amongst young children, indicate that inadequate nutrition and reduced efficiency of the immune system caused by malnutrition, are likely to be prevalent trends in this region. However it may noted from fig 4.54, that despite the inadequacies in access to medical services described above, crude death rates and infant mortality in Kalahandi during 1988 lay close to the median level for districts in Orissa.

Seven districts in Orissa demonstrated numbers of death per 1000 population higher than that for Kalahandi (7.01 per 1000 persons). Seven districts also demonstrated higher figures for infant deaths per 1000 births³⁸ (Kalahandi 7.01 infant deaths per 1000 births). Notably, these included Puri, Cuttack and Balasore districts in coastal Orissa, generally considered to be more highly developed, and better resourced financially, than Kalahandi and other districts in the State. However, as would be more expected, the highest figure for infant deaths per 1000 births was evidenced in poorly developed Phulbani district (85.77)

³⁷ These forms of treatment are widely valued by considerable numbers of people in western Orissa. As mentioned, they are commonly practised in many *advasis* villages.

³⁸ This figure is often taken to be a comparatively reliable indicator of prevailing standards of health and hygiene in the region concerned.

Fig. 4.54 Number Of Births, Deaths And Infant Deaths By District In Orissa 1988

District	Births	Births per 1000 population	Total deaths	Total deaths per 1000 population	Infant deaths	Infant deaths per 1000 births
Balasore	54245	24.08	15129	6.72	3417	62.99
Bolangir	37385	25.62	9572	6.56	2063	55.18
Cuttack	106027	22.90	31886	6.89	6916	65.23
Dhenkenal	37862	23.92	11429	7.22	2461	65.00
Ganjam	71095	26.63	21320	7.99	4672	65.71
Kalahandi	27898	20.83	9386	7.01	1745	62.55
Keonjhar	25411	22.81	8518	7.65	1606	63.20
Koraput	47835	19.26	18998	7.65	2526	52.81
Mayurbhanj	38930	24.61	11867	7.50	1740	44.70
Phulbani	20450	28.52	6975	9.73	1754	85.77
Puri	66293	22.70	19910	6.82	4283	64.61
Sambalpur	49923	21.87	15896	6.97	2320	46.47
Sundargarh	32264	24.11	10139	7.58	1922	59.57

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991 and personal calculations

Poor access to adequate health services again represents an important explanatory variable in the limited ability of some persons in Kalahandi to maintain food security. Ill health regularly limits people's ability to cultivate, and therefore to meet sections of their food entitlements from their own production. This factor also limits people's ability to take paid employment, in order to generate purchasing power required to buy food from market outlets. The reduced effectiveness of the body's immune system caused by inadequate nutrition further increases people's vulnerability to infections, and reduces their ability to withstand periods of reduced access to food.

A worker from a PHC in Kesinga suggested that main health problems in the Kesinga area include typhoid, tuberculosis, malaria, dysentery and gastro-enteritis. In many instances drinking contaminated water was one of the principal contributors to health problems in the district. He indicated that the problem of gastro-enteritis had been reduced in this region with the recent introduction of considerable numbers of tubewells.³⁹ These had improved the access of the local population to clean drinking water. However he suggested that in some instances people continued to drink water from streams and dugwells because they feel that water from tubewells tastes bad. This factor had reduced the effectiveness of these developments. In Thuamur Rampur block and other interior regions this problem was exacerbated because even when tubewells had been installed, frequently these were not in working order.

However, more generally, improvements had been made in access to potable water in Kalahandi through an extensive scheme for introducing tubewells. These schemes had produced marked improvements particularly in N.A.C.'s, some of which now have a piped water supply to some houses for a number of hours each day. These programmes have been financed by a range of sources, including the World Bank and a number of voluntary agencies.

³⁹ See further in chapter 6.5.

Similar problems were experienced in Parajasila, in the Kashipur block of Koraput district. Inhabitants here stated that main health problems included stomach ailments, 'body pains', headaches, dysentery, cholera and smallpox. Villagers suggested that they felt early diagnosis of such problems to be crucial to successful treatment. As mentioned, inhabitants continued to rely heavily for treatment on village 'quacks' and ayurvedic preparations. However they felt the efficiency of these forms of treatment to have been reduced by the increased use of modern medicines prescribed by allopathic doctors, which some members of the village were beginning to use more regularly. The shortage of adequate medical services in this region becomes more apparent when it is realised that only two towns in the Kashipur region are served with health centres. The rest of the population remained heavily neglected. It was further suggested that much of the emphasis of the care provided by these centres was placed on family planning. (Aragamee b)

During my fieldwork in Thaumur Rampur, Lanjigarh, Boden and other remote areas it was evident that access to health facilities was particularly poor not only because many places are not served by health centres, but also due to poor attendance of workers employed in health services. In Thaumur Rampur, one dispensary in a village in the vicinity of the Indravati project had reportedly not been in operation for 'longer than the villagers could remember' due to the failure of the worker to attend. In a village in the Khariar region, it was argued by one villager that the attendant in the local health care centre would not see anyone unless she was paid by the patient to do so. In Mahalpadar it was suggested that very few health service facilities were available. Inhabitants argued that doctors from the towns visited these places very rarely and 'did not like to come there'.

To summarise, the tasks of promoting access to effective health facilities and disseminating health education are of central importance to the process of promoting and maintaining food security in Kalahandi. Such activities are particularly important for increasing awareness amongst the vulnerable population of how they can use their low access to food and purchasing power most effectively to provide

optimal calorific and nutrient intake. These are also essential to improve knowledge of personal hygiene, hygienic sanitation practices and other aspects of primary health. Emphasis given to the health and training of women and children in these programmes is of considerable value.⁴⁰

4.8 Electrification, Transport, Communications

Further evidence of the limited rural development which has taken place in Kalahandi is evidenced by the low percentage of villages which have been electrified in the district relative to others in Orissa. Figure 4.55 demonstrates that levels of electrification in Kalahandi are the lowest for any district in the State. These are seen to lie markedly below levels for more highly resourced and developed districts in coastal Orissa such as Puri, Cuttack and Balasore. This factor not only restricts opportunities for use of facilities such as lighting and domestic appliances, but also limits its function as an enabling factor for a range of other developments.⁴¹

Poor extension of roads and other communications also restrict levels of development which have taken place in Kalahandi. Evidence from fieldwork conducted for this study suggests that many villages lying considerable distances from towns have tended to experience lower benefits from Government programmes than towns and proximate villages. Inhabitants of Boden and Sinapali blocks rely largely on an irregular private bus service to connect them to Khariar, the nearest sizeable town. These services are erratic, and regularly do not run at all. This situation becomes even worse during the rainy season when roads connecting Boden and Sinapali to Khariar become impassible. During this periods persons living in these blocks can become extremely isolated.

⁴⁰ Although the point was made to me by one worker at the PHC in Khariar that people's low purchasing power and access to cash severely limits the use of latrines, disinfectants and other materials for maintaining personal hygiene.(interview 27.2.92)

⁴¹ For example, a reliable electricity supply is required for use of irrigation pumps, for establishing many small and medium scale enterprises, and so on.

**Fig. 4.55 Villages Electrified and Lift Irrigation Points Energised
In Orissa**

District	No. of villages electrified	Percentage of villages electrified	No. of L.I. points energised
Balasore	2965	77.78	4941
Bolangir	1852	73.40	4847
Cuttack	5019	83.27	7531
Dhenkenal	1908	73.21	3516
Ganjam	2687	63.62	6529
Kalahandi	1351	50.92	2642
Keonjhar	1521	75.70	1284
Koraput	2315	40.73	2239
Mayurbhanj	2098	56.51	1633
Phulbani	1212	27.56	1011
Puri	3518	81.13	3144
Sambalpur	2346	69.20	5391
Sundargarh	1294	79.82	3024

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Poor communications to these interior regions means that often remote villages are visited only rarely by Government officers. For this reason problems developing in these places frequently go undetected. This also leads to deficiencies and inadequacies in the planning of Government programmes. Without regularly visiting the regions in which schemes are to operate, programme planners run the danger of designing schemes which are not compatible with the needs and lifestyles of those being targeted. For this reason considerable amounts of money continue to be spent in Government programmes in ways which are poorly suited for achieving their intended objective.

Lack of adequate communications create a range of further problems. Some of these have been already mentioned. Firstly, it is regularly difficult to reach far lying villages with relief assistance during crisis periods if suitable roads and other communications have not been extended to these places. Secondly, poor transport links create difficulties in reaching work for persons employed in schools, health centres or in other services. This factor contributes to the high levels of absenteeism which prevail amongst staff in these services in remote areas. Thirdly, transport problems increase the difficulties which people experience in attending hospitals or other services which are not available in their village locality. This reduces the quality of education, health and other services which can be provided in the district. Fourthly, this factor reduces the ease with which inhabitants of interior areas can buy and sell goods in outside markets.⁴²

However it has been pointed out that extension of roads and communications in Kalahandi has not brought unqualified improvements in the ability of many persons living in the district to maintain food security. In many instances this factor has also increased opportunities for outsiders to make profits at the expense of local people. These issues are discussed further in chapter 4.9

⁴² Where for example demand for their goods may be higher and therefore they may be able to sell at a higher price, so improving their food security position by increasing the purchasing power which they are able to generate.

4.9 Kalahandi In Wider Social, Political And Economic Context

Previous sections have examined the nature of access which people living in Kalahandi have to food; or more generally the nature of when Sen has termed people's food 'entitlements'. Secondly, these sections locate the nature of hunger in Kalahandi in terms of access to a wider range of resources and facilities. These include education, drinking water, health services, communications, and marketing facilities,. The analysis in these sections has argued, in support of initial hypotheses forwarded in chapter 2, that entitlements and access to 'intermediate needs' such as those mentioned above, are important explanatory variables in determining people's ability to maintain food security in the district.

In this section it is argued that it is only when these variables are studied in terms of the wider social, political and economic context in which Kalahandi lies, and the pattern of historical development which has shaped these factors, that it is possible to gain a more complete picture of why food insecurity and food crisis continue to prevail in Kalahandi. This section argues that this process has been shaped historically through a range of factors which developed under the pre-colonial and colonial order in the Kalahandi and Khariar areas. It also suggests that during the period since 1948, when these regions became part of the State of Orissa, problems of food insecurity in Kalahandi have been compounded by the fact that economic and political power in the district essentially lie with persons coming from outside of Kalahandi. These issues are discussed more fully below.

The Precolonial order and changes under Colonial Rule As mentioned in chapter 3, the pattern of colonial rule in Kalahandi and Khariar initiated a number of changes which were to alter the organisation of food production and distribution in these regions. These were in many cases seen to disrupt the mechanisms through which

people attempted to maintain food security and to cope with periods of food crisis.⁴³ The colonial state has been central to this process in promoting conditions for commodity production and exchange, and increasing people's needs for cash and for marketed items. This was the result of a number of factors:

(1) it imposed taxes, which often had to be paid in cash, thereby accelerating the monetisation of the rural economy. These taxes were particularly significant to food production since they made it essential to produce a surplus. If this surplus could not be met by increased production then it had to be deducted from what was consumed, or had to be met by wages earned from wage labour. In the latter case this meant a reduction in the labour-time which cultivators could devote to food production on their own plots.⁴⁴

(2) Land became increasingly marginalised and plots fragmented. This increased pressure on the land, to the point where certain people no longer owned plots of sufficient size to maintain subsistence levels of food production. In certain instances this resulted in complete landlessness, a process accentuated by land appropriations by merchants and moneylenders.

(3) Colonial states introduced a variety of other measures to accelerate the growth of commodity production and the extraction of primary commodities, both for local markets and for export to other regions. These include instituting new systems of administration, bureaucracy, transport and communications; and inviting business people, contractors, and cultivators into the district from other areas.

⁴³ A. For further details of this issue in a variety of cultural contexts refer to Watts(1983); Bernstein(1979); Bryceson(1980); Raikes(1988); Preobrazhensky(1988); Miles(1987); Hart(1982); Rotberg(ed.)(1983); Palmer and Parsons(eds.)(1977); Dutt(1903); Bhatia(1963)

⁴⁴ Intensification of commodity production acted to stimulate specialisation in household production. As Kautsky argues

'In dissolving the peasant's small industry, capitalism increases his need for cash; the peasant requires cash, in these new conditions, to purchase not only his luxuries but even those goods which are essential to his consumption. Parallel to this, the cash requirements of the peasant's overlords also increased, and led to the substitution of payment in kind by payment in cash and to a general rise in the level of payments (thus increasing the peasant's own requirement of cash even further). The only means available to the peasant of earning this cash was the sale of products, not, of course, those which he produced in his backward home-based industry, but those which the industry of the towns did not itself produce.' (from 'The Agrarian Question', translated in Banaji, 1980:47)

As discussed in chapter 3, the British Government's involvement in the Khariar Zamindari began during the 1890's. Central to policies of the British were measures to maximise extraction of land revenue from local people, and to establish political authority in the area. As part of this programme it took over the right to police management of the Zamindari in 1892. It took over direct management of excise (Abkari) and octroi (Pandari) in 1894 , and in 1898 assumed control of all forests.(Deo, 1989)

The colonial state also introduced a more modern administrative system, revenue department and legal system. Under the British roads were extended into interior areas. Increasing numbers of outsiders were also invited into the region. The Zamindar invited Karanas from Cuttack to maintain revenue records, these being given maufi villages (rent free) in which to live. Increasing numbers of outsiders also entered the area as businessmen or as contractors to extract forest produce.(Deo,1989:94ff.)

A system of settlements was introduced under the British designed to improve the efficiency of revenue collection. During the 1891 Settlement, the Government introduced the patwari system to keep records. Patwaris were to become Government servants. This system in numerous instances worked to the disadvantage of poorer sections in the district. Records under this system were regularly manipulated by patwaris. Many tribals did not recognise the importance of registering their land, and so held no protection if this land was appropriated from them. This indigenous population was also disadvantaged by the policy adopted by some Zamindars of encouraging outsiders to move into the area who were more familiar with settled cultivation.

A second major settlement was formulated in 1903. This granted additional protection and sometimes maufidar, or rent free status, to certain tribal goatias. In this settlement 'bethi bagar' (forced labour) was also legalised. In this system tenants were obliged to provide labour to the Zamindar or Goatia.

A third settlement was drawn up in 1925⁴⁵. This declared the role of thekedars as intermediary revenue collectors between raiyats and the government to be outdated. It also suggested placing a ban on nazrana and bethi bagar.(Deo,1989:90) Under this settlement rents were increased by approximately 30%. A revision settlement was also carried out in 1933-34. (Sambalpur University, 1985:1859)

The heavy revenue demands imposed by this system of settlements added considerably to the pressures on local persons. Revenue paid to the Maharaja and to the British by people of the former Kalahandi State has been estimated to be approximately Rs. 5 lakh, from a population of only 7.45 lakh people.(Sambalpur University, 1985:1859) Problems faced in raising cash to pay these demands accentuated markedly the difficulties which some people faced in maintaining food security in the Kalahandi ex-State.

Changes initiated during the colonial period also accelerated levels of commoditisation and monetisation of the economies of interior regions. These increased the need of local people for cash and their vulnerability to outside traders. Land increasingly became transferred from communal to individual ownership. In many instances alienation of land from tribals and other vulnerable persons to larger landowners was accentuated under this system. Although such transfers were officially banned under the Central Province Land Alienation Act of 1917, land continued to be alienated illegally from tribal persons. These transfers took place particularly through bandhak (land mortgage) and jabar dakhai (capture by force).(Deo,1989:93)

Restrictions placed on use of forest created further pressure on tribals in the region. The Khariar Zamindar encouraged contractors to clear forest in the Zamindari to increase land available for cultivation. Such a trend produced rapid deforestation, and outflows of timber and other minor forest produce from the region, with little remuneration for local people. Forest Laws also restricted the

⁴⁵ This settlement was drawn up under Mr Waterfall.(Sambalpur University,1985:1859)

freedom of tribal people to practice podu (shifting cultivation). This removed the right for many tribal persons to practise one of their principal methods of producing food.

Deo suggests that such a set of pressures had a differential effect on tribal groups within the region.⁴⁶ Certain groups, particularly Gonds⁴⁷, have tended to assimilate with non-tribal persons, allowing the latter to settle in their villages. Other groups, particularly Paharias and Bhunjias, have tended to withdraw from interactions with non-tribals in order to maintain their independent tribal identity.⁴⁸ As Deo argues:

'When Gond encountered the plainsmen, from a position of prior strength as kinsmen of zamindar etc. it appeared to them beneficial or meaningful to interact with and to live together with them; but Bhunjia and Paharia with the powerlessness, ignorance, illnesses etc. did not see any benefits in such relationships; rather they saw the outsiders as encroachers. These reactions in the different groups were shaped out of demographic, psychological and socio-cultural influences.' (1989:98)

Indeed, although colonial rule did induce an increase in monetisation of the rural economy, this factor did not produce a complete destruction of the traditional economy and social structure. It is important to emphasise that there is no clear cut demarcation between a 'traditional' rural 'subsistence' economy, and a fully commoditised and monetised rural economy; in Kalahandi the transformation between the two is gradual and incomplete.⁴⁹ Peasant households were not entirely self-contained and self sufficient before the evolution of the commodity economy, and exchange relations in Kalahandi also existed widely during the pre-colonial period.

⁴⁶ For further analysis of the effect of British influence on tribals in India, and particularly the failure of the Colonial Government to take into account the importance of tribal culture, refer particularly to Padel(1992).

⁴⁷ Gonds are economically more affluent and more influential in their local social structure than other tribes mentioned. Regularly they are landed peasants, whose long-term kinship ties and connections with rulers have allowed them in some instances to become heads of villages. They have tended to be closer to Hinduism than these other tribes, and have regularly maintained only low levels of interaction with other tribal groups.(Deo,1989:95)

⁴⁸ Bhunjias and Paharias have tended to be lower in number in Kalahandi. They have tended to be economically poorer than Gonds, with little political influence. Unlike Gonds they have largely tried to avoid external influence and change in order to maintain their independent tribal lifestyle. Deo argues that Bhunjia and Paharia tribals 'withdrew to inaccessible areas beyond the easy reach of the new forces in order to feel safer for the moment. These short run adjustments have cumulative implications. In the case of Bhunjias the short run adjustments and withdrawal resulted in the preservation of tribal culture and group solidarity'.(Deo,1989:98)⁴⁸

⁴⁹ Hart correctly argues, in an African context, that such a transition cannot be conceived as a leap from one kind of economy to another, but instead it represents a shift in degree along the continuum from self-sufficiency to greater economic dependence through the expansion of the market. Rightly he suggests that we should therefore avoid 'subsistence-commercial dualism' in the form of the intrusion of the 'cash economy' into the subsistence economy, which implies an abrupt confrontation which never took place in modern times.(1982:9)

It is widely argued that the outflow of resources described in this section has largely persisted since Kalahandi became part of Orissa in 1948. It is also widely argued by many local people in western Orissa that Kalahandi and other districts in this region have failed to receive the support that has been provided by districts in coastal Orissa, particularly Puri, Cuttack and Balasore. These issues are analysed further in the next section.

Social, political and economic context of post-1948 Kalahandi In large part these problems are compounded because economic and political power in the district essentially lie with people from outside. Much of Kalahandi's economic power lies with 'marwaris' and other outsiders who have entered the region to establish businesses, to purchase land and to extract its resources. Through widespread quarrying, deforestation and collection of forest of products, large quantities of minerals, timber and minor forest produce have been removed from the district since 1948 both by the Government and by private contractors. It is widely argued by persons resident in Kalahandi that minimal compensation in terms of benefits and developments have been received in return for this resource outflow. Details of recent outflows of mineral, timber and forest resources are listed in figs 4.55 to 4.58.⁵⁰ Significant annual variations between number of working mines, area and workers employed, and lack of correspondence between these columns, may indicate errors in these figures.

Fig.4.55 Collection of Mining Revenue by the State from Working Mines in Kalahandi (all minerals) - Various Years

Year	Revenue (Rs.)
1971-72	27783
1972-73	8753
1976-77	14413

⁵⁰ However the large annual variations in numbers of mines, particularly for quartz and graphite, and the lack of apparent correspondence between changes in numbers of mines and workers employed, may indicate that errors have been incurred in this Government data.

1979-80	27783
1980-81	40484

Source: Government of Orissa, Dept. of Economics and Statistics, Statistical Abstracts, various years

Until 1949 reserved forests in the state were worked on a royalty basis by a range of firms which included B.T.T. Co. and B.N.Dutta & Co. Much of the timber which was extracted by these companies was exported out of Orissa. The independent royalty system was ended after independence and a system of open auctions for timber was introduced. A long term lease was given to Orissa Paper Mills in 1954-55 for extracting bamboo. Rights for the removal of other minor forest produce was sold to the highest bidder, providing a good source of revenue to the state. ⁵¹

A ban on forestry operations by private contractors in 1982, and a complete ban on the felling of trees in 1988, has placed greater control on commercial extraction of timber and other forest produce from the district. However visible evidence of heavy deforestation remains evident in a number of regions in which fieldwork was carried out for this study, particularly in the Nawapara subdivision. Measures initiated by the Government Forest Department, by voluntary organisations and by local communities are far from adequate to compensate for this major removal of forest which has taken place during the past century.

Fig.4.59 Revenue and Expenditure from Forest- Nawapara Subdivision

Year	Revenue (Rs.)
1988-89	31,03,595
1989-90	16,19,106
1990-91	5,34,339

Source: District Forest Officer, Khariar Division

Collection of bamboo has been nationalised from 1.10.88. Since then the Orissa Forest Division Corporation has been working all bamboo in the Khariar forest division, incorporating the Nawapara subdivision of Kalahandi and Padampur

⁵¹ This is discussed further in section 4.10.

Fig.4.56 Extraction of Minerals from Kalahandi - All Minerals

Year	No. working mines	Area (Ha.'s)	No. workers employed	Output (M.T.)	Value (Rs. in 000's)
1982	15	326	173	12442	448
1983	15	257	113	14728	552
1984	13	225	192	13629	591
1985	15	143	114	25507	1836
1986	15	143	114	25507	783
1987	18	190	181	21557	1119

Sources: 1. District Statistical Office, Kalahandi (1989-90) 2. Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Statistical Abstract, various years.

Fig.4.57 Extraction of Mineral Resources from Kalahandi - Quartz

Year	No. working mines	Area (Ha.'s)	No. workers employed	Output (M.T.)	Value (Rs. in 000's)
1980	2	36.117	23	4447	100
1981	5	43.582	115	8870	309
1982	7	51	74	12059	396
1983	6	124	96	14665	536
1984	8	143	177	13488	581
1985	9	54	104	25143	1755
1986	11	89	59	8874	427
1987	14	169	151	21443	1078

Sources: 1. District Statistical Office, Kalahandi (1989-90)
2. Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Statistical Abstract, various years.

Fig.4.58 Extraction of Graphite from Kalahandi

Year	No.working mines	Area (Ha.'s)	No. workers employed	Output (M.T.)	Value (Rs. in 000's)
1972	7	18.858	28	61	40
1976	2	36.117	23	395	
1977	9	30.703	62	500	
1980	4	55.632	320	659	210
1981	6	171.357	104	385	169
1982	8	275	99	383	52
1983	9	133	17	63	16
1984	5	82	15	141	10
1985	6	89	10	364	81
1986	4	67	50	1410	356
1987	4	21	30	134	41

Sources: 1. District Statistical Office, Kalahandi (1989-90) 2. Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Statistical Abstract, various years.

Fig.4.60 Out-turn of Timber, Firewood, Bamboos and other M.F.P. from Khariar Forest Division

Commodity	1989 - 90		1990 - 91	
	Quantity	Revenue (Rs.)	Quantity	Revenue (Rs.)
Timber	947.1916 cum.	566579	831.1974 cums	643812
Firewood	1477.1252 cum. Q. 4831.00	36574	4072 cum. Q.13317.0	8040
Bamboos	3012- 66 sale unit		2523 - 65 sale unit	
Sal seeds	Q. 555.89 (1989 season)	9283	Q119.38-1990 season Q. 1082.86 -1991 season	
Tamarind	Q.1055.0	20114	Q.1236.50	26100
Thorn blooms	Q.1684.00	17666	Q.200.00	Paid earlier
Myrabolans	Q.3246.00	32560	Q.5929.00	not paid
Neem seeds	Q.1808.00	32581	Q.1411.63	39097
Mohua flower	Q.124979.5	962452	Q.85535 Q.26534 by OFDC	658609
Bantulsi seeds	Q.1169.65	44081	Q.1373.05	52897
Char seeds	Q.3313.00	100116	Q.2187.00	58500
Kusum seeds	not reported	2000	Q.100.00	2000
Dhatki flowers	Q.1037.00	1100	Q.240.50	4666
Gum	not reported	4000	Q.257.00	12000
Kendu leaves	Q.17540.34 (1989 season)	.	Q.15524.68 (1990 season)	.

Source: District Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division

subdivision of Sambalpur district. The O.F.D.C. is also working the timber coupes of Padampur range and bamboo coupes, sal seeds and mahua flower from the whole division. It has also been appointed as agent for the collection of mahua flower from the division, consequent upon the nationalisation of mahua collection from 10.4.91.⁵² The quantities of mahua collected by the O.F.D.C. in Kalahandi is as follows:

Fig.4.61 Collection of Mahua by O.F.D.C. during 1991

Agency	Quantity (Quintals)
D.M. OFDC Ltd. Bhawanipatna (c) Division	25469.23
D.M. OFDC Ltd.(K.L.) Division, Bhawanipatna	24674.07
D.P.M. Bhawanipatna Afforestation Division	6778.04
Total	56921.34

Source: District Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division

Further T.D.C.C. Ltd. has been given the rights to work the following minor forest produce items in the Khariar Forest Division: tamarind; hill broom; genduli and other gums; dhakti flowers; thorn blooms; lac; bhalia fruits; rasna; noxvomica; soapnuts; sabai grass; amethi leaves; kurchiseeds; myrabolams.

Fig.4.62 Kendu Leaf Division, Khariar - Target and Procurement

Crop Year	Target (Quintal)	Achievement (Quintal)
1989	20000	17540.34
1990	17500	15524.68
1991	20000	21150.00

Source: District Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division

This extraction of revenue and primary commodities by the Government of Orissa and by private contractors, is widely felt to have contributed to development of districts in coastal Orissa and in other States, at the expense of Kalahandi itself. Such claims form the basis of demands from groups such as the Kalahandi Liberation

⁵² Source: District Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division, interviewed 3.3.92

Front (K.L.F) and the Western Orissa Liberation Front (W.O.L.F) for the provision of a separate states for Kalahandi and for Western Orissa. These are discussed further in chapter 9. This revenue outflow through mineral extraction has thereby been seen to have contributed to the appropriation of valuable resources which could have been used to promote development in the region

These trends are more widely attributed to the fact that in Orissa as a whole, administration and decision making are conducted largely from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. Considerable political power in Orissa is held by Lok Sabha M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s from the coastal region. For this reason it was regularly suggested within Kalahandi that these persons are able to divert sizeable shares of this funding to their own districts, particularly Puri, Cuttack and Orissa.

This factor is exacerbated because within Kalahandi political power also lies primarily with administrators and politicians coming from outside the district. Further, those with control over political and administrative decisions are rarely women, adivasis, harijans or others from vulnerable sections. When representatives and administrators have come from vulnerable groups, many in the district have argued that these people have spent more time looking after their own interests and incomes than in dealing with the requirements of the local people.⁵³ It was suggested on a number of occasions that politicians are rarely seen in the area, except at election times.

Lack of effective representation means that in many instances the vulnerable do not have an adequate mouthpiece to voice their problems and to protest against their social conditions. This is accentuated by the low levels of political consciousness, education and literacy which prevail in the district. There have been few sustained attempts to organise and politically motivate the poorer sections of Kalahandi's population. In contrast with other areas visited during fieldwork for

⁵³ A prime example may be seen to be Bhakta Charan Das, a man from S.C. background in whom many placed great hopes, on winning the Kalahandi Lok Sabha constituency, for promoting the needs of the district's poor and vulnerable. Although he became Minister for Railways in the V.P.Singh Janata Dal Government, many of his former supporters in the district now argue that he became too involved in seeking money and prestige for himself to do anything for Kalahandi's downtrodden.

this project where Naxalite groups have achieved some larger degree of organisation amongst local people (see further in chapter 4.10 and 9.2), in Kalahandi there has been little organised protest (either violent or non-violent in nature) against the prevailing social conditions. Groups such as K.L.F. and W.O.L.F. have little mass base amongst the poor and receive much of their support from students and 'middle-classes'. Instead the politics of the region remain dominated by the large mainstream parties such as Congress and Janata Dal, with voting patterns particularly influenced by a number of factors:

1. People's votes continue to be influenced by the considerable respect which still exists in the district for members of the former royal family of Kalahandi. For example, P.K. Singh Deo was persistently elected to the Legislative Assembly from the district.⁵⁴

2. Congress retains considerable support as a legacy of the favourable image which Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and to a lesser extent, Rajiv Gandhi had amongst sections of the mass population in the district. The former visited Kalahandi during the severe drought of 1965-66. After this visit she ordered considerable amounts of relief money to be allocated to the district. In the eyes of the masses this created an image of Mrs Gandhi as 'the saviour of Kalahandi', an image which to some extent still prevails today.

On the grounds that he was Mrs Gandhi's son, Rajiv's popularity was already high before he also made visits to Kalahandi during periods of drought during the mid 1980's. Following these visits a number of projects were also launched and further promises made. His popularity again reinforced Congress support in the district.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ I am grateful for this observation to Vijay Pradhan, lecturer in politics at Khariar College and shortly to complete his PhD. thesis on 'Electoral patterns and processes in Kalahandi' (Sambalpur University, Orissa). Space prevents extensive further analysis of electoral patterns and results in Kalahandi. For comprehensive discussion of results of elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly since 1948 refer to chapter XVII of the District Gazetteer of Kalahandi (Senapati, 1980)

⁵⁵ *ibid*

These visits, and the increased assistance for Kalahandi which they ordered from Central Government after their visits, has made a lasting effect on local minds. This is evidenced by the drought picture created in a number of the folk songs belonging to the local people of Kalahandi:

Sajani, jadagachha, tipi mala
Amari desare akalakala
Indira Gandhi sahā hela

O companion, the top of the castor tree dried up
Drought appeared in the country,
Indira Gandhi saved us.

Sajani, Desare Akalakala,
Amara Rajiba Gandhi ho sate
Jhaje Utrila, sate Sinapali tesan kala ho
Nuati Jana.

O companion,
Drought occurred in this country,
Our Rajiv Gandhi arrived in plane,
Made his station near Sinapali
O new moon, hear me. (Mishra, 1992: 10)

A further song describes the discontent amongst local people for the local leaders, and their praise for Rajiv Gandhi on visiting the district as Prime Minister, and for allocating increased assistance:

Sajani Amare Neta thakil a
Rajiba Gandhi ho sate bane bujhila
Sate khaida pindhala dela ho nuati jana

Rajiv Gandhi understood well,
He gave us food and clothes,
O new moon hear me. (ibid)

There is little doubt that the 'Rajiv wave' which followed his assassination shortly before the election was a contributing factor to the election of the Congress candidate, Subhas Naik.

'Drain of Wealth'? It may be possible to identify analogies between a range of the arguments presented above and the Neo-Marxist problematisation of resource outflows and restricted development which has confronted a number of developing

countries in previous centuries. Indeed outflows of revenue and resources reported from Kalahandi may demonstrate parallels with what Paul Baran(1957) termed the 'drain of wealth' from India during colonial times. This may in turn be seen to have led to patterns of 'underdevelopment' similar to those described by Gundar-Frank(1969), in which development is not simply absent from the countries in question (ie. 'undeveloped'), but has actually been retarded by the neo-imperialist exploitation of other states.⁵⁷ However whilst some may argue that such a process has been established in Kalahandi through the large scale appropriation of resources by the State Government and private contractors, with minimal reinvestment in the district, it would be incorrect to attribute Kalahandi's political and socio-economic problems simply to a shortage of finance from the State and Central governments. This issue is discussed in further detail in chapter 6.

4.10 'Coping Mechanisms' or 'Survival Strategies' to maintain food security

This range of problems and the regular occurrence of drought and food crisis in the district in recent decades have led to an ongoing process of deprivation and social disruption. Faced with regular crop failures and lack of access to employment for seven or eight months of the year (or more), the food security position of many in the region has progressively deteriorated during this period. In such a situation the vulnerable have been forced to draw upon a range of coping mechanisms or survival strategies in order to maintain access to food and other essentials. Some of these strategies, such as drawing upon networks of cooperation and mutual support within their family or community structure, may be seen to serve this purpose with minimal negative affects for the recipient or the community structure. Other strategies such as taking out loans, selling off assets, or migrating to other areas,

⁵⁷ These issues are discussed in further detail for example in Baran(1957); Gundar-Frank(1969); Thomas(1974); Kay(1975); Roxborough(1979). Refer also to chapter 2 of this thesis.

may (although need not necessarily) have far more negative long term affects. These may be seen as actions which serve to meet immediate consumption needs during a crisis period, at the expense of a person's long term ability to produce food, to generate purchasing power, to satisfy social commitments, and more generally to secure food security needs when the crisis has subsided. The following section discusses this framework of issues more directly in the Kalahandi context. Where useful this also draws upon comparative fieldwork carried out for this thesis in Koraput and other regions.

To cope with such problems of uncertainty and weather induced risk, farmers in low rainfall areas such as in Kalahandi may utilise a variety of adjustment devices intended ex-ante to help in minimising risk, and ex-post in managing losses and accelerating recovery. Such insurance mechanisms may include:

1. drawing on networks of cooperation, reciprocity and mutual support which exist within the community;
2. use of systems of production and other technical arrangements, including changes in cropping patterns and planting practices, which have been developed over centuries to be well adapted to local conditions;⁵⁸
3. reduction of current levels of consumption and changes in consumption patterns;
4. use of stores of food and other produce collected during more prosperous times and used up during periods of shortage;
5. increased use of forest produce and 'wild foods';
6. taking out loans and mortgaging assets;
7. sales of assets of relatively 'low cost' to maintain household livelihood;
8. sale of assets crucial to production (including draught animals, tools, land) or to maintaining self-respect and social standing in the community;

⁵⁸ These mixed and diversified farming methods may also enable farmers to reduce dependence on off-farm inputs and therefore their reliance on market mechanisms

9. migration to other areas in search of work or food;
10. demonstrating, rioting, looting and other forms of protest action;
11. selling children, much discussed in the Kalahandi as a survival strategy which some parents implement during times of crisis.

For many households, survival strategies revolve around building up assets, which represent a wide range of tangible and intangible stores of value, or claims to assistance, which can be mobilised in a crisis.(Swift,1989:11) These assets create a 'buffer' between production, exchange and consumption. Production and exchange activities create assets which can be used in times of crisis for direct consumption; or can be transformed back into the inputs required for production; or exchanged for cash or consumption goods through the market.⁵⁹

People do not respond randomly when food crisis is imminent. As Watts has argued, they tend to adopt characteristic modes of famine behaviour graduated with respect to time.(1983:140) People will generally be most reluctant to sell or use up assets which are crucial to their future production such as land, draught animals, ploughs etc. It is only at a stage when the crisis becomes more severe and 'low cost' insurance mechanisms become inadequate that households will resort to distress sales of crucial productive assets to obtain money to buy food and to maintain their immediate survival. Since assets sold in distress sales may be difficult to reacquire, such measures are likely to endanger the future economic welfare of the household. This therefore represents a decision to maintain already low levels of food consumption, even at the cost of endangering future sources of income. Once these

⁵⁹ Swift represents assets which are relevant to famine vulnerability in terms of three categories: investments, stores and claims. Investments include productive assets such as animals, farm equipment, household domestic equipment, land, trees and wells; human investments in education, health and other factors; and collective assets such as irrigation systems and access to CPR's. Stores may include reserves of food, and stores of real value such as gold, money, jewellery and bank accounts. These investments are generally under the individual control of households, and may be cashed in times of crisis by the individual household or in conjunction with other households. By 'claims' Swift refers to a variety of redistributive mechanisms within society. These bear similarities to those which characterise Scott's 'moral economy'. At the simplest level these may be in the form of reciprocal support and assistance between groups of kin and households with food, labour and other resources. This is based upon an implicit recognition that community membership requires an obligation to share resources, and a right to support from the community during periods of hardship. 'Claims' at a variety of other levels may also include those on patrons and chiefs; on other communities; on governments; and on the international community.(1989:11)

crucial productive assets have also been sold or used up, then the household may be left virtually assetless, with few obvious sources of food or income. In such a situation household members, or sometimes the whole household, may be forced to migrate to other regions in search of work, food, or to directly avoid death.⁶⁰

Consequently it becomes apparent that the survival strategies which households adopt will change during different stages of the food crisis. As the situation becomes more severe households may be forced into measures which preserve current short-term levels of consumption at the possible expense of their long-term ability to produce food and to generate purchasing power. The following section examines such strategies in greater detail in the Kalahandi context, giving attention to their implications for the short and long term food security of the sections of the population concerned.

Community Arrangements for Cooperation, Reciprocity and Mutual Support Even before rural economies had become increasingly commercialised trade between communities was often important in many societies in overcoming temporary food shortages. Further, in some societies the dispensation of gains which had been deposited with the tribal headman as a form of tribute was used as a form of famine relief fund for distribution to the most vulnerable and worst affected during times of hardship.(Bryceson,1980: 284-285)

James Scott (1988) has argued that these mechanisms represented a form of 'safety first' principle which was behind many of the technical, social and moral arrangements of the 'pre-capitalist' agrarian order. He suggests that the community in such societies were organised around providing for a minimum income, where a household required a certain level of resources to fulfill its ceremonial and social commitments, as well as to feed itself and to maintain food production. Importantly, if this level could not be maintained, households risked not just starvation but also a

⁶⁰ See further for example in Jodha, 1975, 1978, 1986; Corbett, 1988; Swift, 1989.

loss of standing in the community and the possibility of a permanent situation of dependence.

Drawing on the idea of what E.P. Thompson has termed 'the moral economy'⁶¹, Scott refers to this form of social insurance as a 'peasant moral economy' in which every member of society had a right to subsistence. A wide range of social arrangements operated to ensure a minimum income for inhabitants. These took the form of 'patron-client' relationships, reciprocity, forced generosity, work sharing and redistributive mechanisms such as periodic redistribution of communal land according to need.⁶² These served to compensate for shortfalls in a household's resources which might otherwise have caused its members to fall below subsistence level.

Therefore it can be seen that social pressures in these societies also had a redistributive affect: richer members of society were expected to be charitable and to support kin and neighbours who experienced difficulties meeting their subsistence needs. However Scott argues that we should avoid idealising these arrangements. He suggests that these were more the product of necessity than altruism. Often these forms of subsistence insurance were the only way for landlords and rich peasants to secure a workforce in situations when land was abundant and labour scarce; or when there were limitations on the coercive powers which could be exercised by these dominant classes or by the state. Furthermore, violation of this 'subsistence ethic' would be likely to provoke resentment and resistance from the mass of affected community: both because basic needs may not be met; and also because it would represent a violation of communal rights to which considerable importance was attached.(1988:307)⁶³

⁶¹ Some of Thompson's work on the 'moral economy' and the debate which has surrounded this concept has been collected together in Thompson(1991).

⁶² For further information on various forms of mutual aid and 'traditional' forms of informal co-operation refer particularly to the references provided in chapter 2, and others including Jodha(1978), Beck(1989); Platteau(1991) and other articles in Ahmad et al.(1991). Examples include stocking and conservation of food and fodder by well-off farmers for use by others during scarcity periods (Puchhasa); collective arrangements for ploughing the fields of those who have completely lost their draught power; mutual sharing of seed stocks in postdrought years; collective arrangements to provide facilities such as drinking water and fodder to needy peasants in the village; collections of cash and kind donations to help out-migrants and so on.(Jodha, 1978)

⁶³ Popkin(1979) has also raised a variety of problems which arise with trying to implement such social insurance and welfare schemes:

Such forms of reciprocity and mutual cooperation continue to provide an important means of social insurance in Kalahandi both during times of hardship and during more prosperous times. These may be seen as a means of protection or relief for those most vulnerable during periods of food insecurity. They may also be seen as a means to improve the efficiency of tasks such as planting, ploughing, harvesting and child care (to select a few examples) through the sharing of labour, tools and draught power.

For example, in a number of villages studied in this project families share their labour at harvest and other times of high labour requirement.⁶⁴ Such arrangements may be seen to provide an informal division of labour, reducing the time required by any particular household to carry out such operations and possibly therefore the risk of crop loss which may result if such operations are delayed by lack of necessary labour. Such a system is locally referred to as *baada*.⁶⁵

A system of communal child care also operates in a number of predominantly tribal villages. This represents a further example of mutual support through labour sharing.⁶⁶ Here grandmothers and other village members take care of children whilst their mothers have to leave the village to collect firewood, forest produce and to perform other household tasks. In the absence of such arrangements the situation is often difficult for both woman and child since children have to be taken with the mother whilst these tasks are undertaken. During the monsoon, when stores of food have frequently been exhausted and reliance on forest produce and 'wild foods'

(1) the problem of 'free riders'- how to prevent people taking advantage of such a system, but without contributing to it themselves;

(2) how to establish a unambiguous set of standards, or 'means test', to determine who the needy really are, and who most need help from these schemes;

(3) how to prevent contributions which are placed in a central fund from being embezzelled and used for personal gain by village notables;

(4) individuals may retain a desire for personal gain and to raise their subsistence levels at the expense of others, so being reluctant to participate in such a scheme;

(5) these schemes may reinforce the dependency of poorer members on the rich and village chiefs. The latter may attempt to resist any change in this situation by opposing any introduction of innovations, skills, literacy and other changes which may increase peasants' independence, and their ability to survive independently of the lord.

⁶⁴ Village members would assist one household with tasks such as planting and harvesting, and in turn receive help from others when they required assistance in carrying out such tasks.

⁶⁵ In some villages the labour of other village members was also hired at nominal rates of rent.

⁶⁶ This was found both in Kalahandi and the Kashipur area of Koraput.

reaches its peak, heavy rains make the conditions particularly unpleasant for carrying out these tasks.

On occasions, other village members also assist impoverished families when they face high costs due to imminent marriages, funerals, festivals or other ceremonial commitments. A failure to meet such commitments may, as previously discussed, represent a considerable indignity to the family concerned and lead to a possible loss of face and respect in the eyes of the rest of the community.

A variety of other forms of cooperation or reciprocity are also in operation. Particularly common is the sharing of tools or draught power. Many cultivators or labourers were too poor to own such assets, or were found to have owned them in the past but had been forced to sell them to meet immediate consumption needs during periods of hardship. In Chindaguda, a village roughly 3km. from Khariar it was reported that buffaloes required for ploughing are borrowed from larger farmers in return either for cash or for labour service. It was suggested that one pair of buffaloes would be able to plough approximately half an acre of land in one day. In return for this the borrower is required either to pay between ten and fifteen rupees in cash, or to provide two days' labour to the owner.

It is therefore evident that whilst necessary to the actors concerned, such cooperative mechanisms in the community may still be highly exploitative for one of the parties. For those with small plots of land who do not have tools or draught animals, such relationships are essential to enable them to cultivate their plots by borrowing these inputs. Although the terms of this exchange are unfavourable to the borrower, without borrowing draught animals they may be unable to cultivate at all.

In a number of villages visited it was evident that these systems of reciprocity and mutual support are not restricted solely to within people's own social group. These are also often extended in some form to other members of the community regardless of category. In Parajasila in the Kashipur block of Koraput district, villagers suggested that relations and supportive networks between tribals (comprising 70 households in the village) and harijans (comprising 20

households) are extremely good. A number of tribal men suggested in a group interview that the latter 'were like brothers' and that they would help each other out wherever possible. It was generally suggested that other village members would help as far as possible if one village member fell into difficulties.

In Upper Chabri, a village in the Thuamur Rampur block of Kalahandi in the vicinity of the Upper Indravati dam project, similar arrangements were again considered to be important in protecting the vulnerable, and in adding to the efficiency of village life. The social composition of this village was interesting insofar as the majority of its inhabitants were tribals with minimal access to land of their own. Some tribal households owned upto 2 acres of land. The remainder were largely landless and had access only to poor and hard to access dungar land on the hilltops, or to state owned land onto which they encroached illegally. In the latter case people frequently incurred fines on being discovered by the Revenue Inspector.

The majority of the landowners in the village were instead from S.C. background. A number of these owned holdings of around 20 acres, whilst the sahu kar of the village and his family possessed a holding of 50 acres. During a group discussion attended by both adivasis and harijans, the participants suggested that, as in Parajasila, relations between the two groups were 'friendly' and 'supportive' in nature. The tribals suggested that the S.C.'s did not help them directly by providing them with food and other essentials in times of need, but did help them indirectly since they were virtually the sole source of employment in the village. Consequently the tribals relied upon this employment to generate the purchasing power required to buy food and other items which they could not grow themselves, or meet from forest produce and other wild foods.

This relationship may again be seen to be more an example of what Scott deems to be more the product of necessity than altruism. The wages paid in this employment were very low.⁶⁷ However the tribal community relied upon this for lack of any alternative, with the exception of a limited amount of work which some

⁶⁷ Stated by these villagers to be approximately Rs.5 per day.

members had been able to find on the Indravati project. For their harijan employers hired labour was necessary to sow and harvest their crop. They were able to take advantage of a favourable labour market situation, and the relative lack of formal education and low militancy of the tribals, to keep wages levels down.

Whilst these supportive and co-operative networks were extended to others outside of people's own tribal or caste groups, it should not be assumed that similar supportive, or at least cordial, relationships between harijans and tribals prevail within all villages and communities. Elsewhere in the Kashipur region it was suggested that harijans, referred to locally as the Dombs, were seen as a 'thieving community' which operated as petty traders in the region, and served often as intermediaries between the tribals and sahumars or merchants coming from outside. These Dombs would buy produce at low cost from tribal villagers (produce which they had generally either collected from the forest or produced themselves). They would then pass this on to merchants who would sell it elsewhere at considerable profit. In return the Dombs would receive some commission or payment for these services. A similar situation was also evident in the Boden, Sinapali, and Khariar blocks of Kalahandi.

Further, these forms of reciprocity and mutual support have been changing with time. For example in Bargaon, a village close to Khariar, one Brahmin villager interviewed suggested that there had been a marked deterioration in the relations between Brahmin families in the village. It was argued that these persons were now more concerned with their own self-improvement, economic situation and personal power within the village than with the idea of mutual support. Now the tendency was to 'pull each other down' rather than to help each other. This tendency also translated into their lack of concern for the welfare of vulnerable groups, which were becoming more neglected by the better-off as the latter strived for their own self-advance.

Locally Adapted and Diversified Production Systems In addition to the coping mechanisms discussed above, it has been argued by Scott(1976) and others that other 'technical arrangements' in society exist to reduce the vulnerability of sections of the community to harvest failure and food insecurity. It is argued that these mechanisms were devised by trial and error over periods of centuries to ensure the most stable and reliable crop yield possible. Often this was at the cost of reduced returns. Scott suggests that these sets of technical arrangements were evolved by the rural community in order to 'iron out the ripples which might drown a man'⁶⁸: that is to prevent the situation when peasant households could no longer meet their subsistence needs.

Similar 'technical arrangements' are also in evidence in Kalahandi. These include the use of a local tradition of seed varieties, planting techniques, timing of planting and so on. As discussed in section 4.3, there is evidence in some instances of farmers diversifying cropping patterns to include more drought resistant pulses, oilseeds, ragi and other 'coarser cereals' in addition to paddy in order to reduce vulnerability of crop loss due to untimely or inadequate rainfall. Planting a range of crops which become ready for harvesting during different months also reduces the seasonality attached to agricultural production, lessening problems created by long periods of shortage in the pre-harvest period after stores of foodstuffs produced during the previous year have been used up. This has also reduced the risk of total crop failure likely with monocrop agriculture.⁶⁹

Seasonal Changes in Consumption and Use of Stores Households commonly respond to seasonal variations in the availability of food and other essentials by reducing and changing patterns of consumption. Regularly shortages are experienced during the summer months and the monsoon months leading upto the main harvest

⁶⁸ Adopting a similar metaphor to that used by Tawney(1932) in the quote supplied in chapter 2. Scott(1988: 305).

⁶⁹ This range of crops also enabled growers to maintain a better balance in their diet. See further in Padhi and Satapathy(1992).

period in September and November.⁷⁰ During these months many household respond by 'tightening their belts' and reducing levels of consumption, by making increased use of forest produce and other 'wild foods', and by other changes in their patterns of consumption.

Households may also try to respond to these large seasonal variations in the availability of food by establishing stores of foodstuffs during times when these are more abundant, such as after the harvest (generally in October or November) or at times when forest produce, fruits and wild foods are relatively plentiful. These stores can then be consumed during the winter, and in the normal months of shortage before the arrival of the next harvest.

Interviews conducted for this project in two villages in Thuamur Rampur block indicate that households with larger landholdings are in some instances able to produce sufficient food during the harvest to last them throughout the year. However many poorer cultivators are unable to save substantial quantities of foodstuffs. For this reason any stores of foodstuffs which they are able to establish are commonly used up well before the next harvest. Food requirements then have to be met from other sources, including purchases from market outlets and by collecting forest produce and other wild foods.

Stores are frequently maintained on a household basis. However in some villages (eg. Parajasila) there is evidence of communal foodstores being maintained to provide for the community as a whole. A number of indigenous means of storing grains and other foodstuffs exist in Kalahandi and neighbouring Kashipur. One such method is to use grain golas, in which people collect together surplus foodstuffs and store this together in a common pool. Frequently control over the use of this pool is held by the village headman.

⁷⁰ During this period market prices for foodstuffs tend to rise sharply due to the low supply to market. As a result of their reduced purchasing power, this adversely affects the ability of those for whom a large proportion of their food entitlement is met through market purchases, to maintain food security. After the harvest food prices tend to fall sharply due to high supply of foodstuffs to market. This reduces the remuneration which cultivators, forced through their impoverished condition to sell produce at this time, can obtain through sale of their goods. These seasonal variations in terms of trade are an important variable influencing people's ability to maintain food security in the district.

A widely used form of storage is referred to as *dyori*. In this method cane mats, made by local producers or purchased from local markets, are bent to form a cylinder. The ends of this mat are stitched together and the walls are plastered with cowdung.⁷¹ Such a container can then be used to store upto seven or eight quintals of grain. This quantity is likely to be used up within eight months. Using this method grain can be adequately stored without decay for this period.(Agramee (a))

In some areas local voluntary organisations have initiated programmes to encourage villagers to maintain communal stores of foodgrains. These are discussed in further details in chapter 7.

Use of Wild Foods and Minor Forest Produce In addition to food produced on people's own plots and food bought from the market with purchasing power generated from wage employment or from other sources, use of wild foods and forest products represent a vital component of the diet of many of those most vulnerable in Kalahandi. Dependence upon forest produce is particularly high during the months of June, July and September when household stores of food and other needs have often been exhausted and the new crop is being sown, transplanted and awaiting harvesting. At this time women are frequently going to the forest most days in the month to collect wild roots, tubers and other edible materials.(Agramee(a))

The forest also provides a vital source of firewood, essential to the household economy as the principal fuel for cooking and heating. If sufficient wood is available after meeting household needs, firewood and minor forest produce represent a marketable commodity which may be sold to generate purchasing power. However the minimal purchasing power which this activity creates becomes evident when it is recognised that, according to those interviewed, in one day a man is able to collect only about one bundle of wood. In Parajasila near Kasipur, tribal inhabitants stated that firewood could be sold to local landlords and shopkeepers in Kashipur for only Rs.6 per bundle. A better rate of remuneration is obtained by those who were able to

⁷¹ This is used to plug gaps in the wall of the cylinder and also provides protection against pest damage

sell their wood to a local voluntary organisation, which paid Rs.10 for each bundle. However for many in Kalahandi and Koraput such outlets are unavailable and they continue to depend on merchants to buy their wood.⁷²

In Parajasila an important range of other forest produce was also collected. This includes roots, leaves and tubers which were frequently used for making medicines. Similarly in Boden the forest provided a vital source of goods such as mahua, kendu, chahak, channa, and roots such as sankar, kanda, kardamula and kuche i.

During my period of study in Kalahandi and other areas it became apparent from observation and interview information that access to forest products and wild food has been declining over a considerable period. This has reduced the ability of the local populations, particularly adivasis, to use minor forest produce as part of strategies to maintain food security. Partly, this must be attributed to state policy for forest management, and to deforestation by the state and private contractors. In the Forest Act of 1865, with amendments in 1878, the forest was declared to be the property of the Government, so appropriating from the local tribal populations informal rights over the forest which were centuries old. The forest became effectively classified into three categories:

1. *village forests* - these being maintained to provide firewood, small timber for tools and agricultural implements, fodder for cattle and to meet a range of other requirements;
2. *protected forests* - in which people had limited rights to remove certain products with the permission of the Forest Dept.⁷³
3. *reserved forests* - in which local people had few rights.(Nayak, Boal and Soreng,1990:113)

The Government's attempts to increase revenue which it obtained from forest produce has heightened the pressure placed on forest resources. For this reason

⁷² It may be noted that a division of labour operates in collecting wood. It is considered the task of women to collect wood for household use. However much of the wood collected for sale was gathered by men.

⁷³ This is classified as 'demarcated' and 'undemarcated' protected forest. In the latter the range of produce which can be removed is less restricted than in the former.

extraction of forest resources has outpaced the ability of the forests in the region to recover and regenerate.⁷⁴

Whilst Government of Orissa statistics suggest that forest cover has actually increased in Kalahandi between 1960 and 1988 (see fig.4.20), this data is sharply contradicted by visual evidence and reports of many of those interviewed in the district.⁷⁵ In the Boden, Sinapali, Khariar region numerous hillsides now lie bare, stripped of the forest cover.⁷⁶ Forest has been reduced to the extent that people are now prepared to travel with trailers from Khariar to Boden, a distance of around 15 kilometres, to collect wood from the forest. This wood is then taken back to Khariar for their own use, or for sale at a profit in the market or to friends. This factor has adverse consequences for the inhabitants of Boden block, particularly adivasis who are forced to travel large distances to meet their own needs for forest produce, as wood close to their homes is collected by outsiders from Khariar and elsewhere.

This process is being accentuated by the constant fires or 'monkey marriage' (mankaro baharo goro) which are visible in all parts of Kalahandi under forest. These fires are generally started by people being careless with fire, or discarding cigarettes or bidis when moving in the forest. Owing to the large amounts of dry wood in the forest, once started these may often burn for several days, destroying much valuable firewood and forest produce.

Frequently this carelessness has been blamed upon the tribals themselves, particularly due to the practice of podu cultivation.⁷⁷ However in many cases

⁷⁴ Indeed by 1909 it was reported that there was already substantial destruction of the forests in the Nawapara subdivision which fell under the Khariar Zamindari.

⁷⁵ Figures provided by the state which indicate that forested area has increased in Kalahandi in previous decades may be erroneous or misleading for a number of reasons. Firstly, deforestation may have greatly reduced the density of forest cover. Therefore even though the area covered by forest in the district may theoretically have increased, the density of trees and quality of wood on that area may have been drastically reduced. Secondly, area under small saplings or seedlings which have recently been planted, but which are not likely to useable as a source of firewood or minor forest produce for a number of years, is frequently also included under forested area. Thirdly, areas have been resown under low quality eucalyptus or fencing wood. This is of little value in enhancing the ability of the vulnerable population to maintain food security by extending access to firewood and other important forest produce.

⁷⁶ This has severe consequences for the environment since without this cover the soil has little protection against erosion and loss of nutrients

⁷⁷ Generally in this system land is firstly cleared, either by burning away surface vegetation or by cutting it with tools. This land is then ploughed, either with simple hand ploughs or otherwise by scratching by hand. Seeds are then sown. Generally this prepared site is cultivated for one or two seasons and then it is left and a new site prepared for the following year. Frequently a small crop of ragi or millets is grown using this method.

adivasis have a highly developed knowledge, developed over centuries, of how to use the forest in a sustainable manner.⁷⁸ Secondly, their respect for the forest does not derive simply from their awareness of its central importance to their livelihoods as source of fuel, food and other produce. It is also something which is central to their culture and ethos, and therefore something to be revered and worshipped, rather than seen simply as a source of inputs.⁷⁹ For this reason an emphasis on forest education both for adivasis and non- adivasis is necessary to promote knowledge of how to use forest and other bioresources in a sustainable manner. In Kashipur some attempts to organise replantation of hillsides in the area have been made by a local voluntary organisation. Local youth groups and voluntary organisations have also made efforts to instill amongst the local community a greater awareness of how to conserve forest and water resources..

Loans and Mortgage Faced with the set of difficulties described above, many cultivators and landless in parts of Kalahandi have been forced to borrow to meet cash and other requirements during periods of hardship. As indicated in fig.4.63 to 4.67, extension of credit through banks and cooperatives in Kalahandi remains low in many instances when compared with other areas. Frequently the most vulnerable have been unable to take advantage of increased availability of credit from Government and other institutional sources. This is particularly due to their inability to provide security for loans due to their low asset base, and due to their limited awareness of the availability of such credit sources. For this reason many continue to rely on loans from 'marwaris' and 'sahukars', whilst institutional credit tends to be utilised by forward caste landowners and other 'better-off' sections.

⁷⁸ Podu has been used in the region by some people for many centuries to meet a significant part of their food needs. When previously the cycle of shifting cultivation was longer, and the forest had more time to regenerate between years of cultivation, this form of cultivation was less harmful to the environment, and a more secure means of meeting food requirements. External factors such as those discussed above, often largely beyond the control of tribals themselves, have been central to increasing the environmental degradation caused by podu, and reducing its effectiveness as a means of maintaining food security.

⁷⁹ For wider discussion of the need to better understand tribal culture and forest knowledge refer in particular to Padel(1992) and to chapter 7.1 of this thesis.

Fig.4.63 Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies by District in Orissa

District	Number of cooperatives	Total Membership (000's)	Deposits (Rs. in lakhs)	Borrowing (Rs. in lakhs)	Loans advanced (Rs. in lakhs)
Balasore	252	294	234	1872	789
Bolangir	219	227	22	1029	227
Cuttack	564	525	50	2538	1019
Dhenkenal	190	202	58	927	322
Ganjam	516	298	10	2028	792
Kalahandi	102	189	27	1028	150
Keonjhar	48	149	43	606	185
Koraput	60	214	32	1163	363
Mayurbhanj	55	216	42	947	188
Phulbani	64	127	9	729	38
Puri	538	361	46	2511	1055
Sambalpur	164	294	85	2561	1068
Sundargarh	47	122	16	1039	256

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Fig.4.64 Non-Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies by District in Orissa

District	Number of cooperatives	Total Membership (000's)	Deposits (Rs. in lakhs)	Borrowing (Rs. in lakhs)	Loans advanced (Rs. in lakhs)
Balasore	53	10	87	25	54
Bolangir	45	2	.	20	149
Cuttack	195	32	1631	220	2028
Dhenkenal	25	5	23	26	48
Ganjam	62	56	581	93	362
Kalahandi	34	1	1	10	6
Keonjhar	28	3	5	11	8
Koraput	65	13	84	81	139
Mayurbhanj	10	7	349	27	299
Phulbani	2	1	.	2	1
Puri	128	46	1238	98	808
Sambalpur	57	12	54	64	240
Sundargarh	73	34	770	81	759

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Fig.4.65 Central Cooperative Banks by District in Orissa

District	Number of banks	Total Membership	Deposits (Rs. in lakhs)	Borrowing (Rs. in lakhs)	Loans (Rs. in lakhs)
Balasore	19	534	810	1441	787
Bolangir	14	411	318	973	310
Cuttack	46	1193	1550	2604	1316
Dhenkenal	19	353	491	940	381
Ganjam	28	894	1515	1455	1112
Kalahandi	14	224	293	900	238
Keonjhar	9	154	413	299	208
Koraput	13	197	349	859	488
Mayurbhanj	14	224	532	645	283
Phulbani	7	179	148	733	44
Puri	34	1121	907	2244	1112
Sambalpur	27	459	1110	2360	2041
Sundargarh	14	170	355	518	351

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Fig.4.66 Regional Cooperative Marketing Societies by District in Orissa

District	Number of cooperatives	Total Membership (000's)	Borrowing (Rs. in lakhs)	Total sales (Rs. in lakhs)
Balasore	5	3	35	114
Bolangir	6	1	54	10
Cuttack	8	2	204	148
Dhenkenal	4	1	33	40
Ganjam	5	13	124	37
Kalahandi	3	1	41	38
Keonjhar	2	1	19	18
Koraput	7	4	187	104
Mayurbhanj	5	1	32	71
Phulbani	2	1	38	4
Puri	6	3	60	195
Sambalpur	8	1	120	20
Sundargarh	3	1	25	36

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

Fig. 4.67 Wholesale and Primary Consumer Cooperative Stores

District	No. of consumer cooperative stores (wholesale and primary)	Membership (in 000's)	Purchase (Rs. in lakhs)	Sales (Rs..in lakhs)
Balasore	50	28	146	144
Bolangir	31	16	45	43
Cuttack	220	63	232	235
Dhenkenal	58	14	114	116
Ganjam	120	46	207	206
Kalahandi	9	5	55	56
Keonjhar	37	8	83	85
Koraput	37	24	279	272
Mayurbhanj	21	29	17	18
Phulbani	5	3	25	25
Puri	82	24	204	220
Sambalpur	63	34	159	155
Sundargarh	91	52	497	502

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract 1991

However many poorer people in the region continue to borrow from moneylenders rather than institutional sources for reasons which go beyond their inability to provide adequate security for loans. Firstly, for many borrowing from moneylenders remains more convenient. The latter are frequently resident in the village, so eliminating the problem of having to travel to the nearest bank or agricultural credit society. Secondly, borrowing from moneylenders avoids the time-consuming bureaucratic procedures which are common at banks and institutional sources. Taking into account the low educational level of many poor people and their limited familiarity with the credit system, this remains an important issue.

Faced with high interest rates and exploitative terms of borrowing it is evident that many will never be in a position to repay their loans. Recurrent years of crop failure has accentuated the trend where many poors are forced to borrow repeatedly year after year to see themselves through crisis periods. In these circumstances a situation is often reached where borrowers become so indebted that they need to sell off cultivable land and other essential productive assets⁸⁰ to service their debts.

Persons forced into such distress sales regularly find their ability to produce food, and to generate purchasing power, to be dramatically undermined when the crisis subsides. Rising levels of landlessness and asset loss have markedly reduced the ability of many persons in Kalahandi to maintain food security for this reason. Through this process a chain of progressively increasing indebtedness and vulnerability is established amongst a widening section of the district's population.

Conditions for borrowing tend to vary widely in Kalahandi. In Chindaguda, close to Khariar, those interviewed suggested that they tended to take loans primarily between July and August, with the months during the monsoon and immediately before the harvest being the time when borrowing was most necessary. They

⁸⁰ These may include cattle, buffalo (essential as a source of draught power as well as milk), ploughs and other tools.

suggested that in return for a loan of Rs.100 they were expected to repay a bag of rice. This was worth around Rs.240⁸¹.

In Upper Chabri, a village in Thuamur Rampur block close to the Indravati dam project, borrowers in the village were commonly forced to pay 100% interest on loans taken out from the local sahuakar. Further, in Kashipur area it was suggested by members of a local voluntary organisation that tribals borrowing from sahuakars during the monsoon period were frequently expected to repay at 50% interest. It is therefore evident that there is considerable variation in terms of lending between regions and from lender to lender.

Forms of loan also vary markedly, In addition to loans taken directly in cash which must be repaid with interest, a number of systems prevail in Kalahandi through which loans are made against mortgage of assets or labour. Examples of such systems include the following:

1. bandha - mortgage of land and labour
2. kalantaria - mortgage of land for money with compound interest
3. bandha saheji mortgage of land with moneylender and mortgager each having a share of cultivated paddy
4. katti - mortgage of land for a fixed time and a fixed amount. When the fixed mortgage period is completed the amount paid by the money lender lapses and is not returned by mortgager.

Mortgages also regularly take place against the borrower's labour in Kalahandi. This may take a number of forms, which include:

1. goti - free agricultural service to the village headman (Gountia);
2. hali - annual agricultural labour in the master's house;
3. bahabandha - mortgage of hand labour by giving advances;
4. kalibhuti - purchase of labour by giving a certain price before reaping paddy, and collecting double as labour during harvest;

⁸¹ At current prices paid by Government procurement agents (F.C.I.)

5. **thika** - a form of contract labour where labourers may be in loss or gain (Mishra, 1991: 4)

These systems of borrowing remain a major source of exploitation in Kalahandi. Regularly they lead to long-term indebtedness, alienation of land and other assets, and in some circumstances to situations of bonded labour. Because the risk of a borrower losing land in land mortgages (**jami bandhak**) is high, people commonly resort to such loans only in extreme circumstances when their situation becomes particularly acute.

Similarly loans against labour are generally made on the grounds that the borrower pledges his/her labour to the lender until the loan and interest are paid off. The frequent inability of many borrowers to repay loans regularly precipitates a situation where the borrower is unable to escape from this commitment, and remains tied to the lender in a relationship commonly referred to as 'labour bondage'.

It should be emphasised that people's requirement to borrow should not be seen only as a survival strategy implemented to meet consumption needs during periods of hardship and food insecurity. There are a wide range of other reasons why loans are sought. These include the need to meet expenses for marriages, funerals, festival commitments and other ceremonies.

One such festival that is particularly important in Kalahandi is **Naukhai** (literally 'eating new rice'), held to celebrate the arrival of the new paddy harvest. A range of other festivals are also celebrated by different people depending upon their beliefs and preferences.⁸² Such commitments may place a heavy strain on stocks and resources, particularly when they are accompanied by consumption of alcohol. However households regularly feel that it is particularly important to meet such commitments. Such events may provide a long-awaited opportunity for celebration and enjoyment after what for many is frequently a considerable period of

⁸² For example some festivals are held for religious reasons. Tribal groups also tend to celebrate festivals which may be specific to their tribe.

shortage and hardship. The new harvest celebrations may be seen as one such example. Further, the need to maintain such ceremonies and festivals may represent an important aspect of maintaining the traditions of the community. Households which are unable to carry out such commitments may commonly feel a strong sense of social inferiority and loss of respect.

In some parts of Kalahandi consumption of alcohol is a factor which has been central to the indebtedness of certain sections.⁸³ This regularly places excessive demands on household purchasing power. In the Khariar region interviews for this study indicated a number of instances where male labourers were spending upto Rs.10 per day on drink. This was often more than they received as their daily wage. In these instances the burden of household consumption was frequently borne out of income generated by the wife and other members of the family who were in paid employment. When this was not possible the costs of drinking were often met by borrowing, with a set of consequences similar to those already discussed.

The process of borrowing and indebtedness described therefore influences people's ability to meet their food security requirements at a number of levels. Firstly, it may provide the purchasing power to enable people to meet their immediate consumption needs and to see them through periods of shortage. However, secondly, the progressive cycle of repeated borrowing and growing debt bondage which may result, can force them to sell off land and other assets. This may reduce their ability to produce food and other commodities, or to gain employment in the future when the situation improves. For this reason their long-term vulnerability may be markedly increased. The process of land alienation and distress sale of assets will be discussed further in the following sections.

Land Inequality and Distress Sales Inequalities in access to land are a central explanatory variable influencing levels of food security in Kalahandi. As discussed in

⁸³ However consumption of alcohol was in no way peculiar to Kalahandi. This was also very much in evidence in Koraput, other districts in western and coastal Orissa, and in various parts of Andhra Pradesh. In some villages in Rayalseema there was a place where people would congregate to buy and consume small plastic bags of arrack, commonly for about Rs.6 per bag.

the previous section, there has been a trend of progressively rising land inequality in the district over an extended period. This factor has been in particular the result of cultivators being forced into distress sales of land to meet immediate consumption requirements. It has also resulted from land appropriations in land mortgages or due to other forms of indebtedness.

This trend is indicated in figs.4.68 and 4.69. These demonstrate a significant increase in numbers of plots and area of plots falling into the marginal (less than 1ha.) category between 1970-71 and 1985-86. Areas falling into the small (1.00 to 2.00 has.) and semi-medium categories (2.00 to 4.00 has) have also increased significantly during this period. In contrast there has been a marked decrease in number and area of plots in the medium (4 to 10 has.) and large (10 has. or more) categories. This data indicates a progressive trend of subdivision of plots, and to increasing numbers of people working smaller areas of land. Land pressure has corresponding increased noticeably.⁸⁴

Technically land ownership in the Kalahandi is limited by ceiling surplus regulations as part of a programme for land reform. These limit ownership to 10 standard acres of land, this representing ten acres of best quality Grade One land but upto forty acres of lowest quality Grade Four land. However land redistributions under this programme have had a limited effect in reducing this trend of rising land inequalities in Kalahandi and neighbouring regions. The pace of land alienations and distress sales of land has continued to rise more rapidly than the rate of redistributions under this scheme.

In tribal areas such as the two designated tribal blocks of Kalahandi, Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur, Orissa Regulation (2) of 1956 officially prevents

⁸⁴ Similar trends have been evidenced in many instances in other contexts. For example Lenin argued that land alienation and differentiation of small producers was at the forefront of the Russian social economy in the period upto 1917. He states that:

'...on the one hand, masses of peasants are giving up the land, losing economic independence and, on the other hand, peasants are continually enlarging their crop areas and adopting improved farming methods. On the one hand, peasants are losing farm property (livestock and implements) and, on the other hand, peasants are acquiring improved implements, are beginning to procure machines, and so forth.... On the one hand, peasants are giving up the land, selling or leasing their allotments, and, on the other hand, peasants are renting allotments and are greedily buying privately-owned land.('On the so-called Market Question' in Desai(ed.)1989:87)

Fig.4.68 Area Operated by Size Class of Operational Holdings in Kalahandi - Number per Size Class in '00s

Category	1970-71		1980-81		1985-86	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Marginal below 1.00	247	17.4	611	29.7	769	35.7
Small (1.00 - 2.00)	405	28.5	637	30.9	609	28.3
Semi-medium (2.00 - 4.00)	269	19.0	569	27.6	510	23.7
Medium (4.00 - 10.00)	432	30.4	211	10.2	235	10.9
Large (10.00 and above)	67	4.7	33	1.6	31	1.4
Total	1420	100.0	2061	100.0	2154	100.0

Source: Government of Orissa, Agricultural Census, various years and personal calculations

Fig.4.69 Area Operated by Size Class of Operational Holdings in Kalahandi - Total Area per Size Class in '00 hectares

Category	1970-71		1980-81		1985-86	
	Area (Ha's)	%	Area (Ha's)	%	Area (Ha's)	%
Marginal below 1.00	156	2.8	366	8.4	437	9.9
Small (1.00 - 2.00)	660	11.7	856	19.6	830	18.8
Semi-medium (2.00 - 4.00)	838	14.8	1502	34.3	1340	30.4
Medium (4.00 - 10.00)	2799	49.6	1199	27.4	1326	30.1
Large (10.00 and above)	1191	21.1	449	10.3	474	10.8
Total	5644	100.0	4372	100.0	4407	100.0

Source: Government of Orissa, Agricultural Census, various years and personal calculations

the transfer of land from a tribal to a non-tribal unless previous assent is obtained in writing from the required authorities. The latter are also empowered to restore to tribal persons land which has been appropriated from them, or which has been transferred under pressures of debt or for other reasons. This provision has afforded at least some greater degree of security to tribals. As discussed in chapter 8.3, the Mishra Commission report identifies a number of instances in which land has been restored under this facility.

However as was the case with ceiling surplus regulations, these laws are frequently bypassed or are not rigorously implemented by the administration. Also they have done little to restore to tribals land which was appropriated from them a considerable time ago. Many tribals have little written proof that they previously owned land appropriated from them. This factor makes it improbable that this land will be restored to them in future under Orissa Regulation(2).

For example in Parajasila, a tribal village lying roughly 4km. from Kashipur in Koraput district, persons interviewed for this project indicated that nearly all land previously owned by this tribal population had been taken from them several decades ago by sahumars after they had incurred debts which they were unable to repay.⁸⁵ However lack of written evidence of previous ownership again largely rules out their chances of regaining this land.⁸⁶

Since losing their land most of these families have had access to no more than half an acre per household, this generally being low quality dongar land which is difficult to access and is dry and hard to cultivate. During interviews inhabitants stated that they were unable to meet their food requirements from this small quantity of low quality land. To supplement their diet most needed to rely on production of 'coarse grains' such as ragi, kausela, kutting and bilo, along with

⁸⁵ The interviews from which the following information is taken were conducted largely between March 27th and March 30th. 1992.

⁸⁶ This lack of formal and written proof of land ownership amongst tribal peoples has long counted against *adivasis* in situations where their land has been taken from them, or when they have been displaced. This has been the case when the Hirakud dam was constructed in 1958, and is now an issue with the construction of the Upper Indravati project, which will displace many tribals when land is flooded after its completion. See further in papers for Sambalpur Conference(1987); Baboo(1991a,1991b,1991c).

forest produce including roots, kanda, barada (leaves), kendu fruit, mahua (used to make liquor) and mango. With the nutritional intake provided by these additional grains and wild foods, the tribal villagers argued that even two acres of the better quality land close to the village (of the quality which they had previously owned) would be sufficient to adequately meet their nutritional needs.

Some additional balance to their diet was also supplied through limited quantities of vegetables which were produced in the common village garden. For this reason access to common property village land and forest is of great importance to the capacity of these villagers to maintain food security. Produce grown in this village garden included brinjal (aubergine), tomato, banana and tobacco.

The men claimed that they often tend to smoke this tobacco when feeling hungry. After smoking they would then tend to fall asleep. In addition to tobacco, use of alcohol was particularly evident in the village. Those interviewed stated that they drank 'all the year round, particularly when it is hot'.⁸⁷ This liquor is produced largely from mahua flower, but sometimes also from ragi.

A slightly different situation can be witnessed in Upper Chabri, an interior village several kilometres from the Indravati dam project in the Thuamur Rampur block of Kalahandi.⁸⁸ Tribal households in this village did not report major appropriations of land by sahu kars, as had been identified in Parajasila. However inequalities in land ownership in this village are significant. As already discussed, some of the tribals reported having land holdings of upto two acres in size. However many were entirely landless and had no access to land without venturing onto nearby dongar land which they did not own, or by encroaching onto Government owned land. In contrast, the bulk of land close to the village was owned by a relatively small number of non-tribals from Scheduled Caste background. This lack of access to land forces many of these tribals to rely upon the sahu kar (and to a lesser degree on the other landowners with larger plots) for employment. This provides one of the sole

⁸⁷ Although this habit is not generalised amongst all villages visited. For example in Upper Chabri (see below) alcohol was not consumed.

⁸⁸ The majority of interviews and observations from which the following information is taken were made in late March and early April 1992.

means through which they can generate purchasing power required to buy foodstuffs and other commodities which they are unable to produce themselves.

Under these circumstances it becomes apparent that land inequality is a central variable influencing the food security of sections of the population in certain areas. The extent to which this is apparent depends upon the degree to which foodstuffs are available from other sources, and upon the availability of employment which enables people to generate necessary purchasing power to buy food. Although some interventions have been made to redress this inequality and to protect the land ownership of tribals, these have in many instances been easily bypassed or have not been rigorously applied. Consequently they have had limited success. For this reason many have been forced to sell off land and other assets to meet their immediate consumption needs during periods of shortage.

Interviews during fieldwork for this project support the hypothesis, forwarded at the beginning of this section, that mortgage and distress sales of land are a coping mechanism which people will adopt only in particularly acute situations, when other 'lower cost' strategies have been used up or have become ineffective. Sale of land and other productive assets is an action which markedly reduces people's ability to maintain food security after the crisis has subsided.

Distress Sales of Other Assets As discussed, distress sales of assets provide a key component of the range of survival strategies which sections of the Kalahandi population utilise to cope with periods of food insecurity. As expected from the above hypothesis, interviews in Kalahandi indicate that people commonly first sell off assets whose loss will have minimum long term affect on their ability to produce food and to generate purchasing power. Commonly this included assets kept specifically for aesthetic purposes or as stores of value.

Options such as sale of draught animals, tools and other crucial productive assets (including land) were perceived to be strategies with a far higher long term cost. These were only adopted when other 'low cost' strategies such as sale of small

stock, minor household items and reductions in consumption had been exhausted or were implausible. Distress sales of seed or foodgrains were also reported, this again falling into this class of 'high cost' coping mechanisms.

Preliminary figures from a study by the Orissa Voluntary Health Association suggest that in a range of villages in the Nawapara subdivision of Kalahandi nearly 30% of households in the study villages reported having recently disposed of assets: 39% reported having sold off land; 33% reported having sold off livestock; and 25% reported having sold off domestic assets. Nearly 72% of assets sold were reported to be classifiable as agricultural assets. The study also revealed that one third of households in the study villages reported having had to resort to distress sales of foodgrains.⁸⁹(Ali and Dash,1992:64)

One important divergence noted from the literature concerned people's attitude to sale of jewellery, often perceived in the literature as falling into the category of 'low cost' insurance mechanisms (see earlier in section 4.10). According to our earlier hypothesis we would expect these to be sold off first, in order to avoid the need to sell off other assets more essential to future household production and employment. In reality, in Kalahandi and the majority of other areas visited it was found to be a major indignity for any household to sell off jewellery belonging to the wife. This may lead to a loss of self respect and standing in the community and would be carried out only in extreme circumstances. Consequently it may be inappropriate to include this in the category of 'low cost' insurance mechanisms.

Migration With the absence of a second crop in Kalahandi limiting the availability of agricultural labour to only three or four months of the year, and with employers tending to reduce rather than increase levels of labour which they take on, many in the district have found little alternative other than to migrate to other regions in

⁸⁹ The study suggests that most of the households surveyed were able to provide food for themselves for less than one year.

search of work. In response to this problem, many migrate simply for the winter and summer months, returning to Kalahandi during the cropping season to take employment, or (for those owning land) to cultivate the household plot. Often this seasonal migration is limited to male members of the family, who remit wages to their wives and other family members remaining in their village in Kalahandi. However considerable levels of permanent outmigration have also taken place. Particularly this has been evident amongst those who have been forced into distress sales of their land and productive assets during previous crisis periods, limiting their ability to resume crop production or to generate income since then.

Traditionally the most popular destination for migrants from Kalahandi has been Raipur in Madhya Pradesh. Here many take up work as labourers or as rickshaw-pullers. Historically Raipur has long been chosen as a migration point, with many persons in Kalahandi having relations or friends who have previously found work there. For this reason it is well known through conversation and social interaction as a suitable destination. Further, by Kalahandi standards it is well connected by transport services and therefore easy to get to, particularly from the Nawapara region. Several buses run daily from this area. There is also a train connection from Kantabanji in Bolangir district, and from Kesinga in Kalahandi.

However other destinations have also become increasingly popular. These include Rourkela in Orissa's Sundargarh district⁹⁰, and Vizagpatnam in Andhra Pradesh. A number of people suggested that opportunities for finding employment in Raipur are now declining and that other destinations are increasingly favoured in response to this factor.

Household interviews conducted in Kalahandi for this study indicate that migration from the district occurs most widely amongst scheduled and backward caste families. It was noticeable that migration amongst tribal families from this region was minimal. Many adivasis instead expressed a need to remain close to forest, which is central to their livelihood in providing food, raw materials for

⁹⁰ Where work is sometimes taken at the steel plant or in other industries.

medicine and other requirements, as well as a source of essential firewood.⁹¹ Notably for *h a r i j a n* families, migration to towns and cities is significant not only as a means to obtain labour, but also because in these places caste barriers are far less clearly defined. Whilst in rural societies untouchability remains prevalent, in cities this system is breaking down more rapidly.

In addition to the survival strategies which have been described above, the issue of child sale in Kalahandi and Phulbani has received considerable media attention during recent years of drought and food insecurity. This is a form of action which is rarely mentioned in food security debates as a coping mechanism used to see the remaining family members through crisis periods, or to reduce their future vulnerability to food insecurity. In the next section I shall go on to discuss this issue in greater detail, examining whether it is appropriate to view this action as a coping mechanism in this sense, or whether this is better explained by other social or cultural necessities.

Child Sale Reports of child sale in the press have regularly tended to indicate that this is a comparatively recent phenomenon in response to particularly severe food crises in in the district in recent years. However local persons interviewed in the district in connection with this issue have indicated that there have been cases of child sale in Kalahandi over a far longer time span.⁹²

This action has been particularly prevalent amongst the Gaud caste, or milkfolk, who have long sold children, particularly girls, to more wealthy families to work in their homes as domestic servants. It became evident from interviews that incidence of this activity tends to be far higher amongst Gauds, which are not a scheduled caste, than amongst *h a r i j a n* families whose daughters would not be accepted to work in higher caste households. Brahmin and higher caste families

⁹¹ One colleague suggested that in the Boden region the proportion of tribal families in the area which had migrated to other areas was less than 2%.

⁹² Dr. Fanindem Deo, personal communication.

would generally accept all food and water from girls of Gaud origin, apart from water-rice (pokhal)⁹³.

Incidences of child sale have been noted in a number of other societies. Greenhough(1980, 1982) suggests that during the Great Bengal Famine of 1943 the sale and abuse of children clearly illustrates the process of 'internal dismemberment' of families during the crisis. (1980:230) He suggests a number of reasons why families resorted to such action. Firstly, he argues that under the stress which famine placed on families at this time, the powerful cultural ideal of a co-resident sharing family became secondary to a more powerful ideal of family continuity. Such continuity was seen to hinge upon the survival of adult males in the community.(1980:222-223) For this reason the wellbeing and survival of women and children was relegated in importance relative to that of adult men. Greenhough points out that such action violates strongly developed cultural values dictating that patrons and masters should provide for the wellbeing of their dependents. However he suggests that:

'on the other hand such abandonment helped the very persons admitted to be capable of maintaining key village and domestic institutions to survive. The paradox of victimisation is that immoral forms of conduct conducted ultimately to moral ends - the reconstruction of the family and the village economy after the crisis has passed'. (1980: 234)

Greenhough therefore implies that children were abandoned or sold as a survival strategy to better ensure the survival of the household or the community after the crisis. Similarly, Arnold identifies a similar trend which prevailed during famine in the Madras region in 1876-78. He states that:

'from desperation too women and children were sold or gave themselves up to prostitution. In part this was a further aspect of the hierarchy of rural subordination. Men preserved their own chances or survival by sacrificing women and children.... Famine brought not only an intensification of the peasant's struggle for survival, but also enhanced their exploitation by others'. (1984: 97)

⁹³ ibid

Greenhough secondly indicates that families in some instances sold their children in order to relieve themselves of the responsibility of protecting and nurturing them during periods of hardship. Also, he argues that families acted in this way to relieve themselves of the 'nearly intolerable clamoring of their children for food'. He therefore infers that it is 'a kind of exasperation or mental exhaustion' which led parents to sell or to otherwise 'do away' with their children.(1980:230)

In contrast, child sales in Kalahandi cannot in many cases be explained in terms of coping mechanisms designed to serve the aims outlined above in the work of Greenhough or Arnold. The sums received for the sale of a child have generally tended to be very low. In 1965 such sales reportedly took place for as little as Rs.5. The much publicised recent sale of a girl in Ambulpani took place with only Rs.40 being exchanged. Even during times of shortage these would appear to be inadequate to bring a improvement in the economic condition of the family sufficient to compensate parents and other family members for the anguish created by loss of a child.

In these circumstances it is perhaps plausible that such action may be an attempt to relieve the burden on the rest of the family of having another member to feed and clothe. However, it was emphasised locally that parents are unlikely to sell children except in the most extreme circumstances. For this reason it may be more likely to be a concern to provide their child with a better chance of survival, and a more satisfactory standard of living, that motivated the parents to sell their child into a more wealthy family.

Indeed, although children were frequently sold into families about which they knew nothing beforehand, it was expected that the new family would ensure that the child was adequately fed and clothed. In the case of a girl, the new parents would also be expected to take care of her marriage and other needs. In many instances these are costs which a poor family would struggle to bear.

Public response through collective action and protest Other forms of collective action alongside those previously described (including interhousehold

transfers and reciprocal mechanisms, use of communal stores etc) may be of major significance in enabling the vulnerable to cope with periods of food insecurity. In certain situations non-violent or violent demonstration may represent a key means through which those in distress, and other concerned activists, attempt to protest against suffering and make their predicament known to a wider public. Such actions may represent a means through which the deprived may place pressure on persons perceived to have a responsibility, whether codified or uncoded, to provide them with assistance during times of distress. These persons may include Government officials, 'better off' members of the community, employers, and so on.

As discussed earlier in section 4.10, this duty may derive from systems of reciprocity and social support which exist within the community. These may be based in the wider safety-net provided by what Thompson, Scott and others have more generally termed the 'moral economy'. In the case of Government officers, this responsibility may derive from provisions laid down in codified form in the Orissa Relief Code.

Forms of group demonstration may be significant in pressuring 'superordinate' actors into fulfilling their perceived duty to provide for the vulnerable during times of distress. Riot and looting on a collective basis may represent an action carried out by the poor, designed to seize food and other essentials in situations when these actors have failed, in the eyes of those in distress, to fulfill these responsibilities. A number of incidences of such activities are noted historically in food security literature.

Writing in the context of people's response to famine during 1874-76 in the Madras region, Arnold points out that two key expectations motivated the activities of those affected.⁹⁴ Firstly, there was a shared belief amongst the vulnerable that those with greater access to food in the community should make food available to the hungry and starving. This motivated a belief amongst the poor that if such responsibilities were not fulfilled, then they would themselves be justified in

⁹⁴ Similar issues are discussed in Sharma(1993)

seizing what they required to meet their needs. A similar attitude prevailed amongst the poor to cases of hoarding, profiteering through grain sale, or transporting food out of the district. In such situations, looting and seizure of food from those unprepared to share foodgrains with the hungry during times of hardship was seen to be justified.

Secondly, there was commonly a shared belief in the eyes of the vulnerable that those holding power in the community should not misutilise this power to their detriment. These power-holders were seen to include moneylenders, landholders, grain traders and Government officers. In this context collective protest from the downtrodden was not organised necessarily to displace these persons from authority, but instead to remind them of the proper use of this power and the responsibilities expected of them by the vulnerable.

Indeed in this sense Arnold argues that from the standpoint of the poor, power connotes responsibility. Neglect of these responsibilities may induce protests from the poor through direct demonstrations of collective anger, or by placing pressure on other agencies with authority, such as the government, to intervene.(1984: 85) He suggests that:

(peasants') acceptance of that order entailed a belief that superordinate groups had certain responsibilities toward the peasants by virtue of the latter's labour and services, from which superordinates had benefitted by virtue of their very possession of power. When in the face of a major subsistence crisis superordinates ignored peasant needs or failed to respond with an appropriate exercise of their power, peasants believed themselves entitled to act - through petitions, entreaties, riots and appropriations - to remind them of their responsibilities or to punish their neglect. The peasants were far from being aspiring revolutionaries seeking to overturn the existing order. On the contrary they were in effect reaffirming that order by requiring that it function in the ways in which from custom and collective need, they believed it should.(1984: 114)

The same author suggests that in similarly trying to understand the underlying reasons for looting carried out by the hungry in South India in 1917-18, the principal motivation for many of those who took part was to humiliate those who the crowd considered to be responsible for profiteering and for hoarding during the period of hardship. Arnold suggests that a related action was to destroy account books

and promissory notes which belonged to traders. Given that many of the latter were also involved in moneylending, this may be seen to represent an action on the part of the poor designed not only to protest against the inflated prices which many traders were charging, but also to destroy evidence of the debts which they owed. (1979: 127)

Importantly, in these circumstances looters tended to direct their hostility primarily towards traders. Similar action was rarely directed towards Government Officers or other persons in state authority. Because the looters were generally unarmed, and traders rarely tried to resist or to have them arrested, these incidents rarely led to personal violence towards the trading community. Violence which did occur resulted primarily when police or auxillary troops attempted to curb the looters' action. This was particularly when they attempted to loot rice mills or railway sidings where foodgrains were stored.(1979: 127)

The concessionary response adopted by the authorities was in many instances motivated by a desire to maintain order, and to prevent an escalation of unrest amongst the deprived and hungry population. On occasions this was seen to take precedence over protecting the property rights of the better-off. Rioters rarely tried to directly challenge the whole system of property and power. Whilst this was the case the authorities were sometimes accomplices to price-fixing, recognising that social peace was more valued than absolute property rights of farmers and food dealers' (1979:293)

In addition to the forms of protest described above, in some parts of India poorer sections have tended to attempt to collectively protest against their deprived social and economic conditions by supporting non-Governmental political organisations such as Maoist-oriented Naxalite movements. Declaredly organised according to the Maoist principle 'from the poor, for the poor', the naxalite Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), and offshoots such as the People's War Group, have been relatively active in region proximate to Kalahandi, including Bastar and Chattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana and Rayalseema in Andhra

Pradesh. Such activities on the part of the poor may supplement, or replace political activity through more 'mainstream' political channels such as elected representatives in the State Legislative Assembly, Lok Sabha, or local Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats. As discussed further in chapter 9.2, instances of naxalite based activity have been minimal in Kalahandi and in western Orissa.

Interviews conducted in Kalahandi during fieldwork for this project also indicate that levels of rioting and demonstration have been low in the district.⁹⁵ Although there are reports of demonstrators being lathi charged by police during 1988, no reference was made to other instances of similar activity.

However crime figures between 1959 until 1981 indicate a significant increase in the reported incidence of rioting during recent decades. This has accompanied an increase in other reported crimes such as robbery/burglary/theft and dacoity. As demonstrated in fig. 4.70, cases of reported robbery, burglary, theft and rioting each increased significantly during this period. There has also been a marked increase in dacoity during this period.

From these figures it is difficult to locate the extent to which such increases in crime are motivated by rising levels of hunger and immiseration.⁹⁶ However persons interviewed in the Boden region indicated that levels of theft had clearly increased during recent periods of drought and food insecurity. Often these thefts were conducted by groups of five or six persons. Such thefts included paddy and corn, especially at night. Regularly these were from smaller farmers, since persons holding larger farms were frequently more affluent, better connected in the community, and more likely to hand the perpetrators over to the police.

These interviews also reported rising levels of violence and other 'vigilante' action within communities against persons found to be committing such thefts. Similarly in Khariar a number of instances of goonda activity had been reported in

⁹⁵ Indicative evidence from comparative fieldwork carried out for this thesis in the drought-prone Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh, indicates that levels of collective protest through these channels in Kalahandi are well below those in these areas.

⁹⁶ Taking into account differing methods used for measuring reported crimes, it is also hard to verify the accuracy with which these figures reflect crimes committed.

Fig.4.70 Incidence of Detected Crimes in Kalahandi district

Year	Murder	Dacoity	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Rioting	Kidnapping	Abduction	Misc.	Total
1959	21	1	9	185	322	18				556
1961	14		3	144	196	5				362
1962	31	.	3	147	196	5				380
1963	13	1	5	214	328	14				575
1978	25	29	32	353	450	35			727	1651
1979	26	6	28	284	419	81			823	1667
1980	14	15	35	381	580	66			946	2037
1981	26	10	40	303	545	81		2	1053	2060

Source: Government of Orissa, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, statistical abstract, various years

the town in recent years. These had, at the time of this study, largely been eliminated through action taken by persons in the town to drive out such 'anti-social elements'.

Alongside incidence of rising thefts, interviews reported rising levels of prostitution in the district. Such activities may indicate that persons are being forced into such activities as means to deal with the rising levels of deprivation associated with hunger which they are experiencing as the result of repeated years of drought and food crisis in Kalahandi.

The absence of higher levels of demonstrations and activities may again be accredited to a number of factors. Firstly, this may be partly due to the low levels of education and consciousness amongst the vulnerable in Kalahandi. Secondly, as discussed further in chapter 8.3, these persons do not always see merchants, moneylenders etc. to be their exploiters. In some instances their considerable wealth and ability to lend money during periods of hardship accords them a particular reverence in the eyes of the poor. Thirdly, as Thompson rightly argues, the fact that people are hungry does not necessarily dictate that they will riot, nor does it dictate the form that riot will take. He suggests that:

'riot is a group, community, or class response to crisis; it is not within the power of a few individuals to riot. Nor need it be the only or the most obvious form of collective action - there may be alternatives such as the mass-petitioning of the authorities, fast days, sacrifices and prayer; perambulation of the houses of the rich; or the migration of whole villages'. (1991: 263)

Indeed, in no sense is rioting a 'natural' or 'obvious' response to hunger or hardship. This instead represents a 'sophisticated pattern of collective behaviour', which may provide a collective alternative to individualistic and familial strategies of survival. For this reason there is no necessary reason why riot should be within

the culture of the poor, particularly within the context of the repercussions which this action may incur.⁹⁷ These issues are taken up further in chapter 9.2.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the roots of food insecurity and food crisis in Kalahandi. This analysis is based heavily on concepts discussed in the theoretical framework provided in chapter 2, and on interviews and observations carried out for this fieldwork in the district. This chapter attempts to identify an ensemble of variables which interrelate in a range of combinations to create situations in which sections of the population in some parts of Kalahandi are unable to maintain access to necessary food. It emphasises the heterogeneity of problems faced within the region, giving attention to differences in vulnerability from region to region and between sections of the population. It also argues that problems encountered in Kalahandi are not unique. Some persons living in different parts of India or in other nations may encounter problems of similar nature, possibly in different combinations and acuity, on a regular basis.

Provisions available to the Government to address problems of food crisis in Orissa are discussed in the next chapter, this providing a background for an analysis of the performance of state interventions in Kalahandi between 1985 and 1991 in chapter 6.

⁹⁷ These repercussions may, for example, be perceived in terms of incurring the wrath of the Gods, who sent dearth and suffering as a judgement. (Thompson, 1991:266) Similar action may also be seen to alienate possible employers, or other more privileged members of society, who may provide assistance during times of hardship.

'Natural calamities like drought, flood cyclone etc., are visiting the State almost every year and elaborate arrangements are being made for relief operations in the affected areas as and when they occur. Hitherto no uniform system is being followed and different administrative arrangements are made at different times with different hierarchies of administration to combat the situations and to provide relief measures in the affected areas. Absence of a uniform practice hampers the smooth execution of relief measures and Government have been considering for sometime past to lay down a procedure with different official hierarchies to deal with the matter.(sic) This will be applicable for dealing with all natural calamities like flood, drought, cyclone etc. and it will be taken as the normal channel of administration in respect of relief operations when any kind of natural calamity occurs.'⁷

The Orissa Relief Code is discussed at length in this chapter for a number of reasons. Firstly, this document lays down the essential guidelines on which relief administration in Kalahandi is based., providing essential background for an analysis of the effectiveness of Government programmes for relief and development in subsequent chapters. This background also provides a basis for an examination (in chapters 8 and 9) of the validity of allegations that the Government of Orissa has neglected its responsibilities, as laid down in the Orissa Relief Code, to implement programmes to protect the vulnerable during periods of crisis in the district.⁸

Secondly, a study of these guidelines is necessary to identify whether instances of administrative failure in Kalahandi are the result of deficiencies in theoretical provisions for administering relief, as laid down in the Orissa Relief Code; or whether these are alternatively due to negligence or failures on the part of Government officials in implementing these provisions. This represents part of a wider study of the relationship between theory and practice in relief administration in Orissa carried out in this thesis.

Thirdly, whilst regular references have been made in food security literature to the close similarities which guidelines for relief administration in current times bear to the recommendations of the Famine Commissions instituted during the colonial period, little attention has been given to the specific content of

⁷ Resolution of Political and Services Dept., Bhubaneswar 7.6.68, included in Appendix 1, Government of Orissa (1980)

⁸ These allegations have been made by activists and other public in Kalahandi; in public interest litigation cases placed before the Supreme Court of India and the Orissa High Court; in press articles; in the Orissa Legislative Assembly and in other forum by Opposition and dissident Government politicians; and in a range of other quarters.

contemporary Relief Manuals. This chapter therefore introduces specific aspects of the Orissa Relief Code currently in operation.

The 1980 Orissa Relief Code The current Orissa Relief Code succeeds two previous Codes, the Bihar and Orissa Famine Code of 1913 and the Bihar and Orissa Famine Code of 1930.⁹ The introduction to the 1980 Code suggests that these previous documents were essentially 'rescue operations' developed primarily to deal with problems resulting from famine or flood in the region. In such circumstances the Government was expected to make every effort to save the population from starvation, extreme suffering and danger to life. However, as described earlier in this chapter, the Government was expected in carrying out this task to ensure that assistance was provided only to the 'truly needy' and those 'severely affected'. It was clearly stated, as in other similar Codes of this period, that there should be 'no tendency to provide indiscriminate Government charity'.(para.3)

The 1980 Code declares in its introduction that the current document represents a significant break with the provisions of these preceding Codes. It suggests that owing to what it describes as 'radical changes in the concept of relief in a welfare state', the aims of relief administration in Orissa during current times have now been broadened from this previous focus saving life.(ibid) The fundamental aims of relief are now stated to include a wider set of goals, which include:

'not only to ensure that no one should die of starvation but also to prevent physical deterioration and destitution of the people and to enable them to resume their ordinary pursuits of life on return of better times and simultaneously to encourage the village community in making concerted and continuous efforts to fight a common misfortune. Boosting the morale of the public in times of disasters is very much necessary and is, therefore, an important objective of the relief operations. The approach to relief in the present context has to be both preventative as well as maintenance of a common standard of economic health of the people.'(para.5)

This revised version marks an advance in a number of respects on the guidelines which preceded it. A more complete appraisal of this document is made

⁹ This was modified in 1950 to include amendments made by the Government of Orissa. The latter also derived a new relief code after the severe cyclone of 1951.(ibid, para.1)

later in this chapter. The next section introduces the reader to how particular tasks in relief administration are broken down between individual officers during times of crisis.

5.4 Devolution of Responsibilities in Relief Administration

The Code lays down guidelines for administering relief measures throughout the State in response to what it terms 'natural calamities'. A wide range of 'natural calamities' are outlined in the Code for which provisions for relief administration are given. These include drought, flood, cyclone and tidal disaster and fire accident. Criteria for declaring drought and famine, as laid down in the Code, are detailed in section 5.5. To facilitate an understanding of how relief and development measures are organised within the Administration, this section outlines the principal responsibilities falling to Government Departments or Officers within this system.

In the event of 'natural calamity' the full apparatus of the state is expected as far as possible to act to mitigate the affects of the crisis and to prevent its recurrence. A simplified breakdown of offices in this process between Government and grassroots level is provided below.¹⁰

Revenue Department (Board of Revenue) Full responsibility for co-ordinating relief measures to be implemented by different Government Departments is held at State level by the *Revenue Department (Board of Revenue)*. This department is also responsible for co-ordinating relief measures with Central Government. A more complete analysis of the tasks to be carried out by different departments is provided in the Appendix 5.1 at the end of this chapter.

¹⁰ The following information is laid out in paragraphs 11-19 of the Orissa Relief Code.

Special Relief Commissioner Direct responsibility to the Government for relief operations which take place in the affected parts of Orissa falls to the Member, Board of Revenue/Special Relief Commissioner(S.R.C.). This officer is given considerable powers and responsibility in relief administration under the Orissa Relief Code:

1. This official is directly responsible to the State Government for relief. He is expected to issue necessary orders to all Heads of Department and their subordinate officers to ensure that efficient and timely relief operations are properly implemented. He is given the authority to direct the Heads of Departments or other field Officers 'to function in any particular manner as he considers fit in the interest of the administration of relief measures'.¹¹

2. The S.R.C. has powers to sanction detailed schemes approved in principle in relief budget, along with various other financial powers which may be exercised as appropriate during relief operations.(para.12)

3. This officer has powers to call for information from Revenue Divisional Commissioners and other Heads of Department and to review periodically and coordinate relief operations. The Board of Revenue is itself provided with statutory powers (under section 4 of the Orissa Board of Revenue Act of 1951) and responsibilities to supervise work done by the Revenue Divisional Commissioners and Collectors. These powers also apply to relief operations.

4. The S.R.C. has authority to requisition the services of any gazetted or non-gazetted officer working in an affected area for relief work, and to transfer this officer from one place to another. He is also empowered to allow Collectors to requisition vehicles belonging to State Departments in affected areas. When necessary private cars may also be requisitioned for relief purposes. ¹²

¹¹ On issuing such directions to Heads of Departments he is expected to keep the Administrative Departments informed Resolution of Political and Services Dept., Bhubaneswar 7.6.68, included in Appendix 1, Government of Orissa (1980)

¹² In the case of requisitioning private cars a hire charge is to be paid at the same rate as that paid by the Home (Elections) Department when requisitioning vehicles for election purposes.

Revenue District Commissioners The R.D.C., as the Head of the Revenue Division, is in overall charge of drought-related matters in this Division. In this role he is subject to the overall control of the Board of Revenue.¹³ The responsibilities of the R.D.C. include the following:

1. to extensively tour affected areas in the Division in order to assess, and to attempt to rectify, problems arising in administering relief. In this task full cooperation is expected from all officers connected with relief operations and from the elected representatives of the people. Problems which cannot be immediately solved should be made apparent to the S.R.C., as well as to appropriate Heads of Department and (if necessary) to the Revenue Department.¹⁴
2. To issue instructions to Divisional Officers of relevant departments, and to call for any information relevant to relief operations from Officers at Divisional Level in charge of relief measures;¹⁵
3. To attend meetings of District Relief Committees in the district and to report the recommendations of these Committees to the Government.
4. To review, at least once every two weeks, the progress of relief measures in operation in the Division and to issue a report on these measures to the S.R.C.

Collectors As the executive head of the district the Collector holds overall responsibility for properly implementing relief measures in the district. These responsibilities include:

1. coordinating relief measures and where necessary supplying gratuitous relief.
 2. Ensuring that the public distribution system in the district operates effectively.
- In order to ensure that sufficient stock is available when relief measures become necessary, and to safeguard that flow of stock is kept moving through the P.D.S., the

¹³ Special powers for implementing relief measures were provided to Revenue Divisional Commissioners in a letter from Shri A.K. Barren, Chief Secretary to the Government, to the Special Relief Commissioner, Board of Revenue, Cuttack on 17.5.66. Listed in Appendix Ib Government of Orissa (1980)

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ These officers must abide by instructions issued by the S.R.C and must report their compliance to him. It is suggested in the Code that failure of any Divisional Officer to do so 'will be viewed seriously' by the Government. (letter from Shri A.K. Barren, Chief Secretary to the Government, to the Special Relief Commissioner, Board of Revenue, Cuttack on 17.5.66. Listed in Appendix Ib Government of Orissa (1980) op.cit.)

Collector is required to guarantee that sufficient quantities of essential commodities are stored in vulnerable areas before the monsoon arrives. This is particularly important in interior pockets. In the event of difficulties the Collector is expected to make these known to the R.D.C., the Food Commissioner, the B.O.R./S.R.C. and the Revenue Department.¹⁶

3. Acting upon all reports of starvation in the district emanating from the public or in the press. The Code argues that:

'In spite of taking adequate precautions in providing relief works for able-bodied persons, and gratuitous relief and feeding programmes for those who cannot undertake physical labour and other relief measures, reports of starvation cases very often appear in the Press....(Also) reports on large scale migration of population on account of lack of work, scarcity of drinking water, outbreak of epidemics etc, appear in the Press very often. The Collector shall take steps to get such reports immediately verified by proper enquiry or otherwise and if found true should take immediate remedial action. Proper publicity relating to the relief measures undertaken should also be given. If on the other hand, the report is found inaccurate, exaggerated or incorrect a contradiction stating the correct facts may be issued by the Collector immediately. Copies of such contradictions should be made available to the higher authorities'.(para.39&40)

The Collector is instructed to initiate an inquiry as soon as he becomes aware of any reported instance of starvation death in his district. This inquiry is to be carried out by a gazetted officer, in the presence of the village Sarpanch, a Ward member, or 'some other gentlemen of the village'.(para.39)

Although a proforma is provided in the Code, the questions contained in this questionnaire are not considered to be exhaustive. The Collector is advised to include whatever other information considered necessary to provide to the Government a complete picture of the circumstances in which the alleged death occurred.

'If he deems proper' the Collector is instructed to either visit the area in person, or to delegate one of his senior officials to ensure that labour employment, food supplies and other relief arrangements are satisfactory. He is also expected to take further action wherever possible to reduce the levels of distress in the region. If he considers it necessary to strengthen relief provisions, he is required to submit

¹⁶ If such a report is received from the Collector, the R.D.C. is expected to personally take up the issue with the Government authorities concerned and deal with the problem, keeping the B.O.R./S.R.C. and the Revenue Department informed of the progress.(para.33)

a set of concrete provisions 'with necessary justification' through the R.D.C. to the Board of Revenue/S.R.C.

In carrying out these responsibilities the Collector is given extensive powers of control over other Government officers in the district. He is also authorised to instruct non-gazetted officers from other departments to participate in relief. To ensure that delays in implementing Government interventions are minimised, district level officers are expected to carry out the instructions of the Collector 'without any further correspondence and to report compliance to him'.¹⁷

These recommendations are particularly relevant to the legal cases brought against the Government of Orissa relating to its failure to implement necessary measures, as described in this chapter, to provide relief and to promote development in Kalahandi. These legal cases are discussed in greater detail in chapters 8 and 10 of this thesis. On the basis of these inquiries the former Collector of Kalahandi, Sri Aurbindo Behera, was found culpable by the Orissa High Court of having neglected his responsibility to initiate inquiries in response to reports of starvation deaths in Kalahandi made in press articles, and in a petition forwarded to the Collectorate by the Sarpanch of Sindhipadhi.

4. In times of distress the Collector is expected to act as temporary guardian of children found deserted in his district and to be subsequently responsible for care of these children. This instruction is again particularly important in the Kalahandi context. Sri Behera was similarly reported by the Orissa High Court to have neglected his responsibility to care for orphans whose parents had allegedly died from starvation in the district. This issue is again discussed further in chapter 8 of this thesis.

5. The Collector is responsible for providing employment to destitutes in labour intensive works in operation in the district, along with assistance in obtaining a

¹⁷ Failure of any officer to do this is to be regarded as an act of indiscipline. In this instance suitable disciplinary action is to be taken against the officer after referral of the incident by the Collector to the R.D.C. and the Board of Revenue. (Letter from Shri A.K. Barren, Chief Secretary to the Government, to the Secretary, Board of Revenue, Orissa, Listed in Appendix Ic Government of Orissa (1980))

house building grant for house repair.¹⁸ If necessary, the Collector may sanction ad hoc gratuitous relief in cases of distress under the prescribed rules regulating the sanction of such relief'.(para.201)

At times when the Collector is absent from the district, all his responsibilities and powers are taken by the Deputy Collector (Additional District Magistrate or A.D.M.).

Subdivisional Officers (S.D.O.) - are responsible for all relief operations in their subdivision. They are also required to coordinate and supervise the work of Relief Officers, Tahasildars and Block Development Officers. It is their responsibility to ensure that relief measures are carried out expeditiously in accordance with the directions of the Government and the Board of Revenue/S.R.C. and to make sure that relief actually reaches the people for whom it is intended. These officers are also expected to maintain statistics on agricultural conditions in every part of their subdivision.(para.16)

Block Development Officers The block represents the unit for the organisation of relief administration. The Block Development Officer (B.D.O.) is responsible for all relief activities in that block. In circumstances when the situation is particularly acute the B.D.O. may divide the block up into two units, one half falling under the charge of the B.D.O. and the other under the control of the Additional Block Development Officer or a Revenue Officer. Both these units are monitored directly by the S.D.O.

The services of Tahasildars, Additional Tahasildars, Block Development Officers, Additional Block Development Officers and other officials from the Revenue Department or the Block Administration may be called upon to assist in relief

¹⁸ According to the Code a destitute is a person 'who had an ostensible means of living as well as living accommodation before the occurrence of a natural calamity, but due to such calamity has lost his (or her) living as well as accommodation. (para.201)

operations. The assistance of such officials may also be requested from other districts if numbers are found to be inadequate in the district concerned.(para.17)

Incorporation of 'People's Representatives' In the Relief Process

Representatives in Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis In the theoretical framework developed in chapter 2 of this thesis the importance of participation of the vulnerable in planning and developing Government interventions is strongly emphasised. The Orissa Relief Code advises that as far as possible such representation is to be maintained by incorporating people's representatives into the planning and development of Government programmes through Natural Calamities Committees, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats. This document instructs officers in charge of relief circles (currently Revenue Inspectors in Kalahandi) to ensure that people's representatives are properly associated in all relief measures.(para.19)

Natural Calamities Commissions Committees also exist at State and District levels designed to involve the representatives of the local population in relief administration. Their task is largely to review the prevailing situation during times of 'natural calamities' and to advise the Administration on relief issues. These are termed 'Natural Calamities Committees':

1. at State level this committee is composed largely of Members of the Orissa Legislative Assembly;
2. at District level - committees consist of M.L.A's and M.P.'s from the district, along with Chairs of Panchayat Samitis (according to Code para.19)

Natural Calamities Committees are intended to provide a means to take into account public opinion in planning and implementing Government programmes. However these provisions in many cases fail to provide any avenue for direct participation of affected persons in this process. Instead it is only through their

elective representatives that the views of affected persons are taken into account.¹⁹ In situations where these representatives fail to adequately research and express the views of their constituents, the de facto level of public participation through such avenues remain limited. This issue is discussed in further detail in chapter 5.9.

This section has discussed the organisation of relief administration at State and District level in Orissa. It provides a breakdown of responsibilities held by individual officers as part of a wider examination of the effectiveness of Government interventions to promote and maintain food security in Kalahandi. The next section details the central conditions for declaration of drought and famine in Orissa.

5.5 Nature of Crises addressed under Relief Operations - special reference to 'drought' and 'famine'

Although the Orissa Relief Code indicates guidelines for response to a range of forms of 'natural calamity' such as cyclone, fire damage and flood, space precludes a more complete discussion of response to each of these difficulties in this chapter. For this reason this section focuses on the conceptualisation of drought and famine in the Code. These crises are of particular relevance to the issue of food security in the Kalahandi context under study in this thesis. Specific Government responses to flood in recent years are detailed further in chapter 6.²⁰

Drought Irregularities in rainfall affect particularly severely the agricultural economy of Kalahandi and a number of other districts in Orissa in which a large

¹⁹ Generally through their elected representatives from the Orissa Legislative Assembly, their local Gram Panchayat or Panchayat Samiti.

²⁰ Readers requiring further details of criteria for declaration of other forms of 'natural calamity' detailed in the Code, and required Government response to these crises, should refer further to chapters five and six of the Orissa Relief Code.

percentage of the population rely on agriculture to provide both food and employment. This issue is correctly recognised in the Code. This states that:

'Agriculture is the mainstay of the rural population. Even in the best of times agriculture does not give full employment in the non-irrigated areas which constitute more than four-fifths of the cultivated area of the state. Agricultural income being at a low level, distress becomes chronic in case of even a slight imbalance in rainfall. Most of the paddy growing areas depend upon rainfall. The monsoon commences around the middle of June. For timely agricultural operation a few showers of premonsoon rain is absolutely necessary. Regular rainfall till the middle of October can ensure a good harvest.'

Relating to this point, the Code states that problems of drought, and more generally the problems of food security which derive from drought, are the result of:

'failure of rains in season. Want of rain at the proper time either defers commencement of agricultural operations or affects growth of the crop. In either case it is detrimental. The intensity of drought depends upon whether the concerned areas have been visited by droughts successively for a number of years'. (para 22)

Referring to the theoretical framework developed in the chapter 2 of this thesis, and its particular relation to the Kalahandi context developed in chapter 4, a number of important points should be noted from this problematisation:

1. the Code correctly takes into account the central importance of the agricultural economy to the wellbeing and food security of the population of many districts in Orissa. A large section of these populations rely on agriculture as a means to directly produce food and other essentials, and as a source of employment which may be used to generate purchasing power required to buy commodities in private markets or from state-run outlets.
2. It recognises that although the success of the harvest is crucially linked to the arrival of the monsoon in sufficient quantity and at the appropriate time, production-related factors are not the sole determinant of people's vulnerability. As discussed in the theoretical analysis in chapter 2, drawing upon Sen's concept of 'entitlement' it is evident that food insecurity in Kalahandi is not necessarily the result of overall shortages of food in the district created by production shortfalls or other supply bottlenecks. Food insecurity is instead in particular a function of deficiencies in people's access to food. This factor is particularly germane to the

situation in Kalahandi, which remains one of five net food exporting districts in Orissa, despite the high incidence of food insecurity amongst its population.²¹ This issue is discussed further in chapter 6.

3. Indeed for those dependent for work on agricultural labour, lack of irrigation limits access to employment for many people to only a few months in each year. Also agricultural incomes tend to be low. Though not stated explicitly, the importance of ensuring that the vulnerable population have access to adequate means to generate purchasing power through waged employment is therefore taken into consideration in the Code as a crucial explanatory variable influencing the food security of many inhabitants of Orissa. This factor is again an important determinant of people's 'entitlement' to food.

4. The Code recognises the progressive deterioration in the condition of the vulnerable in many districts in Orissa resulting from successive years of drought and food crisis. As emphasised in chapter 4, rather than 'one-off' years of hardship, lean years have become increasingly regular in Kalahandi in recent times. This has regularly forced people into distress sales of land and other crucial productive assets, into indebtedness, and into adopting other survival strategies which have undermined their fall back position and heightened their long-term vulnerability. This factor has also undermined the effectiveness of the 'safety-net' provided to the vulnerable in many cases by cooperative and support networks operating through household and community structures. This issue has been discussed in further detail in chapter 4.10.

Declaration of Drought Drought is declared primarily on the basis of two measurements:

- (a) assessments of crop loss ;
- (b) rainfall reports.

²¹ Interview, Government grain procurement agent, Khariar, March 1992.

Assessment of Croploss The degree of croploss resulting from drought conditions in a particular area is assessed by local Revenue Inspectors from 'crop cutting assessments' taken in each village in their revenue circle.²² In each village this officer is required to take cuttings from the crop in three fields in each land type classified for revenue assessment. This notably represents three fields on att land, three fields on berana land, and three fields on bahal land.²³ The quantity of crop obtained from these cuttings is compared with average figures for the village concerned, calculated on the basis of cuttings taken over the previous ten year period.²⁴ During the period of this research study the production standard in Khariar tahasil was set as follows:²⁵

Fig. 5.2

Land type	Tahasil calculated average yield
high lying att land	8 quintals of paddy
medium lying berana land	10 quintals of paddy
low lying bahal land	12 quintals of paddy

Source: Additional Tahasildar, Khariar Tahasil, interviewed 4.3.92

On the basis of the results of crop cutting experiments the following action is to be taken:

- (a.) collection of revenue is to be suspended in villages where croploss is between 50% and 75%;
- (b.) in addition to suspending revenue collection the Government is advised to initiate immediate relief measures to relief distress in villages where croploss is more than 75%.

²² The Code specifies that from each field crops are to be cut from a square area of 1/160 of an acre. Immediately after cutting the main product of the crop is to be separated from the bye-product, properly cleaned and then weighed. The produce is then to be returned to the owner. (Government of Orissa Resolution on 'Procedure for Assessment Damage to Winter Paddy and Ragi Crops from 1977-78 onwards' of 3.9.77 in Government of Orissa (1980) Appendix V and ammendments in ibid, Appendix V-A).

²³ If when supervising the crop cuttings the supervising officer feels that the fields chosen by the Revenue Inspector are not representative then he may press for other fields to be chosen for cutting experiments. (Government of Orissa (1980) Appendix V-A parag.5)

²⁴ The Code specifies that croploss assessments made by Revenue Inspectors are to be checked by the Revenue Supervisor and the Tahasildar in every village. (ibid)

²⁵ Additional Tahasildar, Khariar tahasil, interviewed Khariar 4.3.93 However this Officer suggested that standard production averages are frequently underestimates, causing the occurrence of croploss to be understated. For this reason he argued that even in particularly bad years croploss failed to exceed 50%, meaning that the state was not required to suspend revenue collection or initiate other measures.

In villages where crop loss is less than 50% no action is necessarily required. The Code specifies that families with an annual income of more than Rs.6400 are not to receive Government assistance, even if living in villages identified from crop-cutting experiments as being drought affected.²⁶

Collection of Rainfall Data In addition to crop cutting assessments the Code emphasises the importance of collecting rainfall data in determining the level of drought. The Board of Revenue acts as the Head of Department for rainfall registration.²⁷ Rainfall data is considered to be of value both for preventative and remedial purposes. Firstly, this is required to provide the Administration with timely warnings of climatic dangers, intended to prevent surprise and to enable it to formulate a plan for relief measures. Secondly, during 'ordinary times' this data is required to highlight weak points in the condition of the district, and therefore to facilitate timely relief and development-based programmes designed to reduce people's vulnerability.

Declaration of Drought A decision to declare drought may be taken by the Government after it has examined crop cutting reports and rainfall data submitted to it by the Collector; and after it has taken into account the comments made on these reports by the Revenue Division Commissioners and the Board of Revenue/S.R.C. However in special circumstances the Government has the powers to declare a particular area to be affected by drought before such reports have been received from field officers. Such a declaration may be made on the basis of monthly situation reports; special reports of the Collector; the opinions of the R.D.C.'s and the Board of Revenue/S.R.C.; and other information which it may have at its disposal.

²⁶ Additional Tahasildar, op.cit.

²⁷ The Director of Agriculture and Food Production is expected to keep closely in contact and to obtain weekly rainfall reports from the Rainfall Registration Authority. It is also the duty of this officer to send weather and crop reports to the Government of India and other relevant agencies. Other correspondence with the Central Government is made via the Revenue Dept. Orissa Relief Code: appendix IV) Further details of reports on the weather and crop situation are detailed in Appendix II of the Orissa Relief Code.

A number of issues are significant relating to declaration of drought by the Government. Firstly, such a declaration represents a 'recognition of distress by the state which relief measures are designed to relieve'. However importantly this action *does not require that the Government takes on new responsibilities for combating distress.*(para.32) Because the Administration is expected to be in a constant state of readiness to combat impending crisis, the Code specifies that this instead requires a widening of ameliorative measures and an increase in the Government's 'alertness' in administering relief measures.

Secondly, the Code emphasises the importance of '*preparedness*'. In particular it reinforces the necessity for the Government to maintain an already prepared Master Plan of relief measures which can be immediately brought into action in the incidence of drought.

Thirdly, the Code emphasises the need for such schemes to be '*durable, productive, remunerative and asset creating*'. It states that such projects must be long-term measures which work to promote a permanent solution to drought problems.(para.31) The Code therefore recognises the value of providing protection to the vulnerable by providing opportunities for them to generate purchasing power in relief works. However it emphasises that such works should not be simply short-term means to mitigate the affects of crisis on the vulnerable, but should instead have a long-term asset creating potential which will contribute towards more permanent solutions to problems of food insecurity.(para.31) This thesis has emphasised the importance of these issues as necessary components of effective relief administration.

Reports on Croploss The Tahasildar is required by the end of November to submit to the Subdivisional Officer a list of all villages having suffered croploss of more than 50% and more than 75% in each Gram Panchayat. The S.D.O. is expected to check at least 2% of the total number of villages reported to have suffered croploss. A list of such villages is then to be provided by the S.D.O. to the Collector. To ensure the

accuracy of assessments the latter is then to verify a minimum of 1% of villages from this list. The Collector is required also to provide a consolidated list of this data, along with a report containing other necessary details, to the Board of Revenue, the Revenue District Commissioner and the Revenue Dept. After district figures have been compiled by the Board of Revenue a final report is submitted to the Government.²⁸

In addition to this procedure, the Board of Revenue is expected to supply ad hoc reports to the Government in instances of inadequate rainfall or monsoon failure. This is particularly the case during September and October when timely arrival of the rains is particularly important for a successful harvest. These reports are required to provide crop loss estimates to enable the State Government to initiate necessary relief measures.

Famine is defined in the Code to represent:

'a State of extreme paucity of food due to complete failure of crops consecutively for more than one year and acute form of human distress as well as acute distress to animals and birds on account thereof' (para.3.2)

Deficiencies may be found in this definition for a number of reasons. Firstly, there are ambiguities in what is meant by 'complete crop failure' and 'acute' forms of distress to humans, animals or birds. Secondly, there is no obvious basis for taking crop failures 'for more than one year' as a standard for defining 'famine'. Whilst long-term deteriorations in the social condition of those affected during repeated years of crop failure is a crucial variable in the set of processes which may lead to 'famine', no obvious reason is provided as to why crop failure in two or more successive years is a prerequisite for 'famine' to occur in Orissa. In addition, whilst crop failure is an important explanatory variable in the famine process, the above definition fails to take into account the importance of a range of other factors which

²⁸ For further information on reports and returns required from Government Officers relating to relief and development programmes, refer to Government of Orissa(1980), chapter XVII.

interrelate in this process to create the conditions for 'famine'. These have been discussed further in chapter 2. As Sen has rightly argued it is people's 'entitlement' to food, rather than levels of food production per se, which is the primary determinant of famine and starvation.

However what is perhaps more significant is that the 1980 Orissa Relief Code states that it *does not contemplate the possibility of famine*, according to the above definition, in the State. It argues that with improvements in food production and the development of transport and communications, *'the condition of famine could no longer be said to appear on any failure of local rains'*. For this reason it suggests at present the question of declaration of an area as 'famine affected' does not arise.(para.3, para.97)

Such a statement has important implications. It is widely recognised that the nature of food crisis in recent times in India has tended to differ markedly from the sudden and acute disasters which have been experienced in past decades in Africa, China, and elsewhere.²⁹ The relief and support network which has been developed in India has clearly played an important contributory role in recent times in preventing large scale deaths due to famine since the Great Bengal Famine of 1943, despite its failure to prevent long-term hunger and endemic poverty. However with the confirmation from the Supreme Court of India in 1992 that starvation deaths have occurred during recent periods of drought in Kalahandi, denials that famine is a possibility in Orissa are clearly themselves highly contestible. For this reason to declare that famine is no longer contemplated in Orissa (para.232) may appear premature. This may also indicate excessive complacency on the part of the authorities responsible for formulating the administrative guidelines laid down in the Orissa Relief Code regarding their assessment of levels of food security within the State.

²⁹ Further details of these famines have been widely discussed elsewhere. Space prevents me from providing extensive details and a wider review of this literature. Refer further for example to Lawrence(ed.)(1988); Bush(1988); Kane(1988); Dreze(1988); Dreze and Sen(eds.)(1989,1991).

This section has focussed on how drought and famine are conceptualised in the Orissa Relief Code. For reasons of space extensive discussion of other 'natural calamities' addressed in the Code are not included. The following section provides an overview of specific measures laid down in this document for dealing with drought and other natural calamities in Orissa. A more complete treatment of measures introduced by the Government to address problems of flood in Kalahandi during 1990-91 is provided in chapter 6.

5.6 Programme of Relief Operations detailed under the 1980 Orissa Relief Code

As in relief provisions advocated by Famine Codes instituted during British rule in 1880, 1898 and 1901, interventions specified in the Orissa Relief Code are based upon two central tenets:

1. provision of relief works for those able to work;
2. gratuitous relief for those unable to work on the grounds of ill health, age, and so on.

Such measures are designed to protect people's 'entitlement' to food by safeguarding their ability to generate purchasing power which can be used to buy food from market outlets, or by directly providing food to those unable to work from Government food kitchens or distribution centres. The evolution of current relief management from the guidelines laid down in these early Codes has been discussed in section 5.2 of this thesis.

It is specified in the Code that when a 'natural calamity' takes place and an area is declared by the Government to be distressed, then a combination of the measures may be implemented according to the instructions of the Special Relief Commissioner (Board of Revenue). These measures are as follows:

1. Labour intensive works including relief works
2. Gratuitous relief
3. Nutritional supplementary feeding programmes

4. Relief measures by non-official organisations
5. Care of orphans and destitutes
6. Strengthening of the public distribution system
7. Health measures and veterinary measures
- 8.. Agricultural measures including provision of credit supply
9. Special relief to weavers and artisans
10. Arrangements of foodstuff and stocking of foodgrains in strategic places
11. Provision of drinking water
12. Provision for immediate irrigation facilities
13. Remission and suspension of loans
14. Grant of educational concessions
15. Enquiry into starvation cases and prompt action on such reports
16. Action on press reports (para.7)

The next section examines the nature and objectives of these provisions in greater detail.

Relief Works These projects are designed to ensure that persons in distress but able to work, are able to access employment during times of 'natural calamity' according to the Orissa Relief Code. Purchasing power generated from wages in this employment may be used to buy food and other essentials from outlets managed by the state or in open market. In some works food is also provided directly as a part or full component of this wage.

On the introduction of relief works, other schemes currently in operation are to be modified, slowed down or suspended as the situation warrants. It is the task of the Collector to ensure that all able-bodied people have access to employment in or near to their villages. This removes the need for the Government to provide accommodation and sustenance at the workplace. It also prevents those needing to attend such works, who may already be in a weakened and impoverished state, from

being made to travel large distances to reach these programmes, as they were required to do when 'distance tests' were maintained in relief schemes run by the British.

Although similar distance tests do not operate within current relief works, field officers are required to take necessary measures to restrict employment on these schemes to 'genuine cases who are in need of relief due to natural calamities'. The Code points out that at times when these projects are opened there may be a rush of people from other areas to take advantage of this work. For this reason it may be necessary for field officers to restrict employment only to landless agricultural labourers and marginal and small farmers from the affected area. Restrictions may also be placed on the numbers of persons allowed to attend relief works from each family.(para.160)

The current Orissa Relief Code correctly recognises the need that relief works not only mitigate the affects of crisis, but also have long-term benefits in terms of promoting development in the district concerned. The importance of this factor has been emphasised in this thesis. The Code argues that 'where possible productive, durable, remunerative and asset creating works are to be funded from the Relief Budget for the distressed areas'.

Priority in such schemes is to be given to projects such as development of water resources, irrigation potential, and temporary sources of drinking water.³⁰(para.150) It is emphasised that schemes classified as 'unproductive' such as metal breaking, are to be avoided. However in times of 'extreme distress', or when other projects are unavailable, earth works and road repairs may be carried out under relief work projects.³¹ The Code therefore correctly recognises that,

³⁰ Other works may be taken up with the approval of the department concerned. Works such as repair of schools and department buildings may be implemented but are to be given low priority.(para.150)

³¹ In the Orissa Relief Code a distinction is made between 'productive' and 'unproductive' works. It suggests that ventures such as road works, which have formed a central part of relief work operations in the past, tend normally to be temporary in nature and are frequently unproductive, especially in rural areas. It suggests that such unproductive ventures should be discouraged in relief operations, and greater emphasis given to soil conservation, afforestation, minor irrigation projects and other ventures which would create productive assets from the finance laid down for relief works.(para.8a, para.8b.)

rather than being purely 'make work' schemes, labour intensive works should combine relief operations and development programmes in affected areas.

The Orissa Relief Code also correctly recognises the importance of correct timing of interventions. The importance of this factor again been already emphasised in this thesis. It suggests that:

'As one or more of the major natural calamities like drought, flood or cyclone occur every year and bring in its trail much loss and suffering, precautionary arrangements should be undertaken to meet the eventualities and minimise the impact of these calamities...'(para.9)

As in previous Famine Codes, the current Orissa Code emphasises the need for the Government to maintain a prepared list of suitable works which can be rapidly implemented in the incidence of crisis. These works should be capable both of assisting agricultural production and raising the income of the people. In designing such schemes the specific resource position of the district is to be taken into account.

Responsibility for maintaining such a list in each block lies with the B.D.O. This list is prepared in consultation with the Tahasildar and Gram Panchayat.³² To further ensure that these schemes can be rapidly implemented, any technical advice required in preparing this list of schemes is to be taken beforehand, and not to be left until the actual time of execution. Projects requiring technical knowledge are not recommended on the grounds that people with the necessary knowledge and training to implement them may not be available when it is necessary to put these schemes into operation.(para. 151)

Execution Procedure - Relief works are normally executed through the Block agency. Generally they are carried out by local bodies considered by the Subdivisional Officer or the Block Development Officer to be most competent to carry out this task.³³ To

³² B.D.O.'s are required to compile such a list by April of each year. These lists are to be prepared for each Gram Panchayat and to given to the Panchayat Samiti for approval and comments before being sent to the Subdivisional Officer and the Collector. After adding his own comments the Collector places this list before the District Level Natural Calamities Committee. After corrections have been added, the final copy of the list is given to the B.D.O., the Tahasildar and the S.D.O. A copy is also provided to the Revenue Divisional Commissioner, the Special Relief Commissioner (Board of Revenue) and the Revenue Dept.

³³ These local bodies may be Gram Panchayat, a sub-committee of the Gram Panchayat, an ad-hoc village committee or any other local bodies which the S.D.O or BDO consider suitable. The works under execution through the Block agency are to be carried out under the direct supervision of the SDO, who shall nominate the BDO or other suitable officer as Officer-in-Charge. The latter is responsible for getting work done according to the plan and as expeditiously as possible. Also he is to ensure that the works are completed on time.(para.156)

ensure that schemes can be closely monitored, and to prevent exploitation or corruption which may operate when schemes are managed by contractors, the Code recommends that as far as possible administrators are to avoid giving schemes to contractors for implementation. If these cannot be managed by local bodies, they are to be operated by relevant departments of the State Government.(para.154) It is the responsibility of the Officer-in-Charge of each scheme to ensure that proper wages are paid to labourers.(para.154.3)³⁴

Food for Work Schemes/ Grain for Work Schemes - In addition to relief works in which wages are paid in cash, employment generating works may in certain instances also provide remuneration to those employed in the form of grain or in other foods.

Gratuitous Relief and Feeding Programmes Whilst relief works are central to relief policy in safeguarding the means through which the vulnerable are able to generate purchasing power (which may be used to buy food and other essentials from private markets or state-run outlets), alternative forms of assistance are necessary for those unable to take up employment. As in previous relief policy, the Orissa Relief Code stipulates that the core of such assistance should be met through 'gratuitous relief'. The principles for administering gratuitous relief laid down in the Code are based upon distribution through three channels:

1. Emergent relief;
2. Ad hoc gratuitous relief;
3. Gratuitous relief on cards.

As in previous famine codes in India, as discussed in section 5.1, the 1980 Orissa Code specifies that gratuitous relief cannot be provided as a matter of principle. Instead this must be strictly targeted to deserving cases. However this document unequivocally states that because private charity may tend to decrease

³⁴ Since the programme is intended to provide for the distressed the Code specifies that nothing should be done which would be prejudicial to the interest of such people. Undesirable people who would exploit such a situation should not be appointed as the ground-level agency for execution of such works.(para.154.3)

during times of widespread calamity, it is the *responsibility of the State Government* to feed those who cannot work due to handicap, or who have been temporarily incapacitated due to the impact of such a calamity or illness and are therefore unable to earn a living. To prevent any deterioration in the condition of children, and of expectant and nursing mothers, the Government is also required to provide some form of supplementary feeding programme.(para.163)

The basic tenets of these forms of gratuitous relief are as follows:

Emergent relief ³⁵. this is intended as short term relief to help people overcome the initial acute distress created by a particular natural calamity which may prevent them from procuring food. The Code specifies that this relief should be sanctioned regardless of status, caste or religion on the grounds that 'the haves and the have-nots are levelled down to the same position'. Such relief will generally only be continued for upto 15 days after the calamity, unless it is 'of very devastating nature' or unless special orders are provided by the Government.³⁶

Wheat, rice, *chuda*, *mudhi*, ragi and maize etc. may normally be provided at the rate of 500 grams per day per adult. Half this amount may be provided per day for children aged under 12. Other essential necessities such as *gur*, salt, kerosene, matches, cooked food, clothing and improvised shelter may also be provided. These are to be distributed by road, waterway, air drop or other means available.(para.165)

Ad hoc gratuitous relief ³⁷. This relief can be administered to persons falling into the following categories :

³⁵ See further in para. 165 of the Orissa Relief Code.

³⁶ The Collector is permitted to sanction this relief himself for a period of upto three days, or to delegate the powers of sanction to the SDO. The RDC is empowered to extend this relief for a period of 7 days and the Member, Board of Revenue/SRC for upto 15 days.(para.165)

³⁷ See further in *ibid*, para. 167

1. those required to look after the sick or infant children and therefore absolutely unable to work;
2. those able-bodied but temporarily weak due to lack of food, illness or malnutrition;
3. those unable to cook food due to inundation and those who are marooned.

The Collector is advised to sanction this form of relief only in 'deserving cases' and to those to who have not received gratuitous relief on cards.(see below). Ad hoc relief may be sanctioned only for periods of upto 2 weeks to allow the recipient to 'come back to their normal avocation'. All distributions through this provision are to be provided in kind in the form of rice, wheat products, *ragi*, maize, other dry food items, and sometimes clothing. No payments are to be made in cash. The Collector is required to maintain a list of persons receiving this form of relief.

Gratuitous Relief on Cards - this is to be sanctioned by the Government for longer periods depending on the severity of the calamity. Generally it is to be limited to villages having suffered crop loss of more than 50% to which private charities cannot provide adequate relief.³⁸ It is also intended primarily for persons living in rural areas. The Code states that only in exceptional circumstances, such as in times of severe drought, is this form of assistance to be sanctioned on Government cost in urban areas.

Again the Block is the unit for administering this relief. These measures fall under the responsibility of the BDO, who supervised by the SDO and higher authorities. A list of potential recipients is to be prepared on a household, village and Gram Panchayat-wise basis. Those coming as migrants or temporary residents from other districts are also to be included in this list.

³⁸ People eligible for this form of relief, living in affected areas with no source of livelihood, include: cripples or invalid people; 'idiots' and 'lunatics'; the blind; those unable to work due to old age or infirmity and not receiving pension or other social security benefits; children below 12 not on another feeding programme; helpless widows; those looking after the sick or infant children; those able-bodied but temporarily weakened due to illness, malnutrition or lack of food. See further in Orissa Relief Code (para 168 ff.)

Centres for administering this relief are located at Gram Panchayat (G.P.) headquarters. In large GP's other centres are to be opened to ensure that nobody is required to travel more than 3Km's to receive relief. Relief rations are to be allocated to card holders in the form of uncooked rice, wheat, ragi or maize at the rate of 250 grammes per day to adults, and 170 grammes per day to children. These rations are to be issued every fortnight to persons holding a ration card.(para.173)

To ensure that adequate quantities are available for distribution, the Collector is required to place in advance an assessment of expected requirements in the district with the Food and Civil Supplies Dept. At the initial time of request this officer is required to provide an estimate for two month's supplies (one month's running requirement and one month's advance stock). This food is to be stored by the Food and Civil Supplies Dept. in the place from which it will be distributed through the P.D.S. From these depots the food required by different relief centres is drawn and transported under the orders of the Collector by the BDO. It is the Collector's responsibility to ensure that food supplied to distribution centres is of required quality and is kept in damp-proof and leak-proof storage.(ibid)

Strengthening of the Public Distribution System and Supply of Foodstuffs for Relief Measures During times of distress, when demand for essential commodities in the affected area is likely to be high, the State Government is required in the Orissa Relief Code to protect people against scarcities and rises in foodgrain prices by ensuring that adequate quantities of these commodities are available to the vulnerable at prices they can afford. As discussed in this thesis, when properly administered these interventions represent important means for reinforcing the purchasing power of the vulnerable in India.

The Code suggests that the PDS is the normal channel for distribution of essential commodities amongst the people. Responsibility for ensuring that P.D.S. operates effectively lies with the Collector. The Government is instructed in the Code to open an 'adequate' number of fair price shops and retail outlets, and to ensure that

an 'adequate' stock of the required commodities are maintained at each one.(para.240) This document does not specify what level 'adequate' means in this context.

The supply of commodities to be distributed in relief measures is to be met from the allocation to the district by the State Dept. of Civil Supplies. In addition to meeting the needs of fair price shops and retail outlets for the P.D.S., this allocation is also used to meet requirements for gratuitous relief and other feeding programmes; and to supply special shop centres located near to labour intensive works(para.242)

To safeguard food supplies to the district's population during times of drought, the Code makes a number of important recommendations which must be met when drought is declared:

1. the Collector must ensure that food supplies are adequate in the district and that necessary measures are taken to supply essential food items through the P.D.S. and other means. For this reason the Code correctly recognises the importance of identifying shortfalls in people's purchasing power. It indicates that in this event employment oriented labour intensive works must be provided for the able-bodied; and gratuitous relief, feeding programmes and other relief measures made available to alleviate the suffering of those who are unable to work.
2. In regions where people rely on forest produce for food, the Board of Revenue/S.R.C. is to ensure that all facilities compatible with the safety of the forest are made available to persons looking for food in Government forest reserves. If forest produce has been leased to contractors then it is within the power of the Collector to cancel such leases. In districts such as Kalahandi where large numbers of people meet some component of their requirement for food and other essentials from forest produce, such provisions are particularly important. These guidelines also enhance the compatability of Government interventions with coping mechanisms regularly employed by the vulnerable. As mentioned in section 5.3, this issue receives low attention in the Code.

3. In areas where food is in short supply the Collector is given the option of drawing on private traders to rapidly transfer necessary supplies. The importance of maintaining a necessary balance between supply of foodgrains from private merchants and Government-run outlets has been mentioned in chapter 2. This factor is rightly taken into account through this provision. In these circumstances it is essential that adequate safeguards are included to eliminate any exploitation or corruption which may emanate from private trading in foodgrains during times of food crisis.

Health Measures The importance of reinforcing the access of the population to health facilities and to other 'intermediate needs' has been emphasised on a number of occasions in this thesis. Before the rainy and cyclone seasons arrive, and in situations where it appears that a natural calamity may be imminent in any part of the State, the Director of Health and Family Welfare is expected to carry out tasks which include the following:

1. to ensure that medical and public health arrangements are made for the distressed in all districts. This Officer is to ensure that as far as possible he is able to inspect and supervise these programmes personally.
2. To direct the Chief District Medical Officers to frequently inspect sanitary arrangements in the area, along with facilities for supplying cooked food. This officer is also to take necessary measure to ensure that 'unwholesome food' is not supplied.
3. To submit to the State Government and to the Revenue Department and Board of Revenue a weekly report including:
 - a. the number of deaths in hospitals with cause of death;
 - b. the number discharged after treatment;
 - c. the number of distressed people treated outdoors;
 - d. the number of deaths, if any, reported;

e. if there is any marked increase in death rate, illness, and disease believed to be due to want of food;

f. other information that is considered relevant for appreciation of the situation.(para.207)

4. The Chief Medical Officer is also expected to carry out frequent tours of the affected areas and to inspect preventative and curative arrangements which have been made. If there are any shortcomings in these programmes, this officer is expected to attend to them immediately and to rectify any deficiencies.(para.209)

These responsibilities accorded to the C.M.O. to inspect health conditions and to investigate incidences of starvation deaths are particularly relevant in the Kalahandi context. Here allegations of failure on the part of the State Government to implement necessary measures to prevent starvation deaths in Kalahandi form central elements of cases brought against it in the Supreme Court of India and the Orissa High Court. This issue is discussed more fully in chapter 8 of this thesis.

Mother and Child Care Again the Orissa Relief Code states that responsibility for caring for children during times of hardship lies squarely with the State Government.³⁹ It advises that when necessary mother and child care centres should be introduced in villages or groups of villages affected by conditions of scarcity and distress. These are intended to provide the minimum health and nutritional needs of pre-school children, pregnant women and nursing mothers, who the Code correctly recognises fall amongst the nutritionally most vulnerable sections of the community. Emphasis is also rightly given to providing clean drinking water and maintaining environmental hygiene.

Importantly the Code identifies the importance of education in hygiene and health practices. It suggests that in addition to providing supplementary nutrition and nutritional therapy, mother and child welfare centres should play a role in

³⁹ The Code states that 'The nation's children are a supremely important asset. Their nurture and solicitude are the responsibility of the State. There can be no hope for a better future for the nation unless the special needs of the children in times of distress or natural calamity receive the utmost attention of the community'.(para.210.1)

conveying to the community, especially parents, simple educational messages relating to health nutrition and personal and environmental hygiene.⁴⁰ The importance of education in these issues has been emphasised in this thesis. More generally the above recommendations represent a well-planned recognition of the need to reinforce the access of the district's population to primary health facilities and other necessary 'intermediate needs'. These variables are crucial in providing effective relief and in enhancing the ability of these persons to maintain food security.

Protection of Animals As well as the obvious need to provide relief to the affected population, the Code correctly recognises the importance of also protecting cattle and other animals. Though not specified in the Code, cattle and buffalo represent an important source of draught power and a valuable household asset.⁴¹

The Code advises that necessary steps are taken in advance, particularly between March and June, to ensure that there is adequate fodder for cattle. When shortages of fodder are expected then the Collector is advised to make liberal advances to cultivators for purchasing 'fodder seeds' and constructing temporary wells.⁴² The State Government is expected also to maintain emergency schemes for fodder production and if necessary to set up fodder banks. In the event of drought of 'excessive magnitude' then cattle camps may be established in selected areas where 'useful' cattle may be provided relief at State cost under department

⁴⁰ The State Government is also expected to lay down standing instructions for identifying and treating common conditions such as diarrhoea, cough, fever, skin infections etc., especially amongst preschool children in scarcity affected areas; and is responsible for procuring and supplying drugs which are likely to be in demand. The Code recommends that pregnant mothers also be immunized against Tetanus and the children given the necessary prophylaxis.(para.210)

⁴¹ They also have important cultural and religious significance in Orissa, as elsewhere India. The Code rightly argues that '(t)he important part which cattle play in the economic and agricultural life of the community needs no emphasis. Wherever there is economic distress due to failure of agricultural operations, whether due to drought, flood, cyclone or otherwise the cattle suffer extreme hardship no-less than human beings. Loss of cattle means loss of national wealth. It should therefore be an important duty of the Collector to see that adequate steps are taken for the preservation of cattle in the affected areas during the relief operations as well as for their treatment on account of epidemic and contagious diseases which may break out in such conditions'.(para.213)

⁴² At this time the Collector should also provide a report stating the fodder requirements of the district, the possibilities for imports of fodder from other areas and the progress of such imports, the economic position of the people for buying fodder and whether he suggests that fodder sales should be subsidised. This is to be given to the R.D.C., the Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services and to the B.O.R./S.R.C.(para.215)

supervision.(paras.214-218) At times of scarcity the Forest Dept. may also open up sections of the forest for grazing.(para.219)

Agricultural Measures and Credit Provision Given the crucial importance of agriculture in many districts in Orissa as principal source of food and purchasing power for cultivators and agricultural labourers, measures for agricultural development, and to protect agriculture during times of crisis, must be central to the process of maintaining food security.⁴³ Annually the Agricultural Department formulates a kharif programme based on an expectation of 'normal rainfall'. However in years when rains are not regular the paddy harvest may be threatened and a range of the following steps may need to be taken:

1. the provision of temporary irrigation facilities to protect crops which have already been sown;
2. cultivation of alternative paddy crops;
3. supply of seeds and fertilisers;
4. provision of loans for cultivators to dig dugwells;
5. initiating precautionary flood measures;
6. initiating pest control measures.

Similarly immediately before the rabi season the Agriculture Department also prepares a rabi programme. The rabi programme is framed in case of loss of kharif crops due to the vagaries of the monsoon. This alternative rabi programme aims at:

1. substantial increases in production of pulses, oil seeds, wheat, dalua paddy;
2. introduction of more short duration varieties of the above crops;
3. adoption of low cost technology to achieve production;
4. scientific and optimum use of water resources;

⁴³ The Code argues that 'As agriculture is the main occupation of the rural people in the State and as the holdings are small, vigorous intensive agricultural measures are undertaken for developing agriculture in modern lines and for enduring production against the vicissitudes of natural calamities that visit the State almost every year'. (para.222)

5. encouragement of cultivation of soil restorative crops such as pulses.(para.231)

A number of important elements may be identified from these provisions. Firstly, the above measures emphasise the importance of diversification of cropping patterns, in response to irregular rainfall, to include more drought-resistant crop types (such as pulses, oilseeds, ragi and other 'coarser' cereals) and more rapidly maturing seed varieties. The importance to this issue is discussed more fully in chapter 4.3 of this thesis. Secondly, these also emphasise the need to optimise use of irrigation potential, and the importance of other inputs such as low cost technology, seeds, fertilisers, low interest credit, and so on. The importance of these factors has been emphasised in chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis for stabilising and increasing agricultural production in Kalahandi. A range of these measures are discussed in further detail below.

Provision of Credit The recommendations of previous Famine Codes have included recommendations for providing credit to agriculturalists to 'tide them through' periods of hardship. Indeed Section 155 of the Bihar and Orissa Famine Code of 1913 provides a special set of rules under the Land Improvement Loans Act of 1883 for advances to be granted in areas declared by Local Government under section 74 to be in distress. These rules have been integrated into the Bihar and Orissa Loans Manual reprinted in 1971.⁴⁴

Special facilities provided under the Land Improvement Act to be implemented during times of 'famine' are not included in the Orissa Relief Code on the grounds that, as mentioned, this document does not 'contemplate the occurrence of a famine' in the State. However credit facilities may be made available to those adversely affected during times of crisis from institutional sources or from taccavi loans.(para.232)

Institutional Credit - Cultivators may be encouraged to take advantage of institutional credit facilities provided that both taccavi and institutional loans are not available to the same cultivator. Responsibility for providing such credit in times of need lies

⁴⁴ For further details of credit and loan facilities refer to Government of Orissa(1980), para.232ff.

with the Agricultural and Cooperation Department. This finance may be provided for purposes which include purchasing seeds, bullocks, fertilisers, and insecticides; building dugwells and other irrigation sources; providing capital to pay the wages of workers employed; removing sand from sandcast lands; and for a range of land improvement measures. (para.237)

In times of distress when people may have difficulty in repaying previous loans, this department is instructed when necessary to issue suitable standing instructions for converting or rescheduling loans which have previously been advanced to cultivators from Credit Societies.⁴⁵

The Agricultural and Cooperation Dept. is required also to provide an extension programme for educating cultivators how to become members of Cooperative Societies and how to take advantage of the facilities these provide.(para.239) The low awareness which many vulnerable persons have of such schemes in Kalahandi, and a lack of confidence they have in their use, has been discussed in chapter 4.10. Efforts to heighten people's faith in these facilities is an important component of development and relief policy.⁴⁵

Taccavi Loans As previously discussed, many cultivators do not join cooperatives.⁴⁶ This largely precludes them from taking credit from these sources. Further during years of widespread drought small and marginal farmers may be unable to repay loans. This may prevent them from securing future loans from Cooperatives

To place people in a position where they are able to raise a crop it may therefore be necessary to ensure that they have access to credit provided by Revenue Officers through taccavi loans under the Agricultural Loans Act.⁴⁷ These are to be used for buying seeds, fertilisers, bullocks etc. Similar loans may also be given to enable cultivators to deal with the effects of waterlogging after flooding.

⁴⁵ For a further discussion of this issue refer to chapter 4.10 and 8.3.

⁴⁶ This may occur because they do not feel that they will benefit from joining such institutions; because they feel that their benefits are heavily monopolised by higher caste and more socially powerful members of the community; due to lack of knowledge that these facilities are available, or for other reasons.

⁴⁷ The Revenue Dept. is to make necessary provisions for these loans in its budget.(para.233.2)

Importantly, the Code correctly recognises the valuable role which such loans may play in improving the morale and self-confidence of the affected population, in addition to their obvious economic role in enabling people to survive immediate hardships. This document also identifies the importance of acting rapidly in providing such assistance. It argues that:

'Sagging of the morale of the people is inevitable on the occurrence of a widespread calamity like severe drought, flood, cyclone or tidal inundation. It is of great importance on such occasions to have recourse to an early and adequate distribution of loans, both as an act of moral strategy to give confidence to the people and also with the object of stimulating agricultural efforts. In such circumstances liberal advances may be given under the Agriculturalists Loans Act of 1884 until normal conditions are restored'.(para.233)

Again the importance of this factor has been emphasised in this thesis.

Others measures to safeguard access to water for drinking and irrigation purposes in the incidence of drought are mentioned below. These again represent factors important to stabilising and enhancing agricultural production, and are more generally key variables in the process of maintaining food security. These include:

- a. measures to safeguard the provision of drinking water - particularly through building surface wells and tanks;
- b. deepening of wells and renovation of tanks;
- c. installation of tubewells;
- d. repair of tubewells and supply of drinking water through temporary pipelines from rivers or nallahs to scarcity villages
- e. temporary surface wells (para.36)
- f. in the event of failure of other methods water may be carried to villages at government cost
- g. additional provision of water for cattle and other use through provision of shallow ponds; construction of cisterns; construction of wooden troughs.

h. provision of immediate irrigation facilities ⁴⁸ - as soon as drought is declared an all-out effort must be made to save the existing standing crops in the drought-affected areas. Efforts must also be made as far as possible to raise an alternative kharif crop and to launch a rabi programme.(para.36)

Special Relief to Weavers and Others Special relief to weavers was incorporated into previous Famine Codes and remains a component of the Orissa Relief Code. This may be provided to weavers and artisans if :

1. unfit for hard outdoor labour 'by the practice of their profession and hereditary habits';
2. physically incapable of earning an adequate livelihood on relief works;
3. unable to submit to labour tests on relief works without impairing their skills required for their arts and crafts.

It is the duty of the Block Development Officer to compile a list of artisans requiring assistance in each block and details of their loss of implements. After assessing the level of assistance which is required by each person, the Collector is to forward this list to the Revenue District Commissioner and the Special Relief Commissioner.⁴⁹ This list is to be forwarded to the District Collector.

As discussed in chapter 4.4, fieldwork studies carried out for this thesis in Kalahandi and the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh indicate that such assistance to weavers was of particular importance in some instances. In Sinapali block in Kalahandi a number of weavers were found to be struggling to find employment, or to earn remunerative wages. This was particularly the result of low demand for cloth. The ability of these persons to maintain food security had been markedly impaired by

⁴⁸ Through efforts by the Lift Irrigation Corporation such as energising lift irrigation points, suspending collection of arrears on water rates, supplying pumps to enable cultivators to supply water to their fields; provision of temporary cross bundhs; and a number of other measures.(para.36)

⁴⁹ This relief may take the form of free grants for purchasing raw materials, tools and other implements, boats and nets for fishermen, repair for workshops or sheds and provision of loans or cash grants. Free grants may be given to those who are extremely indigent. Those slightly better off may be allowed to purchase goods at reduced prices, as may recipients of free grants. The Government may consider providing grants to enable those not already members to join Cooperative Societies and to take advantage of their facilities. Where relief cannot be organised for artisans and weavers, grants may be provided under the Agriculturalists' Loan Act.(para.246, para.250)

a decline in the handicrafts industry in the region. A number of weavers in Guntur were similarly living off extremely low wages, and living and working in poor conditions. Despite living in an agriculturally prosperous region, a number of starvation deaths had been reported amongst the weaving community in this area shortly before my visit in May 1992.

Administration of Relief given by other Governments, Semi-Governments, Non-Official Organisations and Individuals Although full responsibility for relief administration lies with the State Government, assistance is also taken from other Governments and from Non Governmental Organisations. (N.G.O.'s) At the district level the relief activities of private agencies, voluntary organisations and individuals are coordinated by the Collector.(para.189a.)⁵⁰ The importance of strengthening cooperation between Government officers and N.G.O.'s in implementing programmes to relieve crisis and to promote development is emphasised in further discussion in chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis.

Miscellaneous Relief In Special Circumstances The Collector is also able to sanction relief in the following circumstances:

1. if a person dies accidentally whilst trying to save human life from natural calamity then a fee may be paid to the bereaved family (Rs.2000 in 1980) as 'a token of recognition of the self-less service'.(para.253)
2. if the only earning members of a family die due to natural calamity and there is no other means of livelihood for the family, then relief may be given (upto Rs.1500 in 1980) within a fortnight of the occurrence of death.(para.254)
3. A reward may be sanctioned if a person shows exceptional bravery in the rescue operation connected with a natural calamity.(para.257)

⁵⁰ If such agencies hand over such stock for relief distribution to the Collector then the stock may be distributed at government cost. However if this is distributed by the agencies themselves, then the responsibility of transporting and distributing materials rests entirely with this organisation. This assistance is normally accredited to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and regulated under the rules of that fund administered by the Political and Services Department.(para.189b.) For further details refer to chapter IX of the Orissa Relief Code.

5.7 Vigilance and the Need for Measures to Check Corruption

The need for Government officials to monitor corruption and malpractice during the implementation of relief and development programmes has been emphasised in this thesis. During periods of crisis, many of those in distress may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation from persons wishing to exploit this situation for personal gain. In such situation officials may be able to spare little time to check such practices and to ensure that all funds and resources are being used for the required purpose.

The Orissa Relief Code correctly recognises that the possibilities for misappropriation of resources and other forms of corruption are enhanced during crisis periods when relief measures are in operation. The Code argues that 'because of the fact that by its very nature heavy amounts of funds are required to be spent within a short span of time, there is a likelihood of wastage and pilferage'.(para.20)

Consequently, it suggests that there is likely to be a need to strengthen the administrative structures of the departments concerned with relief during relief operations. 'Vigilance cells' may also be brought into operation when necessary at various levels by the Special Relief Commissioner to ensure that relief funds and goods are utilised in the intended manner. Further, the Revenue Divisional Commissioners, Collectors and Heads of Departments are urged to remain especially vigilant during their tours and inspections.

5.8 Finance of Relief Measures

As discussed in this chapter, the stated policy of the Government of India is to attempt to interlink relief programmes and development programmes.⁵¹ To allow the State

⁵¹ As recommended by the Sixth Finance Commission established in 1972. (Government of Orissa(1980) para.8)

Government to deal with localised conditions of distress without calling directly upon Central Government for assistance, a sum of money, referred to as 'margin money', is provided to the State Government.⁵²

If in the case of drought the amount required for relief expenditure exceeds that available from 'margin money', the State Government is expected to contribute from its Plan expenditure to meet this shortfall. The amount which must be met from this source is to be assessed by a team from the Government of India, after consulting with the State Government. This contribution should not be more than 5% of the State's annual plan outlay.⁵³

In special circumstances the Central Government also has the facility to extend assistance to the States beyond these provisions. However the Code states that in these situations assessors from the Government of India are expected to take great care in their assessments in the interest of the States themselves. Excessively relaxed financial provisions may lead to wasteful expenditure and unnecessarily add to the financial burden on the State, which has to bear a substantial proportion of these expenses. It is therefore specified that Central teams and High Level Committees should fix ceilings on all items of both Plan and non-Plan expenditure used in this context.⁵⁴

5.9 Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that the current Orissa Relief Code provides in many aspects a well-planned framework for providing assistance during times of crisis, and for promoting developments designed to enhance the ability of the

⁵² In 1972 it was decided under the Sixth Finance Committee that a sum of Rs.3.58 crores should be allocated as 'margin money' which would allow the State Government to deal with localised distress situations without having to apply for central assistance. On the instructions of the Government of India this money is to be kept in a fund which was to be created for that purpose and is to be invested in 'easily negotiable securities' which could be realised when these funds were required to pay for relief measures.(ibid)

⁵³ If money needs to be spent for relief and repair, and for restoration of Public Works after floods, cyclones and other similar calamities, in these situations this difference is not to be met from Plan Expenditure and Central assistance is to be provided to meet 75% of total expenditure which exceeds the 'margin money'.

⁵⁴ Letter from Joint Secretary, Plan Finance I Branch, Government of India Ministry of Finance to Chief Secretaries of all States 25.4.79 (Government of India (1980) Appendix I-A)

vulnerable to maintain food security. If efficiently implemented such interventions may establish an effective 'safety-net' for protecting the vulnerable by safeguarding access to important facilities such as employment, credit, drinking water and health care.

In the context of this theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2 of this thesis, the aims and provisions of the 1980 Orissa Relief Code takes into account a range of important issues:

1. Its aims are not only to mitigate the affects of food crisis, but also to prevent its occurrence. In the words of the Code its provisions are to be '*preventative*' and '*curative*'.
2. The Code states that responsibility for administering relief lies squarely with the Government. Such a statement therefore clarifies that relief operations should not be left primarily to private charity as had been the case until the mid-nineteenth century.
3. It specifies that the Government has a responsibility not only to prevent and mitigate the affects of drought or flood, but also to ensure that 'a certain standard of economic health of the people' is maintained. This responsibility therefore extends during all times and not only when drought or other 'natural calamity' is declared, requiring that relief measures are brought into operation. ¹
4. The Code correctly recognises the importance in the relief process of measures which reinforce people's ability to maintain food security after the crisis has subsided. To do this it is necessary to reinforce their ability to produce food and to find employment or other means through which they can generate purchasing power. This reinforces the need to intervene rapidly before the vulnerable are forced into coping mechanisms which may drastically impair their ability to maintain food security after the crisis, and which may dramatically increase their vulnerability in the future.

5. The Code recognises that satisfactory relief measures must be an enabling factor which encourage 'efforts by the village community to fight common misfortune' and correspondingly boost public morale.

6. Finally, the Code recognises that the objective of relief must not be simply to restore the status quo ante, but should instead trigger longer-term benefits for the affected population in terms of reducing their vulnerability to future crisis. As it correctly argues, 'relief operations are not to be viewed in isolation' but 'should be very much as integral part of rural welfare and development'.(Government of Orissa,1980: para.6)

However in a number of areas there may be deficiencies in provisions laid down in the Orissa Relief Code. Firstly, inadequate attention is given to directly researching the problems and needs of specific vulnerable sections in particular regions. As discussed more fully in chapter 4, the range of problems faced by persons living in Kalahandi tends to differ significantly from region to region and between sections of the population within the district. However the Orissa Relief Code lays down one standard set of provisions for application throughout Kalahandi, and more specifically throughout the State.

Secondly, the provisions of the Orissa Relief Code give low emphasis to ensuring that interventions are compatible with existing 'safety-nets' and community support networks. This document gives only minor reference to methods which people use to cope with periods of hardship such as using forest produce and 'other wild foods', changing consumption patterns, and maintaining stores. Extra attention therefore needs to be given to ensuring that Government interventions are compatible with people's daily lifestyles and coping mechanisms and that these are compatible with sustainable use of the environment.

Thirdly, the delegation of responsibilities laid down in the Orissa Relief Code for officers within the State and District Administrations appears on paper to provide a generally well-planned and clear division of tasks for administering relief and protecting food security. However in applying these principles in practice,

overlaps in responsibilities delegated to individual officers may lead to confusion in how the provisions of the Code are interpreted and which officer should carry out a particular task in a particular situation. Interviews with a number of Government officers indicated that this problem may be accentuated because in some circumstances officers have little training in the tasks they are required to carry out, as stipulated in the Code's guidelines. Frequently these need to be carried out in conditions of considerable urgency.

Finally, the Code is perhaps premature in arguing that improvements in communications and in the availability of food in Orissa have removed the possibility of famine in the State. Whilst such an assumption is dependent upon the definition of famine adopted, confirmation by the Orissa High Court that starvation deaths have taken place in recent years in Kalahandi indicates that there is no room for complacency in assessing levels of prevailing food security in parts of Orissa, or in assuming the infallibility of the current system of relief administration.

Appendix 5.1: Responsibilities for Departments of Government of Orissa in Relief and Development Measures

1. Revenue Department and Board of Revenue : in addition to co-ordinating relief measures carried out by different departments in the State administration and with the Government of India, the Revenue Department is also the administrative department responsible for maintaining relief housing schemes required in times of heavy rain or cyclone; for coordinating relief measures carried out by voluntary organisations; and for measures administered from margin money. Finally it is the department responsible for coordinating with the Government of India and other State Governments regarding relief measures and sending reports to the Government of India.

2. Agriculture and Cooperation Dept. - concerns including supply of seeds, seedlings, fertilisers, insecticides, credit facilities for agriculturalists⁵⁵, soil conservation, plantation works, construction of dugwells, post control measures, collection and provision of periodic crop statistics, collection of statistics and restoration works.

3.. Community Development and Social Welfare Dept.- concerns including organising employment oriented labour intensive works⁵⁶, drinking water programmes, feeding programmes, collection of statistics relating to damage and restoration works under the department etc.

4. Education and Youth Services Dept.- concerns including relief measures for students and educational institutions in the affected areas, when necessary mobilising a student volunteer force.

5. Forest, Fishery and Animal Husbandry Dept.- concerns including veterinary measures, afforestation programmes, supply of forest materials for housing,

⁵⁵ Including purchase of bullocks and pumps.

⁵⁶ Including 'Food for Work' programmes.

provision of fodder, mobile health units for cattle, works on forest roads, other employment programmes, restoration works etc.

6. Health and Family Welfare Dept.- concerns include health measures (both preventative and curative), formation of health squads when necessary, mobile health units, setting up temporary hospitals, preventing epidemics, disinfecting drinking water sources, child health care, collection of statistics for damage and restoration works etc.

7. Home Dept. - concerns include the law and order problem of times of distress, providing police protection for relief commodities and measures, providing army and Home Guard support when necessary for relief measures, mobilising publicity machinery for relief work, installing wireless stations, collecting damage and restoration statistics.

8. Irrigation and Power Dept.- concerns include energising lift irrigation points, supplying pumps to cultivators, rain monitoring and flood forecasts, monitoring weak points in rivers and flood prevention embankments, long-term measures to utilise surface water and rivers for irrigation, works for protection against drought and flood, collection damage and restoration statistic.

9. Planning and Coordination Dept.- concerns include regulation of plan and non-plan schemes and release of funds for these schemes, devising 'contingency programmes' for relevant departments to have ready for use at times of distress.

10. Rural Development Dept.- concerns include providing of widespread minor irrigation schemes and road programmes to provide employment, providing as required technical supervision for Block agencies, collection of damage and restoration statistics.

11. Food and Civil Supplies Dept.- concerns include opening and maintaining fair price shops and retail centres in affected regions with adequate food stocks, maintaining depots in vulnerable and remote areas, supplying foodstuffs for relief operations, regulating anti-smuggling and anti-hoarding measures as instructed by the Government.

12. Harijans Tribal Welfare Dept.- concerns include providing drinking water, labour employment programmes for Adivasis and Harijans in distressed areas, repair of harijan/tribal schools, collection of damage and restoration programmes, etc.

13. Urban Development Dept.- concerns include controlling relief works in urban areas, protecting and ensuring drinking water availability, providing employment opportunities etc.

14. Works Dept.- concerns include maintaining road access for traffic and relief goods, providing road works for employment of the unemployed in distressed areas, collecting damage statistics at the onset of the natural calamity and rapidly instituting relief works.

Chapter 6: Interventions to promote food security and to relieve food crisis: an examination of recent Government programmes in Kalahandi

6.1 Introduction

Theoretical guidelines for relief administration in Orissa have been discussed in chapter 5. This chapter examines the role and performance of the Government and Administration in implementing such a set of interventions in Kalahandi. This also draws on the theoretical framework laid down for studying food security in chapter 2, and the study of prevailing conditions and problems in the district provided in chapter 4, based largely on information from fieldwork in the region.

The material which is presented in this chapter draws particularly on data collected from a range of sources. These include:

1. interviews with Government officers at Block, District, State level;
2. interviews with politicians operative in the Orissa Legislative Assembly and in the Government of India;
3. statistics provided by Government departments at Kalahandi and Orissa level;
4. reports of the Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee;
5. wider information collected from through interviews and conversations with the public in Kalahandi;

The study in this chapter focuses on Government interventions, implemented primarily through the Kalahandi District Administration, in operation between 1985 and 1991. This is designed to provide a cross-section of programmes implemented by the state in Kalahandi during this period. Limitations on space, fieldwork time, and access to information mean that some measures initiated by the state in the district during this period are not included. Missing values also arise in some time series data sets due to difficulties in accessing data. This is particularly

the case with data taken from District Natural Calalamities Committee Reports, available only between 1988 and 1991.¹

Where possible, attempts have been made in this chapter to provide information at the level of the Block, locality or targeted population, as well as at District or State level. It has been emphasised in previous chapters that levels of food insecurity in Kalahandi differ within the district, and between sections of the population. This data is therefore designed to provide to the reader an indication of the extent to which state interventions in Kalahandi have been tailored to meet specific needs in particular regions.

6.2 Interventions in Foodgrain Distribution: The Role of the Public Distribution System

It has been argued in chapter 5 that state measures to protect and promote food security in India have hinged on two central principles: firstly, that of ensuring that the vulnerable have access to employment during times of hardship, so that they can generate purchasing power to buy food; and, secondly, that of safeguarding that food is available at affordable prices through outlets managed by the state or by private retailers.

To secure the first objective, the administration has the capacity during times of hardship to provide work to 'deserving cases' on public works established for this purpose. As discussed in section 5.2, such works formed a central feature of the relief policy developed by the colonial government from the previous century. These also provide the basis of relief policy since independence implemented in individual states.

¹ This constraint also necessitates that details of expenditure or coverage in some schemes is provided only over a short time period. In a number of instances access to information requested from Government Departments was refused. This includes more comprehensive statistics relating to land transfers under Ceiling Surplus Programme or Orissa Regulation(2) of 1956 (discussed previously in chapter 4.10), and time-series information for land revenue paid in Kalahandi over a period of decades. Data for a number of schemes is also sporadic for the reason that these programmes were only implemented during limited periods in the period of study. This is particularly the case with relief measures.

As part of the second component of this policy, the purchasing power of the Indian population is reinforced by ensuring that, as far as possible, all persons eligible to hold a ration card are able to purchase, on a monthly basis, a fixed quota of a range of commodities from 'fair price shops' managed under India's Public Distribution System. (P.D.S.) The objective of such a system is to protect people's entitlements by ensuring that food and other essentials are available to all members of the population at prices they can afford.

The operation of the P.D.S. centres on a system through which the Government procures foodgrains and other essential commodities from producers, and sells these at subsidised rates to rations card holders through P.D.S. retail outlets.² Procurement operations in India are managed largely by the Food Corporation of India (F.C.I.) To protect the access to food of persons living in foodgrain deficit States (which are unable to meet food requirements from within the State), the Government of India attempts through redistribution to maintain a relatively even balance in access to foodgrains and other essentials for consumers throughout India. Purchases from producers during procurement operations are made at or above a minimum price recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (C.A.C.P.)³ Annual variations in this price, known as the 'Minimum Support Price'(M.S.P.), for key foodgrains are listed in table 6.1.

Allocations of commodities are made to individual States from a central pool maintained by the F.C.I., on the basis of requests forwarded to the Central Government by Civil Supplies Departments in the States themselves. A further quantity of foodgrains is held by Central Government as buffer stock. This may be drawn upon for consumption purposes during times of shortage. When there is a danger of price hikes, grain from this stock may also be released into the market in order to stabilise prices and to curb profiteering and speculation. Levels of

² Commonly this through 'fair price shops' managed by retailers employed by the District Department of Civil Supplies.

³ Formerly the Agricultural Prices Commission (A.C.P.)

Fig.6.1 Annual Variation in Procurement Minimum Support Prices of Foodgrains in India

Year	Paddy (common)	Coarse cereals ¹	Wheat (F.A.Q.) ²	Barley (F.A.Q)	Gram	Arhar	Mung
1977-78	77.00	74.00	112.50	67.00	125.00	N.A.	N.A.
1978-79	82.00	85.00	115.00	N.A.	140.00	155.00	165.00
1979-80	90.00	95.00	117.00	N.A.	145.00	165.00	175.00
1980-81	100.00	105.00	130.00	105.00	N.A.	190.00	200.00
1981-82	115.00	116.00	142.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1982-83	122.00	118.00	151.00	122.00	235.00	215.00	240.00
1983-84	132.00	124.00	152.00	124.00	240.00	245.00	250.00
1984-85	137.00	130.00	157.00	130.00	N.A.	275.00	275.00
1985-86	142.00	130.00	162.00	132.00	260.00	300.00	300.00
1986-87	146.00	132.00	166.00	135.00	280.00	320.00	320.00
1987-88	150.00	135.00	173.00	135.00	290.00	325.00	325.00
1988-89	160.00	145.00	183.00	145.00	325.00	360.00	360.00
1989-90	185.00	165.00	200.00	160.00	370.00	425.00	425.00

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Dept. of Agriculture and Cooperation(1990)

¹ Jowar, bajra, maize and ragi

² Fair Average Quality (F.A.Q.)

procurement and distribution of foodgrains, along with buffer stock levels maintained by Central Government, are listed in fig.6.2.

Procurement by F.C.I. As mentioned, the task of procurement is carried out by the Food Corporation of India. In Orissa it is assisted in this task by the State Government, which carries out enforcement measures. At the time of this study, procurement in Kalahandi was being carried out by private grain wholesalers, acting as private government purchasing agents, and by the Regional Marketing Co-operative Society (R.C.M.S.).

In Khariar block at this time procurement agents were dealing primarily with rice, paddy and edible oils. Supplies procured within Khariar block were transported primarily to the F.C.I. godown at Kesinga. In addition to this godown, the F.C.I. maintains another godown at Khariar Road, and 'hires in' other warehousing facilities on contract from the Orissa State Warehousing Corporation(O.S.W.C.)⁴

Grain procured by these agents for the F.C.I. is required to be of Fair Average Quality (F.A.Q.). This implies that it is damage free, having limited moisture (not more than 20-22% for paddy), and free from foreign matter.

To operate legally, any merchant wishing to trade in quantities of paddy greater than 5 quintals is expected to take out a licence from the District Collector.⁵ Separate licences are issued for each commodity (eg rice, pulses, edible oils). In practice however this ruling is regularly violated, with persons often trading in larger quantities of foodgrains without obtaining a licence for the commodity concerned.

The minimum procurement price which may be paid to producers for foodgrains procured on behalf of the F.C.I. is fixed by Central Government, for the period of each kharif year, on the recommendation of the Commission for

⁴ Much of the grain from Khariar block stored with the O.S.W.C. was warehoused at Kantabanji in Bolangir block, about 30 km. from Khariar.

⁵ No licence is required to trade in quantities less than 5 quintals.

Fig.6.2 Internal Procurement and Stocks of Foodgrains - All India Level

Year	Procurement (000's tonnes)	Total distribution	Closing Stock (000's tonnes)		
			With state government	With central government	Total
1951	3826	7991	1330	.	1330
1956	37	2082	108	211	319
1961	541	3977	330	2306	2636
1966	4009	14085	1332	884	2216
1971	8857	7816	1498	6639	8137
1972	7665	11396	968	2475	3443
1973	8424	11414	1175	1959	3134
1974	5645	10790	1116	1614	2730
1975	9563	11253	2643	5642	8285
1976	12853	9174	4265	699	18964
1977	9874	11729	3493	13853	17346
1978	11098	10183	3232	13928	17160
1979	13836	11663	2982	14537	17519
1980	11178	14993	3119	8620	11739
1981	12975	13014	3217	8281	11498
1982	15419	14768	3140	9626	12766
1983	15571	16206	3397	12092	15489
1984	18723	13326	4916	17635	22551
1985	20116	15799	8331	16877	25208
1986	19721	17269	7181	16449	23630
1987	15668	18700	2994	11150	14144
1988	14064	18306	1432	8050	9482

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Dept. of Agriculture and Cooperation(1990)

Agricultural Costs and Prices (C.A.C.P.)⁶ This 'minimum support price' is fixed on the basis of an All-India survey, taking into account costs of seeds, labour, fertiliser and other costs of production, along with miller's costs and levels of foodgrain procurement. Government procurement agencies are expected to purchase grains from farmers at this minimum support price (M.S.P.) Private agents employed by the F.C.I. to procure grain may buy foodgrains from producers at the M.S.P. or at a higher price.

On 3.3.92 the M.S.P. stood as follows ⁷

Fig. 6.3

Commodity	Minimum support price
Common paddy	Rs. 230
Fine paddy	Rs. 240
Superfine paddy	Rs. 250

However during interviews with cultivators in Kalahandi it was stated that whilst larger farmers generally do tend to receive at least M.S.P. for produce they sell to procurement agents, in some instances lower prices are paid to poor farmers, who may be less educated and not fully aware of the official rate. For this reason smaller farmers sometimes received only Rs.200 per bag of paddy, rather than the statutory rate of Rs.230.

Private merchants under contract to procure foodgrains on behalf of the F.C.I. are required under the terms of their employment to sell 50% of the quantity of foodstuffs they purchase to the Government (ie. to the F.C.I.) On this 50% levy the F.C.I. pays the merchant at fixed price. The remaining 50% of foodgrains they procure may be sold in the open market. To make sales in the open market a licence is required from the Collector.

One private procurement agent interviewed suggested that they are able to make little profit on the 50% levy which they must sell to the F.C.I., and commonly

⁶ This was formerly the Agricultural Pricing Commission (A.C.P.)

⁷ Sri. Jagadish Patnaik, District level Civil Supplies Officer (C.S.O.), Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi, interviewed 2.4.92 and 3.4.92. In addition to this price, the merchant buyer is required to pay purchase tax.

find it difficult to cover their costs on this component.⁸ Instead he argued that it is only in open market sales (O.M.S.) that they are generally able to make profits.

In Kalahandi it was suggested that profits made by private procurement agents tend to be lower than those made in other areas where productivity levels were higher.⁹ This is the case for a number of reasons. Firstly levels of procurement in Kalahandi often tend to be lower than in these regions. This therefore reduces the quantity of foodgrains which, after the compulsory 50% levy has been sold to the Government, agents are free to sell in the open market.¹⁰

Secondly, it was suggested that there is significant regional variation in the quantity of rice that can be produced from a given quantity of paddy after milling. The official figure fixed by the Government of India stipulates that 100Kg. of paddy after processing will yield 66Kg. of rice. However merchants in Kalahandi suggested that the husk of the paddy commonly produced in the district was heavy, and that sometimes yields were as low as 16Kg. from 1 quintal of paddy. In contrast, it was suggested that with some of the high yielding variety paddy types grown in parts of coastal Orissa, Bolangir, Sambalpur and other irrigated regions, 68Kg. to 72Kg. of rice may on occasions be obtained per quintal of paddy. This factor again reduces the profits which grain merchants from Kalahandi are able to make from rice sold from their mills when compared with those in some other districts.

However despite these factors it must be recognised that problems of food insecurity in Kalahandi cannot be attributed simply to shortfalls in foodgrain production. Importantly, Kalahandi along with Sambalpur, Bolangir, Koraput and Balasore, was in April 1992 still one of five districts in Orissa (out of the total 13)

⁸ It was suggested that initially they were able to operate 'on a par' i.e. on a 'break even' basis. However later they frequently began to make a loss on this levy.

⁹ Such as, for example, in the regions of Sambalpur and Bolangir districts which are irrigated with water from the Hirakud system. Refer to figs. 4.8 to 4.16 in chapter 4 of this thesis.

¹⁰ I was provided with the following example. In a region where a procurement agent was able to procure 22000 quintals of grain, then the Collector would fix a levy for the agent of 11000 quintals which must be sold for minimal profit to the F.C.I. This would leave a remaining 11000 quintals which could be sold more profitably in open market sales (O.M.S.) However in an area where agents were able to procure a higher quantity of foodgrains, for example 25000 quintals, then the Government levy would be fixed at 12500 quintals, leaving a further 12500 quintals which could be sold at profit in O.M.S. On this basis it may be seen that, according to the reasoning provided by foodgrain merchants in Kalahandi, merchants in districts where levels of procurement are higher are able to secure larger profits. (Grain merchant, Khariar region - name supplied).

which was a net exporter of foodgrains.¹¹ This reinforces the argument made earlier in this thesis, according to the 'entitlement' notion of Sen and others, that food insecurity is not simply a function of deficiencies in overall food availability, as determined by levels of production in the district. Instead it is more accurately a function of the direct access which different persons in the district have to food and other essentials. Shortfalls in a person's access to food may, but need not necessarily, result from deficiencies in production in the region concerned.

Distribution through P.D.S. retail outlets As discussed, the P.D.S. is organised as a centralised system. Foodgrains are allocated to each State from the Government of India's central pool, maintained from procurement and from other stocks. These allocations are made on the basis of requests placed before Central Government by each State, founded on offtake from market outlets distributing P.D.S. commodities in the State (most commonly fair price shops), and on expected demand from P.D.S. in the forthcoming year.

At sub-State level, commodities allocated to the State from the central pool are reallocated to the Civil Supplies Departments of individual districts for sale in fair price shops and other P.D.S. outlets. These allocations are made, on a similar principle to State-wise allocations, on the basis of returns from each district forwarded to the State Government's Dept. of Civil Supplies. In Orissa, allocations are fixed by the Dept. of Civil Supplies, Government of Orissa according to the total allocation which the State has received from Central Government, and levels of offtake and lifting of P.D.S. commodities in the district in previous years.

In Kalahandi, quota is generally released from the F.C.I. godowns(A.P.S.D.'s)¹² at Kesinga and Khariar Road on a monthly basis, generally at the start of the month. The Government of Orissa undertaking responsible for purchase and sale of stocks from these storage and distribution facilities to retailers

¹¹ ie. total quantities of foodgrains leaving the district after F.C.I. procurement exceeded the quantity allocated to the district by the Orissa Civil Supplies Dept. or incoming from other sources.

¹² These are base level godowns of the F.C.I.

Fig. 6.4: Stock Position of Foodgrains in Kalahandi during 1989-90 (Megatonnes)

Date	Scheme	Coarse rice	Fine rice	Total
1.2.89	Under P.D.S.	0	603.5	603.5
	Under I.T.D.P.	129	114.0	243.0
	Total	129.0	717.5	946.5
1.6.89	Under P.D.S.	728.7	376.1	1104.8
	Under I.T.D.P.	201.2	80.9	282.1
	Total	929.9	457.0	1386.9
1.8.89	Under P.D.S.	738.0	29.0	767.0
	Under I.T.D.P.	465.8	66.7	532.5
	Total	1203.8	95.7	1299.5
1.10.89	Under P.D.S.	30.3	377.9	408.2
	Under I.T.D.P.	273.4	62.1	335.5
	Total	303.7	440.0	743.7
1.12.89	Under P.D.S.	19.0	288.0	307.0
	Under I.T.D.P.	212.5	62.1	274.6
	Total	231.5	350.1	581.6
1.5.90	Under P.D.S.	20.1	134.3	154.4
	Under I.T.D.P.	118.5	12.0	130.5
	Total	138.6	146.3	284.9
1.7.90	Under P.D.S.	514.7	129.1	643.8
	Under I.T.D.P.	257.0	12.0	269.0
	Total	771.7	141.1	912.8
15.9.90	Under P.D.S.	546.3	118.9	665.2
	Under I.T.D.P.	329.3		
	Total	875.6		

Source: Natural Calamities Commission, Kalahandi

is the Orissa State Civil Supplies Corporation (O.S.C.S.C.). Employees of the Corporation lift stock from A.P.S.D.'s and transport it to storage points. The rice stock position held in Kalahandi during 1989-90 is listed in fig. 6.4 The cost of transport of commodities from A.P.S.D. to storage point is paid by the Corporation. On 2.4.92 this was paid at the following rates ¹³:

Fig.6.5

Category	Rate per bag
distances upto 10 km.	120 paise lump sum paid
distances after 10km.	8 paise paid per quintal per km.
Handling charge	Rs.2

Source: Kalahandi District Civil Supplies Officer

In April 1992, 18 storage points were in operation in Kalahandi. Agents employed to maintain these storage points are generally appointed by the Collector, who issues to each agent an allotment order to allow supplies to be drawn from F.C.I. godowns.¹⁴ Food is then distributed from these storage points to retailers.

Retailers are similarly expected to obtain an issue order from the Inspector of Supplies. On the strength of this order they are then permitted to lift stocks from storage points and to transport this to retail points, where it is sold to ration card holders.¹⁵ Whilst the majority of fair price shops in Kalahandi are managed by private traders, some retail outlets are maintained by other agencies including groups of villagers (or gram panchayats), voluntary organisations or co-operatives.¹⁶ Details of fair price shops in operation during 1989-90 in Kalahandi are listed in fig 6.6.

Commodities are sold at subsidised prices to members of the public on production of a ration card. Ration cards are allocated to households on the basis of

¹³ Sri. Jagadish Patnaik, District level Civil Supplies Officer (C.S.O.), Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi, interviewed 2.4.92 and 3.4.92. At the time of interview this rate was soon to be increased to 10pa. per quintal per km.

¹⁴ It was suggested that in rural areas there is often one storage agent for every 2000 population. In urban areas there is often one storage agent for every 1000 population. (Relocation and Rehabilitation Officer (R. & R.), Indravati project, previously Subdivisional Officer (Subcollector) of Jeypur and Dharamgarh blocks.)

¹⁵ In April 1992 there were currently 3,19,590 card holders in Kalahandi, 2,84,261 of these living in rural areas and 35,329 in urban regions. (District Civil Supplies Officer, Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi op. cit.)

¹⁶ See chapter 7 for further details of interventions from voluntary organisations, and chapter 4.10 dealing with village support networks and cooperative arrangements.

Fig. 6.6: Fair Price Shops in Operation in Kalahandi

Date		Private	Cooperative	Gram panchayat	Voluntary organisations	Total
16.2.89-	Urban	62	9	0	1	72
	Rural	694	134	22	11	861
	Total	756	143	22	12	933
1.6.89	Urban					
	Rural					
	Total	735	143	15	8	901
26.6.89	Urban	61	6	0	1	68
	Rural	700	129	21	6	856
	Total	761	135	21	7	924
26.10.89	Urban	65	6	0	1	72
	Rural	735	128	17	7	887
	Total	800	134	17	8	959
27.12.89	Urban	64	7	0	0	74
	Rural	729	131	25	0	885
	Total	793	138	25	0	959
1.5.90	Urban	63	6	1	0	70
	Rural	718	125	7	15	865
	Total	781	131	8	15	935
30.6.90	Urban	62	3	0	1	66
	Rural	756	109	14	8	887
	Total	818	112	14	9	953
1.9.90	Urban	65	4	0	1	70
	Rural	788	100	13	8	909
	Total	853	104	13	9	979

Source: Kalahandi District Level Committee on Natural Calamities

household income.¹⁷ Prices at which commodities may be sold from fair price shops are fixed by the O.S.C.S.C. In April 1992, each ration card holder was entitled to purchase, on a monthly basis, the following quantities of specified commodities from fair price shops:

Fig. 6.7

Commodity	Allocation
rice	upto 13 Kg. per month
wheat	upto 20 Kg. per month
Sugar (urban)	roughly upto 5 Kg. month - although varies depending on whether a Class A card holder (annual income > Rs.15000) or Class B card holder (annual income < Rs.15000)

Source: Civil Supplies Officer, Kalahandi district, Bhawanipatna.

Variations in issue prices of rice are detailed in fig 6.10. In April 1992 issue prices at which ration card holders could purchase commodities from fair price shops stood as follows:

Fig 6.8

Commodity	Issue Price
common boiled rice	Rs. 4.32 per Kg.
fine boiled rice	Rs.4.98 per Kg.
superfine boiled rice	Rs.5.20 per Kg.
wheat	Rs.3.24 per Kg.
sugar	Rs. 6.90 per Kg.

Source: Civil Supplies Officer, Kalahandi district, Bhawanipatna.

However in tribal blocks covered by the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (I.T.D.P.) commodities are sold at more highly subsidised rates:

¹⁷ In April 1992 households having annual income of less than Rs.15000 were issued with a Class B ration card.(District Civil Supplies Officer, Kalahandi op.cit.)

Fig.6.9

Commodity	Issue Price
common boiled rice	Rs. 3.27 per Kg.
fine boiled rice	Rs.4.12 per Kg.
superfine boiled rice	Rs.4.33 per Kg.
wheat	Rs.2.55 per Kg.

Source: Civil Supplies Officer, Kalahandi district, Bhawanipatna.

Allocations and offtake of particular commodities under P.D.S and I.T.D.P., and rice stocks held under these programmes, are detailed in figs. 6.11 and 6.12.

Procedure for distributing kerosene differs to that for other commodities sold from fair price shops. This commodity is not distributed through the P.D.S, but is instead supplied, according to district quota, by the Indian Oil Corporation (I.O.C.) The I.O.C. appoints wholesalers, who manage depots for maintaining supplies of kerosene, from which wholesalers and retailers appointed by the Collector transport the commodity to their own distribution points. From these retail points it is then sold at subsidised prices to ration card holders.

Consumers holding ration cards in Kalahandi are generally permitted to purchase between 1Kg. and 3Kg. of kerosene per month. In April 1992 the sale price tended to vary between Rs.254 and Rs.272 per litre, depending upon the area in which it was being sold. In inaccessible areas consumers were generally expected to pay higher rates to cover extra transport costs.¹⁸

The Public Distribution System remains of crucial importance in maintaining and promoting the access of the country's population to foodgrains and other essentials at affordable prices. When efficiently implemented it also serves to address a range of other problems which prevail in India. Firstly, it helps to redress differences in people's access to food caused by high levels of inequality in land and other assets. These inequalities lead to marked variations in quantities of foodgrains and other essentials which people are able to produce from their own

¹⁸ Source: District Civil Supplies Officer, Kalahandi op.cit. In Lanjigarh and Thuamar Rampur blocks, the two blocks in Kalahandi designated as I.T.D.P. areas, two mobile vans were in operation to distribute commodities to consumers in inaccessible places who did not otherwise have access to fair price shops.

Fig. 6.10 Issue Prices of Rice (Rs. per Quintal)

Period	Variety	Price
25.10.71	Common	150.00
	Fine	162.00
	Superfine	172.00
1.1.81	Common	165.00
	Fine	177.00
	Superfine	192.00
1.10.81	Common	175.00
	Fine	187.00
	Superfine	202.00
1.10.82	Common	188.00
	Fine	200.00
	Superfine	215.00
16.1.84	Common	208.00
	Fine	220.00
	Superfine	235.00
10.10.85	Common	217.00
	Fine	229.00
	Superfine	244.00
1.2.86	Common	231.00
	Fine	243.00
	Superfine	253.00
1.10.86	Common	239.00
	Fine	251.00
	Superfine	266.00
1.10.87	Common	239.00
	Fine	264.00
	Superfine	279.00
5.1.89	Common	244.00
	Fine	304.00
	Superfine	325.00

Source: Dept of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India

Fig 6.11 Offtake of Rice in Kalahandi (In Megatonnes)

Date	Scheme	Coarse rice	Fine rice	Total
Dec. 1988	All schemes			285.5
April 1989	Under P.D.S.			184.7
	Under I.T.D.P.			148.3
May 1989	Under P.D.S.			383.3
	Under I.T.D.P.			174.2
July 1989	Under P.D.S.	648.4	99.4	747.8
	Under I.T.D.P.	191.1	9.8	200.9
Sept. 1989	Hat sale rice			33.060
	Mobile sale - PDS			59.933
	PDS sale	430.8	91.7	522.5
Nov 1989	Hat sale rice			119.75 quintal
	Mobile sale rice			383.92 quintal
	Under P.D.S.	11.3	25.2	36.5
	Under I.T.D.P.	110.7		110.7

Source: Natural Calamities Commission, Kalahandi

Fig. 6.12 PDS Allotment/Offtake (continued), Various Commodities

Date	Commodity	Allotment	Offtake	Progressive offtake ¹
June 1990	PDS rice (M.T.)	500	30.8	517.9
	I.T.D.P. rice (M.T.)	250	158.9	1500.6
	PDS wheat (M.T.)	180	79.1	1205.0
	Levy sugar (M.T.)	623	695.1	5384.9
	Kerosene oil (KLitre)	484	445	3991
	P. oil (M.T.)	45	28.860	143.360
Aug 1990	PDS rice (M.T.)	500 surrendered	113.5	
	I.T.D.P. rice (M.T.)	250	166.1	
	PDS wheat (M.T.)	480	400.3	
	Levy sugar (M.T.)	623	823.0	
	Kerosene oil (KLitre)	448	448	
	P. oil (M.T.)		4.740	

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities

¹ From October 1989 until 30.6.90.

production, or to sell to provide cash. These also generate differences in people's access to purchasing power, gained from waged employment and other sources, which can be used to buy food. Secondly, by centralising procurement and distribution of foodgrains the P.D.S. helps to reduce differences in access to food between people living in surplus-producing States and food-deficit States. Thirdly, it serves to protect the population from deficiencies in access to food caused by the high levels of instability in foodgrain production which prevail some regions. Fourthly, it cushions the public from hikes in foodgrain prices, and from the adverse affects of speculation and profiteering in grain markets.

However despite the crucial importance of this system, it must be recognised that a range of deficiencies and inefficiencies markedly reduce the effectiveness of the safety-net which the P.D.S. is intended to the Indian population.¹⁹ Firstly, the system has moved since its creation during India's First Five Year Plan from its original role of 'making food available to all at prices they can afford'. Now its principal role is essentially that of curbing inflation and stabilising prices, primarily acting only to supplement what is otherwise available in the free market.(Venugopal, 1992) Secondly, it has been suggested that too much emphasis has been placed on maintaining buffer stocks to protect against variations in prices. These stocks have been maintained at excessive levels, subsequently increasing storage costs and levels of wastage. Surplus from these stocks has tended to be sold off by the Government at low prices to roller mill operators and private traders, benefiting the latter rather than those most vulnerable.(ibid) Thirdly, the Government of India has regularly failed to provide adequate information and guidelines to States for implementing the P.D.S. at regional level.

A number of other deficiencies relating to the operation of the P.D.S. can be observed in Kalahandi. Firstly, whilst its intention has been to ensure that all persons have access to necessary foodgrains and other essentials at prices they can

¹⁹ For further discussion of the operation of the P.D.S. in India refer further to Venugopal(1992) and other references cited in chapter 2.8 of this thesis.

afford, the way that fair price shops in the district operate in practice commonly means that for many of the poorest this condition is not satisfied. In particular card holders are frequently required to purchase their full monthly allocation of distributed commodities in one single purchase every month. To do this they must therefore have access to sufficient cash on the day of purchase to be able to pay for this full monthly quota in one transaction. However gaining access to such sums is often not possible for many poorer families, in which wage earners may be paid a daily basis. For this reason they are forced to forfeit a section of the subsidised commodities which they are entitled to purchase from fair price shops. Although it would increase administrative demands and costs, to enable the poorest to fully benefit from the P.D.S. it is therefore essential to provide a facility through which they can purchase smaller quantities of commodities at more regular intervals during the month.

Secondly, distributions through the P.D.S. commonly fail to take into account variations in tastes and consumption patterns from region to region and between different sections of the population. In consequence in many fair price shops in Kalahandi considerable quantities of wheat are stocked for distribution, despite being consumed at a much lower rate than rice (and in the case of poor persons often than ragi and other 'coarse grains'). In Boden block wheat was being purchased by local persons at subsidised prices, only to be sold off to others because the purchasers did not favour eating wheat, or were not familiar with preparing roti.

Indeed by distributing a comparatively standard set of commodities throughout India, without taking into account variations in consumption preferences within the country's population, the efficiency of the P.D.S in minimising wastage and in satisfying demand requirements amongst specific communities lies well below optimum level.

Similarly in Government employment schemes in the district wages are sometimes paid as Rs.20 in cash and Rs.5 in kind. However within this in-kind component the Government had, at the time of this study, opted to include 250g. of

oil. Since many families consume in one month less than 1Kg. of oil, this again suggests that much of the high quality oil distributed is wasted or sold off to others.

Thirdly, it was widely suggested that ration cards were frequently held by consumers whose annual household income far exceeded the level at which they are eligible to offtake commodities from fair price shops. Although officers from the Civil Supplies Dept. are expected to visit families throughout Kalahandi to assess whether they are eligible to hold ration cards, commonly it was reported that these officers fail to carry out this duty, and instead 'just sit in their office'. For this reason considerable numbers of poor persons eligible to purchase P.D.S. commodities do not hold ration cards, and are therefore not covered by the P.D.S safety-net. This is particularly the case in remote areas rarely visited by Government officials.²⁰

6.3 Credit Availability

It has been suggested in this thesis that measures to safeguard and reinforce the access of vulnerable persons to credit facilities are of importance in strengthening their ability to maintain food security. These measures are particularly necessary to prevent people being forced into taking out loans from private moneylenders at usurious rates of interest. Inability to repay such loans commonly leads to an expanding cycle of indebtedness from which borrowers are unable to escape. Access to institutional credit at reasonable interest rates may also prevent borrowers from being forced into 'survival strategies' such as distress sales of land or other crucial productive assets which may markedly reduce their ability to maintain food security in the future.²¹ Various banks operating in Kalahandi make crop loans to assist

²⁰ Indeed considerable numbers of persons living in some remote areas in Kalahandi continued to lack access to P.D.S. outlets. A local voluntary organisation operating in Lanjigarh block suggested that the system of mobile vans operated by the Government in that block and in Thuamur Rampur were insufficient to meet demand. It reported also that considerable numbers of persons in Lanjigarh were still unaware that such a mobile service existed.

²¹ However for reasons discussed in chapter 4.10, whilst a range of agencies provide alternative sources of credit to *sahukars* and moneylenders, these forms of institutional credit are commonly less available to the poor than to more privileged sections of the community.

agriculturalists in the district. In 1990 the lending position through crop loans schemes stood as follows:

Fig.6.13

Name of Bank	Rs. in Lakhs
State Bank of India	77.07
Indian Overseas Bank	7.86
Kalahandi Anchalika Gramay Bank	39.00
Bank of India	5.49
United Commercial Bank	4.17
Central Bank of India	0.42
Total	134.01

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 30.5.90

Whilst only the second largest lender in the district through crop loans, the largest number of branches for any bank operative in Kalahandi is maintained by the Kalahandi Anchalika Bank.(K.A.B.) In July 1992 the K.A.B. had 65 branches in operation in Kalahandi and a further 12 in Phulbani.²² This bank operates specifically with the purpose of providing crop loans to small and marginal farmers (ie. farmers owning plots of less than 7.5 acres). In addition to making agricultural loans, and limited numbers of commercial and business loans, the Kalahandi Anchalika Bank acts as an agent for distributing finance for Government schemes. These include the Integrated Rural Development Project (I.R.D.P.), Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Poor (E.R.R.P.) and the Rural Landless Employment Generation Project (R.L.E.G.P.). Details of loans made under Government schemes from Bargaon branch of the K.A.B. during 1991-92 are listed below:

²² Whilst the State Bank of India, The Central Bank of India, The United Commercial Bank and the Indian Overseas Bank also operate in the district, these each have only 5 or 6 branches.

Fig. 6.14 Government Schemes Administered by Kalahandi Anchalika Bank, Bargaon Branch

Scheme	No. of loans	Amount of loans
IRDP	528	464
ERRP	51	29
MADA	29	53
SC/STD FCC	48	64
PMMP	12	72
DWCRA	17	61
Biogas	8	25
Total	693	768

Source: Kalahandi Anchalika Bank, Bargaon branch

For private lending, loans are made from the K.A.B. at rates of 11.5% interest on agricultural loans, 23% interest on consumption loans and 14.5% interest on business loans.²³ In Government sponsored loans a subsidy element is provided at a rate of 50% of the loan to S.T.'s, 33% to S.C.'s and 25% to general caste borrowers. Details of loans made by the Bargaon branch of the K.A.B. are listed in fig.6.15.

However despite the urgent need for low interest credit to the poor cultivators in the district, risks are high for banks lending to this category of borrower. Recovery rates of loans to small and marginal farmers by the Kalahandi Anchalika Bank are extremely low, the rate for the Khariar branch as of June 1992 being only 36% of total agricultural loans made. For the Bargaon branch, the figure for recovery was even lower at only 25%.

Repayment rates have tended to be this low for a number of reasons. Firstly, many borrowers simply cannot afford to repay. In the years of repeated crop failure which have been witnessed in Kalahandi during the last decade many are unable even to service interest on their loans, let alone to pay them off. Some borrowers have taken out loans on the pretext of using them for agricultural purposes or to establish

²³ The Khariar branch of the Kalahandi Anchalika Bank in July 1992 had 2500 depositors, mainly business and service holders. It had made in total 1500 crop loans of Rs.5000 in size. The Turkela branch at this time held Rs. 9 lakh in deposits from 900 depositors. It has dispensed Rs.21 lakh in advances to 1200 recipients. At this time Bargaon branch held Rs.9.89 lakhs in deposits from 1072 depositors.(Interviews with officials of respective branches of Kalahandi Anchalika Bank. 24.7.92, 25.7.92)

Fig. 6.15 Loans Outstanding as of June 1992 from the Kalahandi Anchalika Bank, Bargaon branch

Purpose	No. of loan	Amount of loan ((000's Rs.)
Agricultural cash credit	207	319
Dugwell	44	155
Electric Pumpset	4	29
Diesel pumpset	4	25
Papaya cultivation	1	1
Dairy (cow)	19	64
Plough bullock	45	14
Bullock with cart	80	85
Pisciculture	1	1
Biogas plant	8	25
Sheep	22	4
Goat	25	6
PCPI	140	107
Chuda / mudi	21	8
Tailoring	11	6
Handloom	9	2
Carpentry	6	4
Pottery	14	15
Blacksmith	16	6
Bamboo work	18	2
Tile making	2	1
Cycle repair	6	27
Pumpset	1	3
Saloon	1	3
Hotel and tea stall	3	4
Othi	12	12
Kirana shop	74	189
Pan bidi	2	7
Dry fish	1	1
Bengal business	4	4
Vegetable vendor	10	3
Rice vendor	144	67
Cloth business	19	66

Hawking	33	29
Others	12	14
Cycle	21	4
Rickshaw	9	20
Loan against deposit	21	40
Consumption	69	113
Total	1139	1485

Source: Kalahandi Anchalika Bank, Bargaon Branch, interview 25.7.92

a small business (see fig. 6.15) but have instead had to use these to meet their immediate consumption needs.

Secondly, the incidence of borrowers defaulting on their debts has increased markedly since the pledge made by Janata Dal Prime Minister V.P. Singh in 1988 to write-off existing agricultural debts. Officials of the K.A.B. suggested that this pledge had totally undermined the whole system of bank lending to the rural poor. Even since this system of debt write-offs has been discontinued, many cultivators have continued to default in the expectation that if there is a forthcoming election, then a new Prime Minister will again reintroduce a similar write-off scheme. For this reason they see little advantage in repaying outstanding debts.

Indeed bank officials stated that the K.A.B. had already written-off a total Rs. 6.8 Crore out of its total advances of Rs.18 Crore. In return it had only in July 1992 received Rs.1 Crore from the Government of India in compensation, therefore leaving a remaining overdue position equal to nearly one third of its total advance loans. The serious delays which the K.A.B., and other banks, have faced in receiving Government compensation for bad debts severely threatens their future.

Difficulties faced in operating lending schemes to small farmers and other vulnerable groups also result from the relative cost inefficiency of maintaining such a lending system. K.A.B. officials suggested that much of their business centred on making large numbers of loans. of relatively small sums of money. For this reason costs of administering loans were high, in relation to sums advanced, when compared with banks lending in larger amounts. To combat this problem there was considerable support amongst bank officials for a proposed unification of banks primarily concerned with small-scale agricultural lending into a national small farmer bank. At the time of this study such a plan had been approved by the Cabinet of the Government of India, but was still waiting to be passed by Parliamentary Bill.

6.4 Measures to stabilise and increase foodgrain production and to promote agricultural development

It has been argued in this thesis that problems of food insecurity faced by many sections of Kalahandi's population cannot be attributed simply to deficiencies in foodgrain production in the district. Indeed during 1992 Kalahandi remained one of only five districts in Orissa which supplies to the national grain distribution system (to the F.C.I.) more grain than is allocated to the district by Department of Civil Supplies for distribution through the P.D.S.

Much of the grain procured in Kalahandi is grown in a relatively concentrated area, particularly the better irrigated Tel basin region. This is also produced by a relatively small concentration of larger landholders. Whilst some agricultural developments have been introduced in the form of new seed varieties, fertilisers, production methods and other technical developments, these are again concentrated particularly in the Tel basin region. In largely unirrigated or hilly regions of the district, measures to increase foodgrain production have been highly limited.

As previously discussed, restricted irrigation potential in these regions limits the effectiveness of 'Green Revolution' agricultural inputs and techniques. For this reason agriculture in many areas remains monsoon dependent. These trends have tended to increase inequalities between the Tel basin region and monsoon dependent areas, and the differentials between larger farmers and small cultivators or the landless who have experienced lesser benefit from such programmes.²⁴

In response to these problems agriculture has been given priority attention by the District Planning and Development Office in Kalahandi. During the three year period 1987-88 and 1989-90 it may be seen from fig 6.16 that Rs.415.4 lakh was spent on agriculture, this representing the seventh highest subsector for Government expenditure listed in this table. In this period a further Rs.1010.1 lakh

²⁴ This has been discussed more fully in chapter 4.2 and 4.3.

Fig. 6.16 Government Development Expenditure in Kalahandi between 1987-88 and 1989-90

Section	Subsector	Financial Achievement made during the period of:			
		(Rs. in lakh)			
		1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	3 year total
Agriculture and allied	Crop husbandry	56.56	21.46	37.35	115.37
	Soil conservation	18.79	393.05	930.74	1342.58
	Horticulture	10.71	5.29	8.67	24.67
	Co-operation	12.25	4.83	29.60	46.68
	Afforestation	16.83	20.70	117.76	155.29
	Social Forestry				
	Fisheries	3.92	15.86	1.28	21.06
	Animal husbandry and Dairy development	13.57	0.32	36.85	50.74
Irrigation and flood control	Minor Irrigation	90.98	781.22	137.90	1010.10
	Upper Jonk Irrigation Canal Division		85.40	330.90	416.30
Rural electrification and energisation of pump sets		36.67		142.33	179.00
Industries	Sericulture	3.74	1.14	total 15.03	19.91
	Handloom	5.27	5.05		
	D.I.C.	12.68	14.05		
Roads		168.45	408.96	84.41	661.82
Education and sports	Elementary and secondary education / Adult education	62.27	121.12	131.30	314.69
	Sports	6.92	8.90	19.97	35.79
Health and family welfare	Allopathic, ayurvedic, homeopathic	39.07	48.00	271.02	358.09
Drinking Water supply and Public Health		102.02	76.29	102.24	280.55
Welfare of S.C./ S.T.	Welfare of S.C./ S.T.	44.20	16.61	total 177.01	237.82
	MADA programmes	69.02	40.74		

	ITDA programme	29.29	4.17		
	OSCSTDFCC programme	34.25	.		
	KKDA	5.00	.		
Social welfare and nutrition		177.00	57.64	201.80	436.44
Land reforms		38.21	40.00	5.02	83.23
Panchayat samitis		271.65	353.80	458.90	1084.35
Test relief		264.00	150.00	71.95	485.95
Total		1637.50	2689.67	3314.39	

Source: Mishra Commission Report: pp.43-45

were spent on extending minor irrigation potential (third highest subsector in expenditure terms).

During the Eighth Five Year Plan the District Agricultural Office of Khariar Agricultural District emphasised the following measures which are to be given special attention²⁵:

1. increased coverage under extra early and early paddy in bunded high and medium land to reduce crop loss due to drought;
2. promotion of line sowing for paddy and nonpaddy crops to reduce the vulnerability of the crop to drought induced stress;
3. increased area under nonpaddy crops like groundnut, pulses, ragi and sunflower;
4. emphasis to be given to promoting mixed cropping (ie. groundnut and arhar, paddy and arhar, arhar and pulses) which in drought prone areas may be more profitable than paddy cultivation and less prone to harvest failure;
5. production of cotton over an extensive area on black and heavy soil;
6. production of improved varieties of sugarcane in Sinapali and Khariar blocks in a staggered manner to provide cane for crushing at a sugar factory to be established at Dharamgarh.

In addition to irrigation potential added under the Upper Jonk project (discussed in chapter 4), the Upper Indravati project is expected on its completion to irrigate a further 1,90,300 hectares, including the whole of Dharamgarh and part of Bhawanipatna subdivisions. The District Planning and Development Office has also moved the Government of Orissa for funds to introduce further medium and minor irrigation projects. At the time of interview the Department suggested that it was able to implement 121 minor irrigation projects, for which preliminary studies had been completed.²⁶

The above programme, if implemented on an extensive scale, provides a well-designed structure for increasing foodgrain production and reducing the risk of

²⁵ Interview, Khariar, 3.3.92.

²⁶ Chairman of the Kalahandi Planning and Development Office, Bhawanipatna, interviewed 4.4.92.

drought-induced harvest failure in arid and agriculturally undeveloped areas in Kalahandi. The Administration correctly recognises the essential need to extend irrigation potential in the district. As part of this programme provisions must be included to ensure that this potential is not monopolised by powerful larger landowners, but that access to water is secured for smaller and more deprived cultivators.

Measures designed to increase the mix of more drought resistant crops (such as groundnut, ragi, pulses, and oilseeds) alongside paddy are likely to reduce the incidence of total crop failure, and to promote the purchasing power of cultivators through sale of crops grown for market (as discussed in chapter 4.2 and 4.3). However, alongside measures to encourage farmers to diversify cropping patterns to include commodities grown for market exchange (such as cotton and sugarcane), it is essential that the Government also strengthens marketing facilities available to producers to ensure that they are properly remunerated for sale of their produce.

An officer in the District Administration has been assigned control of Soil and Moisture Conservation. The task of this Department is to engineer water harvesting structures designed to protect the soil and to keep the surrounding land moist. These projects also provide useful employment in relief works. Notably in the three year period 1987-88 to 1989-90, soil conservation was the target of the highest subsector expenditure for Government relief and development in Kalahandi.(Rs. 1343 lakh as indicated in fig.6.16) However despite the useful application of similar small scale irrigation developments, the Chairman of Planning and Development Office suggested during interview that these continued to be discouraged since they create only small irrigation potential and disturb the potential for large irrigations projects which are to receive higher priority.²⁷ As discussed during chapter 4.2, Government programmes which continue to promote the use of the

²⁷ *ibid.*

latter, with the hugely disruptive effects which large dam construction has on local communities, represent a policy area which needs to be urgently re-examined.²⁸

In addition to the planned developments discussed above, a range of measures have been implemented by the Government in Kalahandi in recent years to promote agricultural development and to stabilise production. The breakdown of Government provisions under respective development programmes to promote agriculture and forest include the following:

Fig.6.17

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Total
Plantation	1151.00has.	1707.28	559.00	60.00	1141.00	4618.28
Water harvesting structures	100 in number/ 3320 has.	83 in number/ 2780 has.	58 in number/ 1538 has.	.	.	241 in number / 7638 has.
Dugwell	.	.	.	16	.	16
Dugwell under Million Wells Scheme	.	.	.	.	901	901

Source: Mishra Commission (1990)

Families receiving assistance under respective schemes during 1989-90 are listed below:

Fig.6.18

Project	Year	No. of families assisted
Water harvesting structure	1989-90	20500
Percolation tank	1989-90	1866
J.S.S.	1989-90	39400
Soil & moisture conservation	1989-90	416
Forest and pasture development	1989-90	33955

Source: Mishra Commission (1990)

²⁸ For example, note the problems witnessed by displaced persons with the construction of the Hirakud dam in Sambalpur district, and the current demonstrations against the construction of the Narmada Dam programme in Maharashtra. See further in references already cited for Baboo (various), Sambalpur University Conference, E.P.W.(1993) and others.

Progress made in Kalahandi in extending irrigation potential upto May 1990 is detailed below. At this time the total irrigated area in the district was 61,419 hectares in the kharif season and 26,938 hectares during the rabi season.

Fig.6.19

Sources	Number	Kharif in hectares	Rabi in hectares
Medium projects	3	15598	6227
Minor irrigation projects	178	28367	6596
Lift Irrigation points	370	8560	6830
Dugwell	16755	4894	3285
Upper Indravati Project		4000	4000
Total	17306	61419	26938

Source: Report of the District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 30.5.90

During the period 1987-1991 a range of other measures were introduced by the Government of Orissa to promote agriculture in Kalahandi.²⁹ These include:

Horticultural Development - Under schemes maintained in the district Rs. 6.58 lakh was spent to develop 25.50 hectares under horticulture. This included the introduction 3634 guava, 50 pomegranate, 2360 jack fruit plants, 15000 mango seedlings and 1639 fruit plants.

Well building - During the period 1987-1991, 891 dug wells were completed along with a further 3388 wells under the Million Wells Scheme. These were introduced to irrigate 1000 hectares of land.

Minor Irrigation Projects - During the above period one new minor irrigation project was constructed and a further 21 M.I.P.'s were renovated, creating an intended further 2602 hectares of irrigation potential.

Soil Conservation - to enhance irrigation and soil moisture conservation, 1080 water harvesting structures and diversion weirs were constructed during the above period.

Tree plantation - the Report of the Mishra Commission describes a 'massive plantation programme' being taken up in the district, under which 563.50 lakh trees were planted between 1987-88 and 1990-91. (Mishra Commission Report, 1991)

As discussed in chapters 4.2 and 4.3, whilst a number of the programmes discussed above have induced some improvement in stabilising and improving agricultural production in Kalahandi, the benefits of such programmes regularly continue to be concentrated regionally and amongst larger farmers. As a result, inequalities in agricultural production have tended to be accentuated between better irrigated regions (particularly in the Tel basin region) and monsoon-dependent areas. Differentials between large landowners and the landless or marginal farmer, have also widened.

6.6 Wider programmes for development and poverty reduction

It has been argued in chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis that alongside programmes to stabilise and increase food production, measures to promote people's access to 'intermediate needs' are also crucial in the process of promoting and protecting food security. These include access to clean drinking water, health care facilities and education. Such programmes must in particular protect the access of vulnerable persons, including women, children, lower castes, tribals, in each community to such requirements. Regularly their subordinate position and lack of voice within the community means that these resources are monopolised by more powerful community members.

Indeed Government interventions must be designed not only to provide relief during times of food crisis, but also to promote sustainable development in the region concerned and to encourage asset creation of lasting value to the vulnerable population. 'Development-oriented' programmes initiated by Government of Orissa in Kalahandi for years between 1987 and 1990 are listed in fig 6.16.

It has also been argued in this thesis that vulnerability to food insecurity is closely bound up with problems of poverty and social inequality. For this reason state interventions to redistribute assets and to combat poverty are of central importance in strengthening people's ability to maintain food security. A number of such programmes (eg. ceiling surplus land redistributions) have been discussed in previous chapters. Other programmes implemented by the state between 1985-86 and 1989-90 designed to reinforce people's ability to generate purchasing power and their access to intermediate needs in Kalahandi, include those discussed below:

Anti-Poverty Programmes - under anti-poverty programmes in operation between 1985-86 and 1989-90 the following number of beneficiaries received assistance:

Fig. 6.20

Scheme	No. of beneficiaries	Amount spent (Rs. lakh)
I.R.D.P. (Fresh)	50,262	730.08
I.R.D.P. (Repeat)	5,686	49.38
E.R.R.P.	28,466	186.50
Bonded labour	2,587	183.43
Total	87,001	1149.39

Source: Mishra Commission Report, 1990: 50

Taking into account total spending under anti-poverty schemes in the district (including IRDP, ERRP, Bonded Labour, ITDA, MADA, OSCSTDFCC 1,97,469 beneficiaries received assistance from a total Rs. 2115.36 lakhs spent. In addition to the above, a range of other measures were implemented by the state in Kalahandi to mitigate the affects of drought and to promote development. (Mishra Commission Report, 1991:48) This includes the Area Development Approach for Poverty Termination (A.D.A.P.T.) programme, which was implemented during 1988-89 and 1989-90 in Nawapara, Komna, Khariar, Boden, Sinapali, Golamunda, Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur blocks.(District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, 30.7.90). As part of this programme 571 water harvesting structures were introduced at a cost of Rs.845.21 lakhs; 32 lift irrigation points were installed at a cost of Rs. 81,32 lakhs; 7 minor irrigation points were introduced at a cost of

Rs.29.00 lakhs; and 2102 dug wells had been completed at a total cost of Rs. 204.76 lakhs. (Mishra Commission, 1990)

Further water resources were established under the Drought Prone Area Programme (D.P.A.P.). Assistance to beneficiaries under this programme was provided as follows:

Fig.6.21

Scheme	Year	No. of families receiving assistance
Water Harvesting Schemes	1989-90	81
Percolation tank	1989-90	48
Kachha channel	1989-90	14

Source: Mishra Commission Report, 1990: 50

Drinking Water - extensive measures have been undertaken by the Government and N.G.O.'s in Kalahandi to improve people's access to drinking water. As discussed in chapter 4.7, significant improvements are evident in access to potable water in the district's towns. Piped water is now supplied to a considerable number of homes during a limited number of hours during the day in Khariar, Bhawanipatna and in other N.A.C.'s . There has also been a range of programmes for tubewell installation, such that most streets in the district's towns now have at least one tubewell. Distribution of tubewells installed under Government areas during late 1989 are as follows:

Fig. 6.22

Locality	26.6.89		26.8.89		26.10.89	
	Targeted	Achieved	Targeted	Achieved	Targeted	Achieved
Bhawanipatna municipality	15	0	15	13	15	13
Junagarh N.A.C.	10	0	10	10	10	10
Kesinga N.A.C.	10	0	10	2	10	8
Khariar N.A.C.	13	8	13	8	13	9
Khariar Road	6	0	6	4	6	5

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi

In rural areas improvements in access to drinking water have also been achieved, although on a lesser scale than has been the case in N.A.C.'s. At least one tubewell has been installed in most villages. The report of the District Level Committee on Natural Calamities states that by 30.9.89, 2597 villages had been covered by tubewells. Progress in tubewell installation during 1989-90 in Kalahandi stood as follows:

Fig.6.23

Category	Scheme	Target	Achieved
Rural	Government	459	448
	voluntary organisation		148
Urban	H. & U.D. scheme	7	730
	Drought	64	52
	UNICEF	14	12
	Total	85	71

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, 2.6.89

Attention is being given to installation of drinking water tubewells by the District Planning and Development Office. In April 1992 its Chairman suggested that there were approximately 7200 tubewells in operation in the district. These make use of only 3% of the district's total groundwater potential. Plans are being made to make greater use of groundwater resources for drinking water and irrigation purposes. In places where tubewells were not feasible there were plans to introduce sanitary wells.³¹ In his words 'the drinking water supply is being treated as a mission'.³²

However the effectiveness of Government programmes for installing tubewells in Kalahandi has been markedly reduced by its failure to maintain a satisfactory service for monitoring and maintaining handpumps installed.³³ During

³⁰ Under this scheme these tubewells were distributed as follows: Bhawanipatna municipality- 2; Junagarh N.A.C. - 2; Kesinga N.A.C.- 1; Khariar N.A.C.- 1; Khariar Rd. - 1. (District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 26.6.89)

³¹ These utilise surface water resources using handpumps.

³² op.cit., interview Bhawanipatna 4.4.92.

³³ Generally local people have not themselves been given the training required to repair handpumps themselves.

fieldwork for this study it was noted that many handpumps which had been recently installed were disfunctional, particularly in interior areas. Government figures indicate that on 1.4.90 the position was as follows:

Fig. 6.24

	Working	Defunct	Total
Rural	6006	323	6328
Urban	371	4	374
Total	6377	327	6702

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi, 1.4.90

A number of persons resident in interior areas interviewed during this study indicated that numbers of disfunctional tubewells are likely to be higher than suggested by Government figures. Particularly in interior pockets monitoring and post-installation maintenance of assets created was felt to be highly unsatisfactory. A number of persons living in remote villages in the Indravati region of Thuamur Rampur block commented that they had not seen a Government official in the area for many months. This point again emphasises the need for local officials to monitor closely the operation of Government programmes and assets created by such schemes.

Government interventions to promote access to clean drinking water continue to be of crucial importance. Firstly, access to drinking water is an essential requirement for human functioning and social participation. Secondly, consumption of contaminated drinking water continues to be one of the principal causes of stomach problems and other health problems in the region. Since poor health markedly reduces people's ability to produce food or to generate purchasing power, this issue is of direct relevance to the issue of food security in Kalahandi. Further, impaired health further reduces people's ability to withstand periods of shortage in their access to food.

Promotion of Public Health Care/ Social Services Second only to agriculture, programmes to promote public health and social services, including access to clean drinking water, have been given central attention in the plans of the Planning and

Development Office, Bhawanipatna.³⁴ A particular focus in this programme is placed on extending immunisation.

A campaign for universalised immunisation against preventable diseases has been launched in the district for women and children irrespective of age, covering polio, diphtheria, typhoid, whooping cough, tetanus and B.C.G. By April 1992 this had, according to the Chairman, Planning and Development Office, reached 80% of the district's population. However this was already behind schedule owing to difficulties in carrying out the programme during the rainy season, and should have been completed by Dec.1990.³⁵

In April 1992, 67 elopathic dispensaries or hospitals (including P.H.C.'s), and 20 ayurvedic or homeopathic dispensaries were open in the district. From dispensaries medicines are distributed free of cost, with each dispensary having at least one doctor. Every block had at least one P.H.C. (with some having an additional three or four) each with at least one doctor.³⁶ However it is likely that Government figures overstate the coverage which these provide to local people for the reason that, even though these facilities may exist, frequently doctors and health workers fail to attend to hold surgeries and to dispense medication. This is particularly the case in interior regions in the district.

Attempts are being made by the Department to encourage the use of ayurvedic and homeopathic medicines. These are regularly favoured by adivasis and some other sections of the population. Their use also reduces the problem of shortages of allopathic drugs.³⁷

A programme designed to give protection to women and children was being implemented under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (I.C.D.S.) This programme is designed to provide assistance to children upto six years of age and to

³⁴ Chairman, Planning and Development Office, Bhawanipatna, op.cit.

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ In places where the family welfare programme was implemented then there should be at least 2 doctors. (*ibid*)

³⁷ *ibid*

pregnant and nursing mothers.³⁸ In April 1992 this scheme was currently operating in 10 out of the 18 blocks of Kalahandi, covering 1700 beneficiaries ie. an estimated 20% of the targeted population. It was proposed to introduce this to a further 8 blocks on 1.4.92.

Interventions under this scheme were focused in six areas:

- a. pre-school education
- b. supplementary nutritional programme (S.N.P.)
- c. health and nutritional programme
- d. immunization
- e. referral services
- f. health checkups.

Training is also given to girls and adult women on 'motherhood'. Beneficiaries tend to be provided with food under the S.N.P. to improve child health. This is distributed through 999 centres in the district.³⁹ Numbers recorded as having received assistance under this feeding programme in the district are listed below. In regular instances these figures overstate persons actually benefitting under these programmes due to poor targeting and the failure of assistance to reach persons intended.

Fig.6.25

Year	No. of beneficiaries
1987-88	212800
1988-89	212800
1989-90	229302
1990-91	269000

Source: Mishra Commission Report, 1990

Emergency Feeding Programme This scheme is designed essentially to provide immediate feeding to undernourished or malnourished children, along with pregnant

³⁸ The aims of the I.C.D.S. focus on the development of the 'health, mental health and social status of the child, who India believes is the supreme asset of the country'. (District Social Welfare Officer, interviewed Bhawanipatna 4.4.92)

³⁹ *ibid*

Fig.6.26 Division of Responsibility in Health Care in Kalahandi

Level	Staff
District	1 Chief District Medical Officer 1 Additional Chief District Medical Officer 1 Additional District Medical Officer (Medical) 1 Additional District Medical Officer (Public Health) 1 District Tuberculosis Officer 1 District Malaria Officer 1 Assistant District Malaria Officer (Public Health)
Subdivision	1 Subdivisional Medical Officer 2 O. & G. Specialists 2 Paediatric Specialists 1 Surgery Specialist 1 Medicine Specialist 4-5 Training Medical Officers
Khariar Public Health Centre (P.H.C.)	Medical Officer in Charge 1 Family Planning Medical Officer 1 L.H.V. (Lady Health Supervisor) 1 Driver 1 Block Extension Educator
Gram Panchayat	1 Health Worker (male) 1 Health Worker (female) 3-4 Upgraded subcentre 1 Lady Health Supervisor (L.H.V.)
Village	Traditional Bath Attendants 1 Village Health Guide

Source : interview Chief Medical Officer, Khariar P.H.C. 27.2.92

or lactating women, old women and men, and sick and disabled persons from drought areas. (Das,1991:144-45)

Primary Health Care Programme This programme is concerned with a range of health care and family welfare programmes. The breakdown of responsibilities under the public health programme, as indicated by the Chief Medical Officer, is shown in fig. 6.26.

Other social work activities addressed by the Social Work Department include: (1) the provision of pensions to the elderly, to widows, to those suffering from leprosy, to landless labourers and to disabled persons over five years of age.⁴⁰ ; (2) the provision of scholarships to handicapped students; (3) provision of accident and personal insurance, landless agricultural group insurance, heart insurance and insurance against 'unnatural deaths'. This programme is receiving assistance from the World Bank. Numbers having received old age pensions or widow pensions are listed below:

Fig.6.27

Year	Old Age Pension	Widow pension
1987-88	7554	6249
1988-89	8110	7592
1989-90	4942	6636
1990-91	7042	2647

Source: Mishra Commission 1990

However a number of persons have argued that the effectiveness of the above programmes in assisting the vulnerable has been markedly reduced because old age pensions and other benefits regularly fail to reach the persons intended. The latter have regularly experienced difficulties in obtaining payments due to deliberate postal delays or due to lack of cooperation from Revenue Inspectors and other Government officials in finalising documents.⁴¹

⁴⁰ For landless persons both a man and wife are eligible for a pension, although for others only one of the two is eligible.(D.S.W.O. op. cit.)

⁴¹ Social Services Working Group, Conference on 'Hunger and Underdevelopment in Kalahandi', Lokadusti(1991).

A more general criticism both of Government-run health care programmes, and of social services, has been that these have placed excessive emphasis on curative elements and have given insufficient attention to preventative medicine and primary health care.⁴²

There is clearly also a need for extension of health education and health awareness in the district. Extension of such teaching within schools will provide an important means of disseminating this information within communities. My own fieldwork indicated that because children attending schools were the first persons in many families to have received any formal education, in some villages the information they had learnt was of great interest to adults in the community and given considerable respect. By teaching sound health practices to persons attending schools, these may be adopted by others within the community.

6.6 Relief Measures

As discussed in chapters 2 and 5, state interventions to reinforce the purchasing power and access to food of the vulnerable are of central importance in promoting people's ability to maintain food security. As suggested by Dreze and others, Government interventions have had limited success in redressing the persistently high levels of poverty and long-term hunger which have prevailed in India both before and after independence. However relief measures implemented during times of impending food crisis have been of major importance in preventing incidences of large scale hunger-related deaths of the form that have taken place, for example, in India upto 1943, in China between 1958-60, and in a number of African states during the past decade.⁴³

This section provides an coverage of relief measures implemented in recent years by the Government of Orissa and the Kalahandi Administration to combat

⁴² See again for example Social Services Working Group, op. cit.

⁴³ For further references refer to chapter 5.2.

problems triggered by drought or flood. As discussed in chapter 5, these measures aim largely to: (a) protect the purchasing power of those able to work by providing them with employment on relief works; (b) provide 'doles' or 'gratuitous relief' for those unable to take up such employment on the grounds of age, health etc. Wages earned by those employed in relief works/employment generation schemes are sometimes paid in kind. However more commonly these are paid in cash, and may be used to purchase food and other essentials from state subsidised fair price shops or from private market outlets.

In background to this coverage, this section provides a brief overview of rainfall patterns and the progress of agriculture in the district during the period of study. As mentioned, this is designed not to provide a full meteorological analysis, but rather to provide to the reader a snapshot picture which may help to situate the reasons why relief measures were necessary during this period. A more complete blockwise time series rainfall data set has been included in figs.6.28, 6.29, 6.30 for the period Jan. 1988 until June 1990. These illustrate the high seasonal and regional variations in rainfall between blocks discussed in chapter 4.2

Rainfall patterns and Villages Affected by Croploss during 1989 In providing an account of rainfall in Kalahandi during February 1989 to the District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, the Collector stated that as a result of the drought situation crop cutting experiments had been carried out both for paddy and ragi through the tahasil, to determine the level of croploss during the 1988-89 kharif season. These crop cutting experiments revealed that 864 villages in 139 Gram Panchayats, coming under 16 blocks in the district, had suffered croploss of more than 50%.(D.L.C.N.C.16.2.89)

During April and May 1989 rains were reported by the Deputy Director of Agriculture to have been insufficient to take up agricultural operations such as summer ploughing. However by the first fortnight of June, as a result of widespread rainfall in the district, cultivators were able to start agricultural operations

Fig. 6.28 Blockwise Monthly Rainfall Figures in Kalahandi for the Year 1988 (figs. in mm.)

District	Jan .	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Bhawanipatna	.	15.0	19.0	68.0	23.0	266.0	248.0	176.0	293.0	57.0	.	.
Kesinga	.	14.0	.	40.0	4.0	154.1	187.0	198.1	262.0	37.0	.	.
Kariamunda	.	20.0	29.1	19.1	18.0	232.8	205.9	258.4	257.6	26.4	.	.
M. Rampur	.	3.0	21.0	97.0	33.0	235.0	188.0	203.0	237.0	37.0	.	.
Narla	.	.	.	76.0	44.0	220.0	183.5	217.4	238.4	40.7	.	.
Lanjigarh	.	39.0	.	20.0	22.2	132.0	145.6	181.0	165.0	38.0	5.0	.
Th. Rampur	.	48.1	15.0	142.1	52.0	367.0	509.4	480.6	259.8	45.0	.	.
Dharamgarh	.	67.0	.	25.0	.	166.5	258.0	167.5	97.7	16.0	.	.
Junagarh	.	31.0	.	7.0	5.0	73.5	155.0	115.0	57.5	21.0	.	.
Jaipatna	.	71.0	.	9.0	13.0	161.0	205.0	121.0	98.0	28.0	.	.
Kalampur	.	15.0	.	71.0	18.0	236.0	253.0	254.0	138.0	37.0	.	.
Koksara	.	25.0	.	.	2.0	329.0	355.0	382.0	191.0	72.0	.	.
Golamunda	.	85.0	.	17.0	.	200.0	284.0	165.0	170.0	44.0	.	.
Nawapara	.	54.0	.	.	.	175.8	250.2	198.4	245.2	120.0	.	.
Komna	.	41.6	3.4	7.6	11.6	164.1	149.0	123.4	167.4	25.8	.	.
Khariar	.	68.5	20.0	32.5	8.5	187.7	142.5	122.4	219.8	57.5	.	.
Boden	.	33.6	54.0	21.0	9.5	152.2	176.4	235.2	210.2	13.8	.	.
Sinapali	.	33.0	.	11.0	5.0	166.0	120.0	200.6	154.0	25.1	.	.
Total	.	663.8	161.5	663.3	268.8	3618.7	4015.5	3799.0	3461.6	741.3	5.0	.
Average per District	.	36.9	9.0	36.8	14.9	201.0	223.1	211.0	192.3	41.2	0.3	.
District Normal	11.5	15.4	13.6	23.7	33.7	228.3	243.5	220.9	81.9	17.9	3.2	.

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 16.2.89

Fig.6.29 Blockwise Monthly Rainfall Figures in Kalahandi for the Year 1989 (figs. in mm.)

District	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Bhawanipatna			9.0	5.0	57.2	362.0	191.0	303.0	201			18.0
Kesinga					2.0	347.0	148.5	258.0	136.0	50.0		17.0
Karlamunda			3.4		26.80	424.6	283.8	205.3	132.6			3.5
M. Rampur			3.0		33.0	595.0	238.0	357.0	143.0			10.0
Narla					20.5	554.9	192.4	218.0	192.0			21.0
Lanjigarh			1.0		32.0	242.4	144.4	144.4	266.4	15.4		6.0
Th. Rampur			18.0		103.6	575.2	448.3	671.1	198.6	24.0		24.0
Dharamgarh			7.0			166.5	187.0	193.0	156.0	14.0		
Junagarh			10.0		14.0	191.0	175.0	225.0	69.5	32.0		6.0
Jaipatna			6.0	9.0	28.5	210.0	186.5	363.0	118.0	5.0		7.0
Kalampur				6.0	42.0	306.0	232.0	421.0	249.0	12.0		
Koksara						310.0	554.0	452.0	420.0	60.0		
Golamunda			9.0		4.0	310.6	124.0	308.0	144.0	9.0		
Nawapara			29.0		5.0	157.6	247.6	182.0	72.0	14.0		
Komna			9.8		10.6	267.0	115.2	320.8	196.8	43.0		
Khariar			7.0		7.0	186.0	150.2	247.7	177.2	21.3		
Boden			12.0		6.0	242.0	169.5	321.0	293.6			
Sinapali			16.0		8.0	134.2	70.1	164.4	105.0	15.0		
Total			140.2	20.0	400.2	5582.0	3857.5	5354.7	3270.7	314.7		112.5
Average per district			7.8	1.1	22.2	310.1	214.3	297.5	181.7	17.5		6.2
District Normal	11.5	15.4	13.6	23.7	33.7	228.3	243.5	220.9	81.9	17.9	3.2	

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 30.5.90

Fig. 6.30 Blockwise Monthly Rainfall in Kalahandi 1990 - upto June

District	Jan .	Feb.	March	April	May	June
Bhawanipatna		29.0	93.0	63.0	273.0	345.0
Kesinga		35.0	37.0	22.0	209.0	326.0
Karlamunda		19.5	11.4	39.4	108.6	270.2
M. Rampur		49.0	49.0	55.0	207.0	344.0
Narla		72.0	20.0	67.0	119.6	285.5
Lanjigarh		51.2	36.2	68.8	237.0	247.2
Th. Rampur		28.1	117.9	74.8	376.8	526.9
Dharamgarh			45.0	22.0	195.5	205.5
Junagarh		8.0	40.0	35.0	174.0	211.0
Jaipatna		38.0	41.0	20.0	128.0	144.0
Kalampur		55.0	42.0	47.0	241.0	281.0
Koksara		31.0	58.0	22.0	220.0	216.0
Golamunda		38.0	139.0	43.0	244.5	305.0
Nawapara		15.0		43.0	175.0	274.0
Komna		84.5	71.9	83.0	110.0	319.6
Khariar		29.0	37.2	33.0	110.0	336.5
Boden		22.8	21.6	33.0	144.4	235.6
Sinapali		14.0	28.0	12.0	44.0	119.0
Total		619.1	888.2	783.0	3317.4	4992.0
Average per district		34.4	49.3	43.5	184.3	277.3
District Normal	11.5	15.4	13.6	22.7	33.7	228.3

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 31.7.90

including preliminary ploughing, sowing paddy seeds and raising seed beds for kharif cultivation. Rainfall was reported by the District Level Natural Calamities Committee to have been higher than normal during this month, but farmers were 'too late' to sow crops such as groundnut, soyabean and cotton.⁴⁴ In July the rains were described as being 'too low but well distributed'. Accordingly only 3.08 lakh hectares, out of a proposed 5.15 lakh hectares, were sown upto the end of July 1989. As a result of the scanty rains in July, operations such as beausaning and transplantation of paddy crops were impaired in Khariar, Nawapara, Parla along with Rudra Road regions of Narla Block, Behere and Parla regions of Dharamgarh, and in parts of Lanjigarh and Bhawanipatna blocks. By August rainfall had fallen behind normal.(214.3mm. in July 1989 as opposed to a normal 343.5mm) Non-official members of the Natural Calamities Committee reported that due to low rainfall during August operations such as beausaning and paddy transplantation were 'very slow', and that without good August rainfall areas of paddy land would remain uncovered.(D.L.C.N.C.26.8.89)

Inadequate rains during August and September 1989 once more produced a 'mild drought condition' in the district during the periods 13-26 August and 10-23 September. This again delayed agricultural operations. Rains also proved to be inadequate during October, Tahasildar's reports indicating that crop conditions were normal in only 2440 villages out of 2842 villages in the district. To combat the 'mild drought situation' the Government allocated Rs. 1 lakh for constructing cross bundhs to save the standing paddy crops in affected pockets. (D.L.C.N.C. 27.10.89)

Crop cutting experiments were carried out through Tahasil offices to assess levels of crop loss in different areas in Kalahandi according to guidelines laid down in the Orissa Relief Code.⁴⁵ The state of crop loss in villages on 26.10.89, as indicated by Tahasildar's reports, are detailed in fig 6.31. These figures immediately indicate the markedly lower incidence of crop loss in irrigated villages. Only 1.7% of

⁴⁴ Kalahandi District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, 26.6.89.

⁴⁵ As discussed in chapter 5.

Fig.6.31 Croploss in Kalahandi as of 26.10.89

Block	Name of G.P.'s in the Block	No. of G.P.'s containing Affected villages	No. of villages in the Block	No. of villages affected by Croploss				
				Non-Irrigated		Irrigated		Total
				50% to 75%	75% and above	50% to 75%	75% and above	
				(figs. in brackets indicate percentage villages affected in block))				
Nawapara	19	18	168	54 (32.1)	18 (10.7)	5 (2.9)	4 (2.4)	81 (48.1)
Komna	21	18	148	40 (27.0)	13 (8.8)	9 (6.1)	2 (1.4)	64 (43.3)
Boden	10	7	89	15 (16.9)	0	0	0	15 (16.9)
Khariar	13	13	112	38 (33.9)	0	19 (17.0)	1 (0.9)	58 (51.8)
Sinapali	13	3	126	5 (3.9)	0	2 (1.6)	0	7 (5.5)
M. Rampur	9	9	246	158 (64.2)	2 (0.8)	0	0	160 (65.0)
Karlamunda	9	4	62	17 (27.4)	0	1 (1.6)	0	18 (29.0)
Lanjigarh	18	9	471	165 (35.0)	4 (0.8)	2 (0.4)	0	171 (36.2)
Narla	16	14	170	81 (47.6)	24 (14.1)	4 (2.4)	0	109 (64.1)
Kesinga	16	7	101	22 (21.8)	0	0	0	22 (21.8)
Bhawanipatna	20	13	265	84 (31.7)	1 (0.4)	0	0	85 (32.1)
Dharamgarh	15	3	72	4 (5.6)	0	0	0	4 (5.6)
Junagarh	22	13	183	47 (26.8)	2 (1.1)	0	0	49 (27.9)
Koksara	13	1	65	2 (3.1)	0	0	0	2 (3.1)
Jaipatna	11	4	92	11 (12.0)	0	0	0	11 (12.0)
Kalampur	6	3	54	8 (14.8)	0	0	0	8 (14.8)
Total	231	139	2424	751 (31.0)	64 (2.6)	42 (1.7)	7 (0.3)	864 (35.6)
Golamunda	13	0	124	0	0	0	0	0
Th. Rampur	12	0	214	0	0	0	0	0
Overall total	256	139	2762	751 (27.2)	64 (2.3)	42 (1.5)	7 (0.3)	864 (31.3)

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 26.10.89 and personal calculations

irrigated villages suffered croploss of between 50% and 75% in the district, compared with 31% of unirrigated villages.⁴⁶ It may be noted that the most severely affected districts, in terms of percentage of villages affected by croploss of 50% and above, were Madampur Rampur and Naria in the Bhawanipatna subdivision, and Khariar, Nawapara and Komna in the Nawapara subdivision. Importantly, the most severe croploss occurred in Khariar block, where 17% of villages in the block suffered croploss of 75% or more. The second highest percentage of villages affected in this category also lay in the arid and unirrigated Nawapara subdivision, notably in Komna block in which 6.1% of villages were affected by 75% or higher croploss.

Rainfall patterns and Villages Affected by Croploss during 1990 On the evidence of crop cutting experiments in May 1990 the Government Revenue and Excise Department declared 220 villages in the district to have sustained croploss of more than 50%. These villages fell under 50 Gram Panchayats in 8 blocks in the district. Details of these crop-cutting experiments are as follows:

Fig.6.32

Block	No. of Gram Panchayats having affected villages	No. of villages having croploss of 50% to 74%
Thuamur Rampur	9	64
Naria	16	53
Kariamunda	3	6
Kesinga	2	7
Lanjigarh	7	53
Khariar	9	24
Boden	2	8
Sinapali	2	3
Total	50	200

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 30.5.90

The influence of drought, as reported by the District Natural Calamities Committee of 30.5.90, affected 1.06 lakh out of Kalahandi's 13.30 lakh population.

⁴⁶ Further 0.3% of irrigated villages suffered croploss of 75% or more, compared with 2.3% of non-irrigated villages.

Of the district's 5.15 lakh total cultivated area, 0.53 lakh hectares were deemed to have been 'partially affected' by drought.

During 1990 rainfall was heavier than normal in the district in all months between February and the end of September. In April there were hailstorms and heavy rains, causing heavy damage to summer paddy crops in 21 villages in all 8 Gram Panchayats in Komna block, and in 2 Gram Panchayats in Nawapara block. After detailed 'field verifications' the estimated value of paddy crops lost was reported to be Rs. 44.21 lakhs.⁴⁷

Cyclonic winds on 24th and 31st March, and on 6th. April and 4th. May 1990 produced damage to school buildings in different blocks in Kalahandi. This required an estimated Rs. 9.90 lakh costs for immediate repair.⁴⁸

Heavy rains on the 21st., 22nd. and 29th. August, along with a tornado on the first of these dates, produced flooding in the rivers Hati, Tel, Sundar and Udanti, leading to further heavy damage. Rainfall recorded on these days is listed below:

Fig.6.33 Rainfall Recorded on: (figs in mm.'s)

Block	21.8.90	22.8.90	28.8.90	29.8.90
Bhawanipatna	49.0	112.0	52.0	60.0
Kesinga	96.0	132.0	30.0	71.0
Karlamunda	107.0	96.1	40.0	61.0
M. Rampur	162.0	172.0	57.0	27.0
Narla	148.4	290.7	79.0	116.0
Lanjigarh	56.0	127.6	23.0	26.0
Th. Rampur	350.0	4.0	45.3	32.1
Koksara	72.0	126.0	54.0	85.0
Golamunda	95.0	235.0	21.0	55.0
Sinapali	13.0	155.0	21.0	60.0

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 30.5.90

These tornados and floods caused damage to an estimated 6259.0 hectares of standing kharif paddy crops, along with considerable damage to houses and other

⁴⁷ District Natural Calamities Committee, 30.5.90

⁴⁸ A report on these damages was submitted to the Board of Revenue, Cuttack and the Government Revenue Dept. (ibid)

buildings, roads, and irrigation projects.⁴⁹ The cost of introducing works to deal with sand-casting to crops was calculated to be Rs.26.56 lakhs.

Indravati Dam Tragedy As a result of the heavy rains on 27th July 1991 the level of the Indravati rose considerably, flooding the power channel and leading to the deaths of a number of persons working inside. Government figures suggest that this tragedy led to the deaths of 16 out of the 20 labourers employed by N.P.C.C., and one labourer employed by Tungabhadra Steel Product. However local persons suggested that in reality more persons are likely to have died than these official statistics suggest.

The State Government (General Administration Dept) was moved by the Kalahandi District Administration to allocate Rs. 2.25 lakhs out of the Chief Minister's Relief Fund in compensation for the nine identified victims coming from Kalahandi district. However the District Level Natural Calamities Committee of 30.8.91 confirmed that only Rs. 75,000 had been received from this source. In addition Rs.3.40 lakhs were received from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the legal heirs of those people that died.⁵⁰

Provision of Relief Under Government Programmes A range of development works were initiated in Kalahandi under the supervision of District Level Officers, to provide employment to affected persons, as required by the Government under the Orissa Relief Code. These can be detailed as follows:

⁴⁹ Out of which 304.7 hectares were sand cast to a depth less than 6 inches, 2220.2 hectares to a depth between 6 and 12 inches and 1320.8 hectares to a depth more than 1 foot.(Ibid)

⁵⁰ The District Level Natural Calamities Committee of 30.8.91 also reported that Rs. 24,000 (Rs. 3000 for each family) were provided by the Unit Officer, N.P.C.C. Ltd, Mukiguda for the families of the deceased, to be distributed by the relevant Tahasildars.(District Natural Calamities Committee, 30.8.91)

Fig.6.34 Allotment and Expenditure under Drought Grant - Breakdown by Block/Project as on 30.4.90 (Rs. in lakhs)

Name of Agency	Amount allocated 1989-90	No.works taken up	No.of works completed	Amount spent	Balance	Mandays generated
B.D.O. Bhawanipatna	3.950	39	39	3.950	.	35909
B.D.O. Kesinga	4.50878	36	29	3.862	0.647	34238
B.D.O. Naria	9.050	63	35	3.677	5.373	33764
B.D.O. Karlamunda	2.050	12	8	1.757	0.243	15972
B.D.O. Madanpur Rampur	6.700	29	29	3.650	3.050	33378
B.D.O. Lanjigarh	5.200	46	26	2.150	3.050	19510
B.D.O. Thuamur Rampur	.	.	.	.	.	.
B.D.O. Dharamgarh	0.300	3	3	0.300	.	2726
B.D.O. Junagarh	2.500	29	19	2.500	.	20724
B.D.O. Koksara	0.400	2	2	0.400	.	2727
B.D.O. Kalmapur	0.500	5	5	0.500	.	4345
B.D.O. Jaipatna	0.600	5	5	0.600	.	6000
B.D.O. Golanunda	.	.	.	.	.	.
B.D.O. Nawapara	3.000	20	20	3.000	.	27272
B.D.O. Komna	4.700	29	29	4.620	0.080	37391
B.D.O. Khariar	7.450	47	35	5.450	2.000	43180
B.D.O. Sinapali	1.200	7	5	0.600	0.1600	5455
B.D.O. Boden	3.500	27	27	2.900	0.600	24646
Total	55.60878	988	904	39.916	15.2030	347237
S.C.O. Bhawanipatna	16.39122	22	21	16.39122	.	100624
Construction of cross bunds	1.000	.	.	1.000	.	9910
Construction of chua and chahalas	2.000	567	567	2.000	.	18348
Overall total	75.00000	988	904	59.30722	15.2030	476119

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 30.5.90 meeting

Fig.6.35

Year	Amount available (Rs. lakh)	Amount Spent (Rs. lakh)	Mandays generated (lakh)
1985-86	694.89	358.68	22.51
1986-87	789.43	721.91	51.21
1987-88	1035.83	785.85	44.22
1988-89	974.19	735.82	39.41
1989-90	1240.69	1016.21	48.64
Total	4735.03	3618.47	205.99

Source: Mishra Commission Report: 50

Test Relief Further test relief providing employment for those living in drought affected regions was provided as follows⁵¹:

Fig.6.36

Year	Allotment (Rs. in lakhs)	Amount Spent (Rs. in lakhs)	Mandays generated (No. in lakhs)
1987-88	264.00	264.000	26.121
1988-89	150.00	150.000	13.581
1989-90	75.00	71.750	5.808
1990-91 (upto Jan.1991)	10.00	3.065	0.145
Total	499.00	488.815	45.655

Source: Mishra Commission Report: 44-45

Labour Intensive Works In addition to employment generation works to provide employment for rural labourers carried out under schematic grants, the Government also provided funds for labour intensive works in drought affected areas. The Rs.114.00 lakhs provided for this purpose in 1988-89 included Rs. 4.00 lakhs for construction of chuas and chahalas and Rs.3.00 lakhs for construction of cross-bundhs during the kharif season.

⁵¹ The purpose of test relief is not to directly to relieve food crisis, but instead to test for the presence of it. As argued in the 1901 Famine Commission, 'it is not to appease hunger, but to find out whether people are hungry'. This suggests that without test works it is not possible to gauge the existence or the pressure of distress, or to discover the appropriate time for implementing relief programmes. (Government of Great Britain, 1901: para.43)

Block Development Officers were advised where possible to use these funds for renovating tanks, kuttas and minor irrigation points. Funds which could not be utilised for these purposes were to be used for strengthening embankments, building new tanks and for turfing work. B.D.O.'s were expected to obtain approval for such works before these were initiated.

The monthly requirement for funds to be spent in employment generation works was assessed as follows:

Fig.6.37

Requirement	Cost
a. requirement at 100 mandays per gram panchayat for villages having crop loss between 50% and 74% for 116 G.P.'s	Rs.34.80 lakh
b. requirement at 300 mandays per gram panchayat having crop loss of 75% or more for 23 G.P.'s	Rs.20.70 lakhs
Total	Rs.55.50 lakhs

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 16.2.89 meeting

The funds allocated to Kalahandi district for labour intensive works by the Government of Orissa between 1986-87 and 1990-91 are as follows:

Fig.6.38

Year	Allotment from Government (Rs. lakhs)	Expenditure	Balance for works in progress upto 30.4.90	Mandays generated
1986-87	11.075	11.075	-	110140
1987-88	264.000	264.000		2612123
1988-89	150.00	150.00		1358106
1989-90	75.00	70.622	4.378	577475
1990-91	10.00	0.300	9.700	2227

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi various dates

Blockwise allocation expenditure under the drought grant in Kalahandi, is on 30.4.90 are detailed in fig. 6.34

However the benefits to the vulnerable provided through employment generation schemes in Kalahandi has been markedly reduced in certain instances by failure of persons administering these schemes to pay the required wages to those

employed. In numerous cases it appears evident that the Orissa minimum wage of Rs.25 per day is not being paid. The M.L.A. for Bhawanipatana reported to these District Level Committee on Natural Calamities that adequate wages were not being paid to workers in the Dharambandha project and the Tendapani and Makundpur water harvesting projects (all in Daspur Gram Panchayat). Similarly the Koksara M.L.A. reported to the same Committee that labourers were not receiving 'due wages' in the Chadpur project in Jaipatna block. He also reported that metal collected for work was of poor quality.⁵² In response to these allegations the Committee instructed the Subcollector of Dharamgarh to ensure that correct payments were made on such works. Other complaints relating to non-payment of wages were made by the Khariar M.L.A. regarding water harvesting structures at Bargaon, Khadupani and Chadel. The Subcollector, Nawapara was instructed to inspect this situation.⁵³

During interviews for this study in Kalahandi and Koraput a number of persons reported late or reduced payments on Government schemes. Inhabitants of Parajasila in Kashipur block in Koraput stated during in a group interview that they had been able to obtain employment in Government projects for building roads, tanks, buildings and for gully-plugging. However contractors who were organising this work on behalf of the Government were paying labourers Rs.10 to Rs.15 per day, rather than the legally required Rs.25. Further, for some labourers, payments for work carried out on these schemes were, at the time of these interviews, already two months late. Those interviewed suggested that whilst the previous official dealing with payments had been reliable, this was not the case with the new official who had taken over this task seven months previously, and he regularly delayed payments.⁵⁴

⁵² This point is of particular significance since, as indicated in chapter 5.6 of this thesis, guidelines under the Orissa Relief Code advise that 'unproductive works' such as metal breaking should not be carried out on relief works except in particularly acute circumstances.

⁵³ Report of the District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi, 30.5.90.

⁵⁴ This information was obtained largely through interviews with labourers on Government schemes in villages in the Kashipur and Thuamur Rampur regions between 27.3.92 and 2.4.92.

Emergency Feeding Programme and other Feeding Programmes A range of feeding schemes were implemented by the Government in Kalahandi to provide 'gratuitous relief' and supplementary feeding alongside relief administered through labour intensive works. As on 31.7.90 the Drought Emergency Feeding Programme covered 20,550 persons in 268 centres in the affected areas of Kesinga, Narla, Madanpur Rampur and Karlamunda blocks. In addition 1,58,290 persons were covered under the pre-school Supplementary Nutrition Programme (S.N.P.) and 71,062 persons under the midday-meal programme. The A.D.A.P.T. feeding programme provided further coverage to 40,247 persons, primarily in eight blocks: Nawapara, Komna, Khariar, Boden, Sinapali, Golamunda, Thuamur Rampur and Lanjigarh. Blockwise distribution of persons covered by different feeding programmes as of 31.7.90 is detailed in fig. 6.39.

Supply of Essential Commodities Essential commodities such as rice, sugar, edible oil and kerosene oil were sold throughout the period of drought by retailers in different weekly hats in the district. In May 1991 block level depots for rice, wheat and sugar were operating in all block headquarters in the district apart from Narla.⁵⁵ (D.L.C.N.C.29.5.91). Details of storage and movement of essential commodities in depots in inaccessible regions in the district are listed in fig. 6.40.

In the Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur I.T.D.P. blocks, and in Komna, Nawapara and Khariar A.D.A.P.T. blocks, mobile vans were used to sell rice and kerosene at subsidised prices under P.D.S. and I.T.D.P.⁵⁶ Members of the Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee recommended that the quality of P.D.S. coverage would be further improved if each A.D.A.P.T. block in the district was provided with a mobile van. (D.L.C.N.C.16.2.89) Although the State Government originally instructed the Kalahandi Civil Supplies Dept. to purchase 50% common rice and 50% fine rice from the Food Corporation of India against its allocation for the

⁵⁵ Extra depots also operated at Beltukri in Nawapara block; and in Jubrajpur, Benakhamar, Mahulpatna, Karlapat, Nakrundi and Kerpai in Thuamur Rampur block. (District Natural Calamities Committee. 31.7.90)

⁵⁶ Departmental vehicles covered weekly markets in Dharambandhaa and Amodi in Nawapara block; and Tarbad, Udyanbandha, Chhata and Michhapali in Komna block. (District Natural Calamities Committee. 30.5.90)

Fig. 6.39 Relief Provided Under Government Feeding Programmes as of 31.7.90

Block/ I.C.D.S. ¹ project	Beneficiaries covered under different Programmes			
	Pre-School	Midday meal	A.D.A.P.T.	Emergency
Bhawamipatna	8000	4000	0	0
Kesinga	7000	4000	0	2030
Narla	7000	4000	0	9770
Madanpur Rampur	5500	3200	0	6010
Kartamunda	5000	2000	0	2740
Lanjigarh	9600	3767	3821	0
Thuamur Rampur	8900	2863	3286	0
Dharamgarh	7000	3300	0	0
Junagarh	8000	4000	0	0
Kalampur	5000	2000	0	0
Jaipatna	6000	3200	0	0
Koksara	14200	3800	0	0
Golamunda	8300	4758	6176	0
Nawapara	8590	6595	5597	0
Komna	17700	5512	8410	0
Khariar	7300	5484	4536	0
Sinapali	14400	4658	4710	0
Boden	10300	3925	3711	0
Total	157790	71062	40247	20550

Source: District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi 31.7.90

¹ Integrated Child Development Scheme

Fig. 6.40 Storage and Movement of Rice in Inaccessible Depots in District (In Quintals)

Name of Inaccessible Depot	Quantity programmed	Quantity moved upto:			
		26.6.89	15.8.89	31.7.90	
Mohangiri	200	200	200	200	
Artal	300	300	300	300	
Jubrajpur	500	500	500	500	
Benakamar	200	200	200	200	
Nakrundi	400	48	203	79	at Gunpur
Karlapat	100	0	100	160	
Kerpai	130	0	98	130	
Bijepur	100	100	100	95	
Bengaon	500	260	260	288	at B.N.pur
Musanai	300	210	210	285	
Badchargaon	200	0	100	100	at Dharamgarh
Mahaling	200	100	150	100	ditto
Rengalpali	100	0	70	100	ditto
Badkutru	200	0	200	0	
Dharambada	500	200	200	300	at Nawapara
Bhella	500	300	300	301	ditto
Duajhar	200	200	200	200	
Sunabeda	200	100	100	100	ditto
Amanara	100	100	100	100	
Lanji	100	100	100	100	
Boden	900	600	900	900	
Khaira	500	200	500	300	
Nanhalbad	200	150	150	140	at Sinapali
Nilji	300	200	300	200	
Total	6930	4068	5541	5178	

Source: compiled from Natural Calamities Commission reports, various dates

district, it was later moved to purchase only common rice since there was minimal demand for fine rice from card holders.⁵⁷

To improve the efficiency of the system B.D.O.'s were ordered by the Collector to ensure that extension officers and village level workers regularly checked that stocks of essential commodities were arriving at retail points. All concerned with the distribution system were also requested to be 'vigilant', in order to minimise leakages and corruption, and to ensure that Fair Price Shops operated smoothly.(D.L.C.N.C.,30.5.90) Civil Supplies Officers were instructed by the Collector of the district to ensure that retailers regularly lifted their quotas of rice and kerosene and to ensure that the stocks lying with retailers did not dry up.(D.L.C.N.C.,16.2.89)

Distributions of commodities sold through such P.D.S. retail outlets were widely utilised in the district. It was reported to the District Natural Calamities Committee that although people were entitled to draw 13Kg.'s of rice on their ration cards every month, people were demanding more rice to meet their requirements. The District Information and Public Relations Officer was ordered to widely publicise the availability of stocks of essential commodities in areas covered. However despite this responsibility, local persons still reported that in some places people eligible to purchase subsidised P.D.S. commodities, or to draw food in feeding programmes, were unaware that these facilities existed.⁵⁸

Drinking Water provision during drought During 1988-89, Rs.4.00 lakhs was sanctioned by the Government for the construction of chuas and chahalas to provide drinking water for humans and for cattle. This was distributed blockwise as follows:

⁵⁷ District Natural Calamities Committee, 30.5.90.

⁵⁸ Interview, April 1992, Lanjigarh.

Fig.6.41

Block	Amount allocated upto 16.2.89	Amount allocated upto 26.6.89
Nawapara	0.30	0.45
Komna	0.30	0.50
Boden	0.05	0.20
Khariar	0.015	0.165
Sinapali	0.015	0.165
M. Rampur	0.15	0.25
Kariamunda	0.05	0.10
Lanjigarh	0.15	0.25
Narla	0.30	0.45
Kesinga	0.10	0.20
Bhawanipatna	0.25	0.40
Dharamgarh	0.01	0.11
Junagarh	0.095	0.125
Koksara	0.01	0.11
Jaiapatna	0.01	0.11
Kalampur	0.01	0.06
Golamunda		0.1
Total	2.00	4.00

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 26.6.89

In addition to the above programmes, designed primarily to protect the affected population during times of drought in Kalahandi, the Government of Orissa, through the District Administration, implemented a range of relief measures during 1990 to address problems created by flood and tornado, as described above.

Relief Measures to combat flood and tornado damage

Relief and Rescue Operations Sub-Collectors were instructed to draw up relief squads in different blocks and to make use of the assistance of local police and Home Guards. The Superintendent of Police in the district was instructed to maintain police and the Home Guard in a state of readiness, since they were seen by the administration to play an important role in rescue and relief operations. B.D.O.'s were instructed, on the command of respective Sub-Collectors, to provide emergent relief in deserving cases when flood or cyclone arose. Responsibility for restoring communications in flood affected areas immediately after the flood, and for facilitating the smooth supply of relief to affected villages, lay with the Executive Engineers of the Rural Works Division/Public Works Division (Roads and Buildings) and with B.D.O.'s. To provide employment in flood affected villages in which agricultural operations were totally disrupted, the Executive Engineers of the Rural Works Division/Public Works Division (Roads and Buildings) and the Minor Irrigation Projects and Irrigation Division were expected to maintain a list of projects ready for rapid implementation.

Crop Damage As described above, flood and tornado caused damage to an estimated 6259.0 hectares of standing kharif paddy crops in Kalahandi. Out of those damaged, 304.7 hectares were sand cast to a depth of less than 6 inches, 2220.2 hectares to a depth between 6 and 12 inches and 1320.8 hectares to a depth of more than one foot. The cost of introducing works to address this problem of sand casting was calculated to be Rs.26.56 lakhs.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ District Level Committee on Natural Calamities, Kalahandi, 30.5.90

In addition to damage caused by sand casting, further difficulties were caused after the flood by pest attack on crops. Measures to address this problem are as follows:

Fig.6.42

Status	Area
Epidemic area declared affected by Gallmidge	2030 has.
Area sprayed upto 2.10.90	1179.50 has.
Total area affected for other pests, including epidemic area in 18 blocks of district	18,769 has.
Area to be sprayed	4864 has.
Area to be sprayed by farmers with Government issued free pesticides	2300 has. (epidemic)
Total	3480 has.
Further area to be sprayed	1384 has.
Requirement of funds for operational costs	Rs. 2,00,000

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee, 5.10.90

Damages to Dwellings Damage was caused to an estimated 1120 houses which had collapsed completely, and 8834 houses which had partially collapsed, in various blocks in Kalahandi. Rs. 500 per house was allocated for repairing the former, and Rs. 200 for repairing the latter. The total cost of these repairs is as follows:

Fig.6.43

Category	Cost
Cost of repairing fully collapsed houses	Rs. 5,60,000
Cost of repairing partially collapsed houses	Rs. 17,66,800
Total	Rs. 23,26,800

Source: District Level Natural Calamities Committee, 5.10.90

The State Government allocated Rs. 8.0 lakhs towards measures addressing this damage. This was allocated as follows:

Fig.6.44

Officer	Allocation
Sub- Collector, Bhawanipatna	Rs. 4.25 lakh
Sub- Collector, Dharamgarh	Rs. 1.75 lakh
Sub- Collector, Nawapara	Rs. 2.00 lakh
Total	Rs. 8.00 lakh

Source: District Level Natural Calamities Committee, 5.10.90

Repair of Government Buildings The costs incurred for repairs to damage caused by flood and tornado to its own departments are listed in fig. 6.46.

Provision of Emergent Relief As required by the Orissa Relief Code emergent relief was administered in a number of marooned villages to protect against the danger of food crisis. Assistance provided by this provision can be detailed as follows:

Fig. 6.45

Block	No. of villages	No. of relief days administered	Adults given relief	Children given relief
Karlamunda	1	3	51	14
Golamunda	2	1	220	760
Th. Rampur	40	15	3525	1374
Jaipatna	14	6 to 15 days	5276	1971
Bhawanipatna		2	214	201

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 30.8.91

Distributions of particular commodities made by the Government of Orissa through the emergent relief facility, as required by the Orissa Relief Code, are detailed in fig.6.48.

Storage of Essential Commodities In response to flood and tornado, as part of the 1991 Kalahandi District Flood and Cyclone Contingency Plan, the Kalahandi Civil Supplies Officer was required to ensure that rice was stored in depots in inaccessible areas. Details of such stores are listed in fig.6.47. This plan suggested that there is likely to be high demand for chuda during times of flood or cyclone. For this reason Subcollectors and Block Development Officers were instructed to maintain close links with chuda mill operators, to ensure that supplies of chuda could be supplied in times of emergency at short notice.

Fig.6.46 Repair to Government Buildings of Damage caused by Flood and Tornado

Agency	Task	Amount required to Restore Damaged Property to Pre-Flood Condition (Rs. in lakhs)
Kalahandi R. & B. Divn.	Restoration work for Breaches in Roads	106.43
	Repair of Damaged Buildings	7.09
E.E.P.H. Division	Restoration of water supply system	16.25
E.E. Lift Irrigation	Restoration work of L.I. points	10.78
E.E. M. I. Division, Khariar	Restoration of damage to M.I.P.'s	4.10
E.E.M.I. Division, Bhawanipatna	Restoration of breaches in canals, surplus earthen embankments etc.	83.30
Soil Conservation Officer, Bhawanipatna	Restoration of damages to W.H.S. & D.W.	26.57
E.E., R.G.L.E.P.	Restoration of breaches in roads	42.80
E.E., Irrigation, Nawapara	Restoration work for Sundar, Saipala & Dumerbhal Irrigation Project	16.75
E.E. Khariar R. & B. Divn.	Restoration of roads	131.15
	Repair of buildings	3.60
E.E. Irrigation Divn. Kalahandi	Flood Damage Restoration work for UTEI Irrigation System	10.13
E.E. Irrigation, Bhawanipatna	Restoration of breaches in Flood Embankments	32.38
E.E., O.S..E.B.	Restoration of electric line	1.55
Total		492.88

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 5.10.90

Fig. 6.47 Storage of Rice in Inaccessible Places to combat Flood and Cyclone

Subdivision	Name of Inaccessible Pocket	Quantity of Rice to be Stored (Quintals)
Bhawanipatna	Aratal	300
	Mohangiri	200
	Bengaon	300
	Bijepur	100
	Nakarundi	300
	Kerpai	200
	Jubarajpur	600
	Benakhamar	200
	Kartapet	100
	Barabandha	200
	Dumeria	300
Dharamgarh	Badkutru	200
	Badchergaon	400
	Rengsapali	400
	Mahaling	400
Nawapara	Dharambandha	400
	Amanara	400
	Bhella	500
	Sunabeda	200
	Duajhar	400
	Lanji	200
	Khaira	300
	Nangalbeda	200
	Nilji	300
	Baisadani	400
Total		7500

Source: Kalahandi District Flood/Cyclone Contingency Plan 1991

Fig.6.48 Distribution of Commodities under Emergent Relief Facility

Item of relief (Quintals)	Block				
	Kariamunda	Golamunda	Th. Rampur	Sinapali	Bhawanipatna
rice	0.87	3.00	315.90	350.00	0.32
chura			5.00		0.57
jaggery			0.15		0.15
potato			3.00	6.50	
salt			3.00	3.50	
amulspray			0.24		
biscuits			180 packets		
banana			45 dozen		
dhoti			200		
sari			200	1611	
blanket			200	1100	
garments			250	770	
onion				1.75	
chilli				0.25	

Source: Kalahandi Natural Calamities Committee 30.8.91

Fig.6.49 Storage of Fertiliser and Essential Oils in Kalahandi under Flood/Cyclone Contingency Plan

Block	Inaccessible Place	Kerosene Oil (litres)	Fertiliser (Quintals)	Pesticides (Rs.)
Th. Rampur	Karlapat	1000	80	400.0
	Nakarundai	400	26	100.0
	Jubrajpur	1600	60	300.0
	Kerpai	500	20	100.0
M. Rampur	Mohangiri	1600	50	200.0
	Barabandha	1000	150	100.0
Kesinga	Gokuleswar	500	50	200.0
	Kandel	500	50	100.0
Sadar	Artai	1000	100	100.0
Lanjigarh	Malingjuba	500	50	100.0
	Musanal	800	30	500.0
	Bandhapari	800	20	100.0
	Rupra	500	30	500.0
	Rupra Road	500	30	500.0
	Juradubra	500	20	500.0
Dharamgarh	Kankeri	1000	20	500.0
	Kanagaon	1000	20	500.0
Jaipatna	Pujhariguda	1000	20	500.0
	Kalargaon	1000	20	500.0
Golamunda	Mahaling	2000	30	500.0
	Badchergaon	2000	30	500.0
Nawapara	Dharambandha	1000	30	500.0
	Kuliabandha	500	20	500.0
Komna	Bhella	1000	30	500.0
Khariar	Duajhar	1000	30	500.0
Sinapali	Kendumunda	500	20	500.0
	Nilijee	100	30	500.0

Source: Kalahandi District Flood/Cyclone Contingency Plan 1991

Fig. 6.50 Storage of Seeds under Kalahandi Flood/Cyclone Contingency Plan

Commodity	Quantity in Quintals
paddy	5000
mung	80
biri	60
ahar	30
groundnuts	600
makka	20
til	15
mandia	5
cotton	70
sayabin	260
nizer	20
dhanicha	10
suryamukhi	10

Source: Kalahandi District Flood/Cyclone Contingency Plan 1991

The Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies in the district was also required to store adequate amounts of fertiliser, kerosene and pesticides in a range of inaccessible pockets. Details of such stores are provided in fig. 6.49.

Raising Alternative Crops To provide further protection against flood and cyclone damage the Kalahandi District Flood and Cyclone Contingency Plan specifies that seeds are to be kept available to be sown as part of a programme for post-flood recovery. Such a provision is essential to compensate for the detrimental effects of partial or full crop losses caused by flood on the food security of affected persons in the district. Details of seeds stored, as requested by the Deputy Director of Agriculture, are listed in fig. 6.50.

Public Health - The Chief Medical Officer from the district was required to frame a detailed programme for implementing post flood and post-cyclone health measures, and to maintain different stocks of 'life saving drugs', antivenum serum and vaccinations. This officer also held responsibility for maintaining adequate stocks of disinfectants for disinfecting drinking water sources.

Care of Animals and Cattle The district's Chief Veterinary Officer was required to prepare a contingency plan for treating cattle during flood and for providing fodder to drought affected villages.

Identification of Temporary Shelter Lists of buildings which could be used to provide temporary shelter after flood and cyclone were identified and maintained in the district. Block Development Officers were instructed to ensure that people in flood prone villages were aware that they should take shelter in such buildings.

6.7 Conclusion

It was suggested in the previous chapter that, despite a number of deficiencies, the Oriissa Relief Code lays down in many respects a well-planned set of guidelines for administering relief during times of food crisis. However in this chapter it is argued that Government programmes in Kalahandi for relief and development have regularly

been limited in their effectiveness when theoretical guidelines come to be implemented in practice.

These limitations cannot be attributed simply to shortages of funds allocated to Kalahandi. From 6.16 it may be noted that a total Rs. 7641.56 lakh has been spent on development measures and employment creation schemes by Block Development Officers during the three financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90. Averaged across the district's 2762 villages, this represents Rs. 2.76 lakh spent in each village in these programmes during this period. Taking into account total expenditures under the district plan during these years, an estimated Rs. 30 lakh has been spent in each gram panchayat in Kalahandi.⁶⁰

Indeed rather than simply a shortage of funds, a range of other factors are probably of greater significance. Firstly a large share of this funding is consumed by the towns and urban centres, whilst villages lying away from these centres, particularly in interior pockets, continue to be neglected. Secondly, much of this funding fails to reach the target groups. Instead it is, in many instances, monopolised by forward castes and persons with a higher position in the community power structure. These persons are regularly able to use their superordinate position and greater awareness of the system to corner these funds for their own use. Thirdly, misappropriations by officials, contractors and other agencies markedly reduce the effectiveness of schemes to improve infrastructure, to generate employment and to provide assistance and opportunities for vulnerable groups.⁶¹

Further, lack of adequate research and planning, and a failure to satisfactorily incorporate community members in the process of programme design, has in many cases led to measures being implemented which are incompatible with the lifestyles and needs of local people. Whilst marked differences exist in people's requirements within Kalahandi, as has been emphasised in chapter 4, regularly insufficient efforts have been made to make allowances for these variations in

⁶⁰ Dr. Fanindem Deo, Khariar college, personal communication.

⁶¹ A number of persons interviewed in Boden block (names supplied) suggested that many officials as a matter of routine demand a payment for transactions they authorise. This commission is generally labelled 'p.c.' in the local parlance (an abbreviation of 'percent'), commonly representing 15% of the transaction concerned.

programme design. Moreover, inadequate targeting and poor monitoring of programmes (during and after implementation) has exacerbated problems of wastage and corruption in many schemes. These issues are given further attention in subsequent chapters.

The following chapter goes on to examine interventions implemented by selected voluntary organisations in Kalahandi to address problems of food insecurity.

Chapter 7: Interventions to promote food security and to relieve food crises in Kalahandi: The role of Voluntary Organisations

It has been argued in the previous chapter that Government interventions in Kalahandi have been of crucial importance in maintaining and promoting the access which persons living in the district have to food and other essentials. However despite considerable resources which have been spent in recent years in such programmes in the district, these have often failed to achieve optimum effectiveness in promoting food security, and preventing and mitigating the affects of food crisis.

It has been argued that lack of research into the specific needs of particular areas and sections of the district's population has been at the heart of this ineffectiveness. Schemes have frequently been administered homogenously throughout Kalahandi, without necessary efforts to target resources and to tailor interventions to requirements which differ markedly throughout the region. Problems of wastage, corruption and, amongst some officials, a lack of attention to why hunger and poverty continue to prevail in the district, further reduce the efficiency of Government programmes.

In this chapter it is argued that a range of the most valuable programmes to promote food security, and to combat exploitation and social inequality, have been implemented by a number of locally-based voluntary organisations operative in the district. Unlike many elected representatives and Government officials who do not themselves originate from Kalahandi, these agencies are staffed largely by concerned persons coming from the area in question. This factor has strengthened their understanding of local culture, problems and needs, and enhanced their commitment to carry out useful work in the region.

This chapter provides details of a selection of the interventions made by two voluntary organisations operative in Kalahandi. The first, Agragamee, is based in Kashipur in Koraput district. Establishing itself in this region in 1981, the

organisation now operates in a wider area, with a focus in Pallahara in Dhenkenal district, Phiringia in Phulbani, Thakurmunda in Mayurbhanj, Rayagada in Ganjam, and Thuamur Rampur in Kalahandi. According to its 1989-90 and 1990-91 Annual Report, the organisation was actively involved in 250 tribal villages. A more complete list of its programmes during this period is listed in fig. 7.1.

To provide a more complete coverage of activities organised by Agragamee during this period, this chapter examines programmes which the agency maintains in Kashipur and in the Indravati region of Kalahandi's Thuamur Rampur block. The information for this study was collected from fieldwork with the organisation in Kashipur and Thuamur Rampur during March and April 1992, based on interviews with Agragamee workers during this period, on observational material during fieldwork with the organisation, and from Agragamee's written reports.

The second organisation, Lokadrusti, based in Mahalpadar¹ in Kalahandi's Boden block, is much smaller in size, maintaining only 5 field stations in this region. During interview, members of the organisation suggested that it operated primarily by concentrating its attention on a small number of villages, to enable them to do 'more in depth work', rather than through trying to provide a more superficial coverage to a wider number of villages.²

It is argued in this chapter, on the evidence of my fieldwork in the above regions, that these two organisations have implemented a range of valuable interventions to promote food security and sustainable development for the poor. However this is not to suggest that all voluntary organisations working in these areas have carried out work of similar value. To the contrary, a number of N.G.O.'s operating in Orissa were identified by local persons during my fieldwork interviews as having implemented poorly planned and inappropriate programmes, and as being involved in corrupt practices.

¹ Mahalpadar, the village in which its main field centre is based, lies in Boden block. It is composed of about 60 families (about 500 people), all tribals or from 'backward' caste. Of these households, two were harijan, and 20 were Gaud caste (milkmen/women), 15 were tribal Paharias (basket makers) and the remainder were tribal Gonds.

² Ajit Panda, interview, Mahalpadar, Feb.1992

Further it must be emphasised that whilst some of the work of Lokadrusti and Agramee has received considerable support from local people and from other parties, reservations about the effectiveness or the bona fides of these operations have been expressed in some quarters.³ For this reason the conclusions drawn in this chapter regarding the effectiveness of these interventions are specifically those of the author and should not be taken to be generalised throughout the district.

7.1 Overview of selected interventions from Lokadrusti and Agramee

The following section describes a range of the interventions made by Agramee or Lokadrusti in the regions in which they operate. Key issues marked out by these organisations for involvement in these regions include the following:

1. lack of awareness amongst tribals;
2. promotion of P.D.S, stores of grain and bank accounts;
3. illiteracy and lack of access to adequate educational facilities;
4. vulnerability of women and children;
5. lack of safe drinking water facilities;
6. poorly developed resources and lack of appropriate rural technology;
7. lack of marketing facilities;
8. environmental degradation;
9. dealing with problems of moneylending, labour bondage, unemployment, wages, and other problems resulting from an 'exploitative social system'.

Partial remedial measures introduced by Agramee to address these objectives during 1989-90 and 1990-91 are detailed in fig.7.1. The above measures are discussed more fully in the following section.

³ For example by a number of M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s. See further in this chapter, and chapters 9 and 10 of this thesis.

Fig.7.1 Programme Implementation by Agramee 1989-90 and 1990-91

Source	Name of activity	Progress		
		1989-90	1990-91	Total
Water Technology Mission, CAPART ¹	Reconnaissance Survey of Kashipur block	1 block	.	1 block
	Socio-Economic survey of Kashipur block	80 villages	.	80 villages
	Hydrogeological and Geophysical survey	40 villages	.	40 villages
	Hand pump mistry training	5 tribals	5 tribals	10 tribals
	Hand pump installation	9 villages	8 villages	17 villages
	Repair and maintenance of W.H.S.	5	.	5
	Construction of W.H.S.	3	5	8
	Construction of Irrigation tanks	3 uncompleted	3 completed	3 completed
	Drinking water tanks	15	.	15
	Plantation	10 villages	.	10 villages
	Puppetry, street theatre and folk media	62 villages	18 villages	80 villages
	Awareness building campaign	23	2	25
	Water quality survey analysis		500 samples	500 samples
Drought Relief Programme Supported by CAPART	Installation of tubewells	11	9	20
Ferro Cement Technology supported by CAPART ²	Storage bins (2 ton)	18	18	36

¹ As Koraput was selected by the Government of India as one of the Orissa 'Mini-Mission Districts' Agramee took up a number of programmes under the financial assistance of CAPART, New Delhi, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Rural Development. (Agramee (a):2)

² To support low cost appropriate technology in the area CAPART, New Delhi was asked to extend financial support to promote ferro-cement technology, favoured for use in constructing storage bins due to its non-toxic nature. Training was also provided to tribal youths in the use of ferro-cement technology. (Agramee (a):3)

	Construction of workshed in Agramee campus	1	.	1
	Construction of store rooms	1		1
	Training on Ferro-Cement Technology	10 tribals	5 tribals	15 youths
	Construction of pabal dome	.	4	4
	Construction of water tank	.	2	2
Education programme supported by Ministry for Human Resource Development. (M.H.R.D.)	Running of non-formal education (N.F.E.) centres	100	Reduced to 85 centres	85 centres
	Running of innovative centres	50 in number ¹	continued	50 in number
	Balmela	5	5	10
	Teachers' work shop	5	5	10
	Teachers' training	5	5	10
	Puppets' supplied	10 schools	10 schools	20 schools
	Grain bank	20	20	40
	Goat keeping	25 in number	25 in number	50 in number
	Bee keeping	13 in number	13 in number	26 in number
	Provision of environmental education in 50 innovative schools		50 centres	50 centres
Ministry for Human Resource Development supported by Tribal Development Project, Kashipur ²	Horticulture training	47 participants	.	47 participants
	Joint workshop for staff of OTDP and Agramee	26 in number	.	26 in number
	Training of animators	62		62

¹ 10 such centres were located in each of: Kashipur, Thakurmunda, Phiringia, Pallahara, Kainpur.

² Agramee has been involved in the I.F.A.D. assisted Orissa Tribal Development Programme (O.T.D.P.) for promotion of human resource development. In order to carry out different activities under the programme an agreement was signed between the H. & T.W. Dept., Government of Orissa and Agramee on 16th. Dec. 1989. (Agramee (a):4)

Training of village committee members	40		40
Balmela ¹	450		450
Tubewell repair training programme	10 in number		10 in number
Training for women	57 in number		57 in number
Plantation	25 hectare		25 hectare
Village Committee mobilised ²		22 in number	22 in number
Installation of solar T.V.'s		4	4
Installation of tubewells		3	3
Construction of house building in Agramee campus		1	1
Construction of Motivation campus		1	1
Village level planning completed with collaboration of T.D.P.		4	4
Road repair		1	1
N.F.E. schools under T.D.P.		15	15
Training materials supplied		5 schools	5 schools
School under Qualitative Education		10 schools	10 schools
Community Awareness Programme in one model village		350 participants in one village	350 participants in one village
Assistance to Grain bank		25 villages	25 villages
Facilities for opening marketing outlet in village (Model village scheme)		2	2

¹ Central to this were games and sports, quizzes, drawing and drama competitions and one act plays. (Agramee (a):4-5)

² Village committee members were drawn primarily from the landless and from small and marginal farmers. These committees tended to be composed of five male members and two female members. (Agramee(a); Agramee(b):7-8)

	Preparation of village plan		3 villages	3 villages
	Awareness generation through cultural programme through school children and youth organisation		1	1
	Mason training		5 youths	5 youths
	Special training for farmers on food day		1 in number	1 in number
	Grain banks for model villages (revolving fund)		4	4
	Construction of storage bins		3	3
	Meeting of Village Committee Members		4	4
Matching contribution of CAPART, DRDA and People	Installation of lift Irrigation points in 3 Gram Panchayats in Kshipur block	7		7
Different Voluntary Agencies	Non formal education training	250		250
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	SCOVA meeting on health	1		1
D.R.D.A.	Youth club meeting	1		1
	Construction of market complex for co-operative society	1		1
	Plantation under J.R.V ¹		100 hectares	100 hectares
	Baseline socio-economic study and preparation of Action plan for Rehabilitation for U.I.P. ²		1652 families in Kalahandi, 2073 in Koraput	3725 families in total
Aragamee	Monthly village Committee Members' meeting	500 members		500 members
	Weekly teachers' meeting	480 members		480 members
CAPART	Awareness building camps on Drinking Water	30 ³		30

¹ Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, undertaken in 3 villages

² Upper Indravati Project, Koraput and Thuamur Rampur block, Kalahandi.

³ These are located as follows: 10 in Phulbani, 10 in Ganjam and 10 in Pallahara

Aragamee	Grain bank organised	97 villages	continued	97 villages
Aragamee	Youth organisation ¹ Women's Committee meeting organised	3 105	120	3 225
	Installation of tubewells		2	2
	Drinking Water Chua		1	1
	Helping the people on Health Ground Treatment		2 tribals	2 tribals
	Training on Ferro Cement Technology		5 youths	5 youths
CAPART	Building greenhouse at Kashipur		1	1
Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India	National Awareness Campaign through padayatra ²		1	1
UNICEF	Universal Immunisation Programme	District and block level workshops and follow up camps	District and block level workshops and follow up camps	District and block level workshops and follow up camps
Action Aid	Construction of Adajore Field Centre		1	1
	Construction of Andirakanch field centre		1	1
	Development of learning materials		4000 books	4000 books
	Balmela ³		5 noa.	5 nos.
HIVOS	Visits for children to other parts of Orissa		10 children	10 children
	Exhibitions organised at Rayagada and Koraput		2	2
	Teacher training		150	150
	Quarterly training programme for staff		5	5
	Exposure trips to other projects/areas		35	35
	Puppetry and other cultural shows		20	20

¹ These youth organisations were formed at Kumbhakhal, Andirakanch and Adajore.

² In translation a 'march on foot'.

³ Balmela is a children's fair. One of these was organised in each of Tharkumunda, Phulbani, Ganjam, Pallahara and Kashipur.

HIVOS appropriate technology programme	Women's camps		3	3
	Village Committee Meetings/ Workshops		20	20
	Eco-development camps		3	3
	Recycling of Agricultural Waste		6	6
	Padayatra		1	1
	Ferro-cement trainees trained		15 youths	15 youths
	Construction of Ferro-Cement Storage Bins		5	5
	Agriculture/ horticulture plantation Grain bank		4 60 villages covered	4 60 villages covered
	Irrigation tanks		2 ¹	2
	Water harvesting structures		2 ²	2
Water Technology Mission	Conducting socio-economic surveys ³		300 villages	300 villages
Orissa Panchayati Raj Department	Observation of the SAARC Year of the Girl Child		1	1
Integrated Tribal Development Area	Carpet training for women		40 women	40 women
Aragamee	Support to KVGMC Ltd.	Staff support 5 days - vehicle support 15 days	Staff support 6 days - vehicle support 20 days	Staff support 11 days - vehicle support 35 days
	Intensive vegetable cultivation ⁴			
	Public distribution system undertaken by KVGMC Ltd.		304 farms	304 farms
	Formation of new cooperatives	15 villages ⁵	continued	15 villages
	Gorakhpur PDS mobilised		9 villages	9 villages
	Maikanch PDS mobilised		11 villages	11 villages

¹ One of these in Bundel, the other in Kumbhakhal, Koraput district.

² These being W.H.S. projects in Phulbani and Thakurmunda.

³ These surveys being in Thakurmunda, Kaptipada, and Sukurli of Mayurbhanj district.

⁴ Carried out with 50 % subsidy through KVGMC Ltd.

⁵ These including Sungar P.D.S. and cooperatives in Parajasila and Siriguda.

Agramee	Chandragiri PDS mobilised		11 villages	11 villages
	Support to youth clubs			
	Registration of Sindurghati Yubak Sangh			
	Movement on minimum wage		50 villages	50 villages
Out of own fund	Running of NFE ¹ schools	12	continued	12 in number
	Vegetable seeds supplied	10 villages	15 villages	25 villages
	Providing transport to Kashipur P.H.C. to check the health of tribals of different villages	10 times covering 30 villages	20 days covering 50 villages	30 times covering 80 villages

Source: Agramee(a)

¹ Non-formal education

Awareness Generation Central to activities of Agramee and Lokadrusti have been measures to raise the consciousness and awareness of the predominantly adivasi populations with which they are working. As previously emphasised, low levels of education and literacy, and little knowledge of market processes, leave many tribals and other poor people in Kalahandi and Koraput vulnerable to exploitation by sahkars and merchants. Redressing such vulnerability is a crucial variable in the process of reinforcing the ability of these persons to maintain food security.

To promote awareness and political consciousness amongst local people, Agramee has been active in organising camps, melas and padayatras. Meetings for exchanging relevant views and experience with these people have been of considerable value in strengthening the cooperative nexus between the voluntary organisation and the people themselves. These meetings have also been of importance for encouraging people to act collectively to forward their demands and requirements.⁴

The importance of collective activity is identified by Achyut Das, one of the founder members of Agramee, in a paper presented to a workshop on 'Hunger and Development in Kalahandi' in Bhawanipatna in Dec.1991.⁵ He argues that

In the late 1970's I was initiated into voluntary action in Kalahandi when it was reeling under drought, starvation and outmigration. I was then seriously asking one question - why there is no public action? I did not find an iota of protest anywhere. And in the mid 80's I was exposed to political dialogue when I had the opportunity of inter-acting with the Prime-Minister and his well meaning Advisors. They were in a hurry to find an answer to centuries old problems and at the same time they were looking for an expert-opinion - something magical, something spectacular - which will transform everything overnight. I wanted to tell them that they were wrong in approach. Perhaps I did tell them so emphatically'. (Achyut Das, 1991: 1)

As similarly argued in the previous chapter of this thesis, Das suggests that Government programmes have regularly failed to benefit the poor. Rather than incorporating the latter into policy making, Das rightly points out that the poor are

⁴ Indeed Agramee workers have emphasised that little can be achieved without a 'ripple affect' taking place such that this action is taken up more widely. (Agramee (a):9)

⁵ The importance of collective action has been discussed more comprehensively in chapter 4 and also in chapter 9..

rarely party to the decision making process.⁶ For this reason it has been central to Agramee's declared policy to update local people about Government schemes and facilities operative in the region designed to assist local people. To facilitate this task, the organisation has maintained its own communication team to discuss problems with local people. This team also aims to promote the development message through media such as puppet shows and street theatre. Attempts have been made where possible to incorporate Government officers into these projects.⁷

Lokadrusti has also used street theatre, meetings with local people, and a similar set of methods to raise levels of consciousness amongst local people. Central to activities of both these organisations have been efforts to protect the vulnerable against corruption and other malpractice carried out by Government officials and other exploiters. A dharna organised in response to complaints made by local people against an officer in Boden for his failure to pay them full wages for Government work is an example of how such initiatives may heighten consciousness and collective action amongst the vulnerable population. Such measures may also increase the level to which these organisations are accepted in these areas, and the support they receive from local people.

Establishing Village Grain Stores and Bank Accounts As discussed in Chapter 4.10, Agramee has given priority to establishing grain banks and communal bank accounts in local villages. These are used to create stores of foodgrains and of cash which can be utilised during times of hardship. The primary aim of these stores is to provide protection, rather than to promote reinvestment or development.

Construction of grain banks, or golas, in these village was generally carried by Agramee for these villagers.⁸ In these golas grain (often rice and ragi) which is collected from households in the village is communally stored. Quantities collected

⁶ Indeed in the paper mentioned above, he argues that the poor 'are always told but never heard, participation is silent in all spheres of planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of each development action'. (Achyut Das, 1991:1)

⁷ Information gained through interviews with Agramee workers and background from Agramee (a).

⁸ These are generally made out of ferro-cement.

vary markedly from village to village and between regions. This depends particularly on the size of the village, the quantity and quality of land which villagers own, and on the farming method used.

For example in Parajasila, a village in the Kashipur region, a grain bank which had been established on the recommendation of Agramee, at the time of my visit contained 15 quintals of mixed grains, pooled from collections within the village.⁹ A wider indication of stores held in other villages can be obtained from fig.7.2.

A communal bank account had also been set up with the State Bank of India in Parajasila. At the time of this visit Rs.2000 had been deposited. This account was initially established five years beforehand (1987). However the balance had been completely used up two years later when the village was affected by food crisis induced by drought. Money from this account was borrowed by those badly affected and repaid at 25% interest when they were in a position to do so.

In another Agramee field centre in the Indravati region workers suggested that a similar account had been established in a nearby village. At the time when I visited this village the balance stood at Rs.2000, this again being lent to villagers in times of hardship. Such loans were similarly repaid at a 25% rate of interest. Details of bank accounts established with Agramee assistance in other villages are detailed in fig.7.3

A number of villagers interviewed suggested that these facilities had added considerably to the security of the most vulnerable in the community. In Parajasila it was argued that before these were established, stores of food and cash could be maintained only at minimal levels due to low crop production, low work availability and low wage levels.

Attempts had also been made to promote food security by encouraging villagers to set up their own P.D.S. coverage in their village. Agramee has tended to provide initial assistance whilst the system is being installed. When necessary it

⁹ My visits to Parajasila were made between 24.3.92 and 28.3.92

Fig.7.2 Village Community Fund - Grain Banks

Village/ G.P.	Year of commencement	Contribution by village (Qtls.)	Contribution by Agramee (Qtls.)	Total Quantity in store (Qtls.)	No. of beneficiaries
Charjodi	1987	1.75	1.40	7.00	30
Mahadputkhuri	1988	3.50	1.68	7.35	47
Daliguda	1987	1.05	0.70	2.94	15
Kanhuguda	1988	2.45	2.45	5.25	30
Badamaribhata	1988	2.10	2.80	4.90	25
Dongasil colony	1987	1.40	.	2.86	15
Ratachuan	1988	2.10	2.10	19.60	30
Sariguda	1986	0.70	0.70	2.80	20
Gaimundunda	1984	2.10	2.10	30.80	30
Rengenasil	1983	0.87	0.87	8.40	30
Tharfy	1984	1.40	1.40	10.50	40
Kodikitunda	1987	1.64	.	7.00	47
Hatimundatikiri	1987	1.05	.	2.10	50
Ekdil	1987	1.22	.	2.12	35
Pondkapadar	1984	2.10	2.10	4.20	27
Kholalapadar	1986	3.50	3.50	7.00	40
Siriguda	1987	13.65	1.46	20.80	55
Kiramba	1987	1.05	.	1.40	19
Koskota	1988	0.56	.	0.91	.
Peringiri	1987	1.12	0.56	1.12	12
Anager	1985	1.40	2.80	10.56	52
Kundursila	1985	0.70	1.75	7.00	15
Tureighati	1987	0.70	.	0.88	45
Kukudakata	1988	0.98	.	0.98	15
Kantabanji	1987	0.84	0.84	1.26	.
Malamba	1985	2.10	2.10	8.40	.
Durkhal	1986	2.10	2.10	9.80	60
Dandabada	1987	2.10	2.10	7.98	30
Padmapur	1986	2.80	2.87	7.47	30
Dhotrapes	1987	1.40	1.40	6.17	22
Y. Kebidi	1987	1.75	1.75	4.20	30
Chandragiri	1986	1.68	1.68	6.30	35

Chandragiri night school (H. Sahi)	1984	0.52	0.52	3.26	
Bharamarajode	1987	0.45	0.45	2.80	20
Maligaon	1989	1.05	.	1.05	35
Kudikipadar	1985	7.70	.	7.70	40
Talapanga	1984	2.80	.	2.80	48
Chiliguda	1984	5.60	.	5.60	42
Dirimibhata	1988	3.85	.	3.85	8
Pidalpadar	1984	1.40	.	5.60	18
Rastuguda	1983	7.70	.	7.70	29
Holiasahi	1987	1.40	1.40	2.80	14
Vshabali	1988	1.98	.	2.90	19
Adajore	1988	3.50	3.50	10.50	142
Musatakiri	1988	2.10	2.10	6.30	20
Barangpas	1988	1.96	1.96	6.05	30
Manditunesh	1988	1.40	1.40	4.20	19
R. Marapas	1989	1.15	.	1.16	35
Similiguda	1989	1.54	.	1.54	26
K.P.Marapas	1988	1.05	1.05	2.10	43
Porlajhar	1989	1.40	.	1.40	42
Andirakanch	1988	2.03	.	2.05	54
Phulpinda	1988	1.33	.	1.35	20
Lundurkona	1988	2.46	.	2.46	50
Jhirikhol	1988	4.06	.	4.06	44
K. Kupakhal	1988	1.68	.	1.68	50
Kupakhal	1988	2.66	.	2.66	21
Paik Kupakhal	1989	2.45	.	2.45	50
Lakrish (A. Sahi)	1987	2.50	.	5.60	64
Lakrish (S.C. Sahi)	1989	0.77	.	0.77	60
Siadimal	1989	0.42	.	0.42	17
Kumbakhol (School fund)	1989	0.98	.	2.15	85
Titkirtunesh	1989	0.52	.	0.53	18
Gadeljhol	1989	.	.	.	.
Mandachuan	1985	.	.	.	.
Dhobasil	1988	0.70	1.16	1.88	13
Maligaon (Night school)	1989	.	.	.	.
Siriguda	1984	3.70	3.70	24.00	35

Khurigaon (K.Sahi)	1985			4.36	23
Gotiguda	1984			4.71	50
Amarsingguda	1984	2.00	2.00	4.80	22
Parajasila V.F.	1984	5.00	5.00	13.60	80
Night schools	1984			2.40	
Maikancha	1987			8.68	112
Baiganguda	1989			1.50	50
Podhbandha	1986	2.00	2.00	6.50	23
Ranjuguda	1986			8.70	20
Similuguda	1989			4.00	35
Rasijhiri	1986	3.00	3.00	13.20	62
Tala Rasijhiri	1985	0.96	0.96	3.00	25
Renga (Uppersahi)	1985			7.20	50
Renga (Talasahi)	1985	3.00	3.00	9.60	60
Sindurghati	1985	2.10	2.10	8.10	37
Sindurghati A. Sahi (Night school)	1989	0.70	0.18	0.88	40
Dhamanghati	1985	1.05	1.05	2.10	18
Sunger (Night school)	1986	0.70		0.70	40
Sanchekana	1988	2.10	2.10	9.20	25
Aliguna	1986	0.70	0.70	1.40	25
Bundel	1987	0.70	0.70	1.40	18
Banteji	1989	0.70		0.70	15
Sunger (colony sahi)	1989	0.49	0.17	0.66	7
Total		163.47	83.41	534.15	2979

Source: Agragamee (d)

has also provided further help to villagers by assisting them with purchasing and transporting commodities. Otherwise it is intended that the system should be operated by villagers themselves, free from excessive direction from the voluntary organisation and from other outsiders. This was the case for a number of reasons.

Firstly, as previously mentioned, the creation of grain banks, bank accounts and self-managed P.D.S. in these villages is designed to form part of a wider programme to reduce the exploitation of villagers by outside traders. In fair price shops managed by such private merchants there have regularly been high levels of corruption, with commodities being misappropriated for sale in the black market or in their own groceries.

Secondly, the policy of encouraging villagers to themselves manage their own village fair price shops is designed to increase their self-sufficiency, and the control which they have over how they meet their requirements for food and other essentials. It is rightly felt to be important that villagers themselves should dictate policy and decision making in the village. Such decision making should include all sections of the community, including women, adivasis, lower castes and all deprived sections. This must not be monopolised by higher castes or more powerful community members. Hence in a number of villages women have been encouraged to establish P.D.S. and grain banks independently of men, to ensure that the safety net which these provide is not monopolised by the male members.

In some areas P.D.S. schemes initiated by Agravamee serves to supplement the P.D.S. operated by the state. However a considerable number of villages in interior pockets, including the majority of those visited for this study in the Indravati region, had not previously been reached by the state operated system. In these places fair price shops set up through this voluntary organisation provided the only access which villagers had to subsidised P.D.S. commodities, and the only alternative which villagers had to buying grain from weekly hats and private traders.

Fig. 7.3 Village Community Fund - Bank Accounts

Village/ G.P.	Amount in bank account (Rs.)	Amount in post office (Rs.)	Loan in the village (Rs.)	Total (Rs.)
Badamaribhata	1008.25			1008.25
Ratachuan	1100.00		1000.00	2100.00
Sariguda	240.00		300.00	540.00
Gaimundunda	3880.00		900.00	4780.00
Rengenasil	100.00		1000.00	1100.00
Tharty	1500.00		5000.00	6500.00
Kodikitunda	192.00			192.00
Durkhal	1949.15			1949.15
Dandabada	595.00			595.00
Bharamarajode	400.00			400.00
Maligaon		704.00		704.00
Kudikipadar	3446.40			3446.40
Talapanga	88.75			88.75
Chiliguda		5.00		5.00
Dirimibhata	3692.00			3692.00
Pidalpadar	653.92	40.75		694.67
Rastuguda	500.00	219.75		719.75
Holiasahi	1682.00	83.75		1765.75
Musatakiri	400.00		600.00	1000.00
Manditunesh		100.00	400.00	500.00
Porlajhar		200.00	800.00	1000.00
Titkiritunesh	1000.00			1000.00
Gadeljhola	500.00			500.00
Mandachuan		87.35		87.35
Dhobasil	551.85			551.85
Maligaon (Night school)		27.00		27.00
Siriguda	2288.00			2288.00
Khurigaon	1600.00			1600.00
Khurigaon (K.Sahi)	560.00			560.00
Gotiguda	300.00			300.00
Amarsingguda	305.00			305.00
Parajasila V.F.	1355.00			1355.00

Night schools	100.00			100.00
Youth club	165.00			165.00
Women's fund	500.00			500.00
Ranjuguda	1000.00			1000.00
Similuguda	2000.00			2000.00
Rasijhiri	3700.00			3700.00
Renga (Talasahi)	2000.00			2000.00
Sindurghati	500.00			500.00
Dhamanghati	153.00			153.00
Sanchehana	400.00			400.00
Aliguna	2000.00			2000.00
Bundel	4000.00			4000.00
Total	46405.32	1467.60	10000.00	57872.92

Source: Agravamee (d)

It should be recognised that these interventions were not universally supported by all persons in the villages where Agramee is operative. In Upper Chabri I attended a village meeting called to discuss whether P.D.S. should be established in the village.¹⁰ During this meeting the son of the village sahu kar expressed considerable opposition to this scheme.¹¹ He stated that people in the village did not want such a scheme. This point was contested by Agramee workers, who argued to the contrary that the sahu kar's family and other principal landowners in the village opposed the scheme because they wanted to maintain the dependency of the predominantly landless tribals on them for loans and work.

In Mahalpadar, in Kalahandi's Boden block, Lokadrusti were also organising P.D.S. in this village and in the surrounding area. This system is managed by members of the voluntary organisation themselves. Unlike retail outlets managed by Government retailers, Lokadrusti opted only to distribute rice and kerosene oil, for which there was sufficient demand in the area. The local population, they suggested, tended to consume primarily rice and ragi, and rarely took up their full entitlement of sugar, wheat or cooking oil, since they consumed little roti and rarely fried when cooking. For this reason it was not worthwhile to distribute these latter commodities.¹²

Provision of Schools and Non-Formal Education It has been argued in chapter 4.6 and 6.5 that whilst numbers of schools and colleges has increased in recent years in Kalahandi and Koraput, the access which some in the district have to educational facilities continues to be limited by the failure of teachers to attend to take classes.¹³ Recognising the central importance of improving standards of education

¹⁰ Although this meeting was attended only by men without any female participation.

¹¹ As mentioned previously the sahu kar of the village, like the other principal landowners in the village, came from harijan background.

¹² Further when local people did purchase their full entitlement of less-used commodities such as sugar, wheat and cooking oil, often this was only to sell it on to others, therefore negating the aim of such P.D.S distributions to ensure that consumers have access to essential goods and affordable prices.

¹³ Group interview in village, March 1992.

and consciousness, both Agramee and Lokadrusti have given emphasis to opening schools and centres for Non-Formal Education (N.F.E.).

One such example was found in Upper Chabri, in the Indravati region of Kalahandi's Thuamur Rampur block. Here inhabitants of the village stated that the Government school had effectively become defunct since the teacher did not attend. In its place Agramee had established a non-formal education school designed to teach numeracy etc. alongside other skills such as management of kitchen gardens, training in goat keeping, and other forms of 'innovative' education. It further aimed to promote the essential elements of health education. This school also aimed to discourage villagers from practising podu cultivation by training them in alternative methods for growing foodstuffs. Children generally remained in this school until they reached the standard of education required to enable them to gain entry to a nearby residential school, roughly 3Km. from the village.

Day school attendance in Government schools in the area was often poor, since children were frequently expected by their families to work in the fields during daytime hours, rather than to study. The evening school run by this voluntary organisation between the hours of 5.30 and 7.30 tended to be better attended, with approximately 30 children studying regularly.¹⁴ Many of these tended to be girls, which contrasted with the high male dominance in a number of schools visited in other villages.

In Parajasila, in Kasipur block of Koraput district, 7 people from the village were attending a local Government school. These were all male and in the 10 to 14 year age range. A school had also been opened by Agramee in this village which was attended by 20 to 30 persons upto third. grade.

In Mahalpadar, in Kalahandi's Boden block, Lokadrusti had similarly established a school for providing education to members of this village. Both these voluntary organisations emphasised the value of choosing and training persons

¹⁴ However again the teacher in this school suggested that many in the 15+ age group did not attend because they were already tired by the evening after working for a full day in the fields.

coming from the village as teachers to work in these schools. This was seen to have a number of advantages. Firstly, local teachers are likely to be better accepted and trusted by persons from the village attending the school, and less likely to generate the 'externally-imposed' feel which is sometimes created when lessons are given by teachers from outside the community. Secondly, local teachers are likely to have a better grasp of local culture and values than teachers from outside. Thirdly, it was felt that locally-recruited teachers would attend more regularly to take classes, and would be less prone to the absenteeism prevalent in many schools employing teachers from elsewhere. Fourthly, particularly in tribal areas where schoolgoers speak a tribal mother-tongue, teachers from the community may help to reduce the linguistic problems created when classes are taken by teachers who do not know the local language.¹⁵

A further strength of education provided in voluntary organisation schools is that this is commonly geared specifically to meet needs of adivasis, lower castes and other deprived persons. Children from such sections regularly face particular difficulties in pursuing their education. Firstly many are expected to work to help to meet household needs and are not therefore free to attend classes. Secondly, many have inferior access to education due to the subordinate position of their families in the community hierarchy and power structure. Thirdly, in many poorer homes there is little quiet space for study. Lack of adequate lighting and suitable working conditions creates problems for children from poorer families wishing to improve themselves educationally.

Promotion of Women's Activities It has been argued in this thesis that women are frequently particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and other forms of exploitation in Kalahandi and surrounding districts. The vulnerability particularly hinges upon factors which include the following:

¹⁵ Names supplied, interviews conducted in Feb. 1992.

1. exploitation of women in the labour process - in particular the high demands placed on women by having to carry out household tasks; to care for children; to collect water, firewood and forest produce; and to perform a range of other tasks, often in addition to working in the fields or taking other forms of waged employment in order to generate household income.
2. Male control of food, money and other household resources in many households.
3. Low levels of education and literacy which prevail amongst women in many villages, due to their limited access to schooling and other forms of training.
4. Sexual abuse, forced sterilisations, and other forms of violation in some instances faced by women, often from outside merchants or contractors.¹⁶

To address these problems Agramee has attempted to give special priority to women's development. At the heart of its programmes have been efforts to raise consciousness and cooperation amongst women, and to encourage them to act collectively to counter their exploited or overworked position in their communities. As mentioned, in some villages this support has included helping women to establish their own separate grain banks. This measure is intended to protect their food security needs independently of male members. This has helped to counter the greater access which males regularly have in the community to food and other essentials, deriving from their superordinate status in the household and their resultant control over such resources.

Protection of Common Property Resources Lokadrusti and Agramee have recognised the importance of protecting the access of local persons to water, forest, land and fodder. It has been argued by these organisations that the Government, particularly the Forest Department, does not fully recognise the importance of providing such assurance to deprived sections of the community. Lokadrusti and Agramee has again attempted to foster efforts to promote the ability of these

¹⁶ Also see further particularly in Achyut and Vidhya Das (1992)

persons to maintain security in food and other essentials, and to act collectively to press for access to water, fuel and fodder through common property arrangements.

Aragamee has emphasised the importance of water rights, and the need to separate water rights from private property in land. It has argued that every family must have access to at least a minimum allocation of water. Efforts have been made within the community concerned to make persons aware of limitations imposed by resource constraints, and the corresponding possibilities which may be achieved by making efficient use of the limited quantities of water and other resources which are available. This voluntary organisation has used interventions to promote access to water resources¹⁷ to good affect in some villages to gain the confidence of the resource poor, and to demonstrate that Agramee can do work which is of benefit to them. It has also given priority to promoting access of the deprived to fodder and firewood, encouraging villagers to set up fodder and fuel pools. A quantity from these pools must be allocated to landless or marginal cultivators.

The same organisation has established a range of further programmes to protect and develop forest resources. A phased programme for forest development includes the following measures:

1. a focus on regenerating grass cover and planting selected trees, spaced sufficiently widely to allow these trees to be tended after planting and to allow space for additional plants ;
2. Trees and shrubs are to be chosen which can produce valuable forest produce without being chopped down, thereby allowing forest produce to be collected whilst still conserving vegetation.
3. Organisation of tree growers societies, composed of persons committed to protecting and regenerating tree cover in the first phase (above), which could also negotiate with the Government for usufruct rights.

¹⁷ Particularly by constructing water harvesting structures.

4. A long-term project to promote sustainable biomass production, to supplement the pool of fodder and to provide a range of products without endangering conservation of vegetation.¹⁸

Watershed Development Great importance has been attached to initiating actions to preserve water sources and to prevent salination. Agramee has also strongly encouraged activities to promote awareness of this issue amongst local communities, and to promote activities which are compatible with this objective. In order to promote long-term plantations on dongar land, people in a number of villages have pledged not to practise podu cultivation or to graze animals on this land. This initiative is of value in protecting surrounding land from soil and water erosion, and also to improve access to firewood and to promote forest redevelopment. As mentioned in chapter 4.10, these resources are crucial to the economy of tribal persons.

Large scale plantations in the Kashipur area have also been promoted under the IFAD funded Tribal Development Project, despite some doubts on the part of local people who feared that such a project would disturb their local economy. Attempts have been made, through consultations by the Orissa Tribal Development Project, to promote agroforestry. This is designed to promote soil and water conservation, to stabilise crop production and income from crops, and to regenerate forest, whilst also allowing local people to continue yearly cropping to meet their subsistence needs. Efforts to make these measures compatible with their existing practices has increased their acceptance with local people.

Redistribution of ~~dongar~~ land - Agramee had proposed a scheme for redistribution of land of more than 30% slope to tribals.¹⁹ This scheme was awaiting ratification by the State Government at the time of this fieldwork in March 1993.

¹⁸ For a more complete discussion of this programme refer to Agramee 'Water as common property - promoting equity and sustainability in watershed development'.

¹⁹ Source: interviews, Agramee, Kashipur, March 1992

Action for Minimum Wage Payments The minimum wage which may be legally paid in Orissa to labourers was increased in July 1990 from Rs. 11 per day to Rs. 25 per day. However many people, particularly in interior areas, were not fully aware of this increase and continued to work for wages as low as Rs. 12 per day in the Kashipur area.(Aragamee (a):8) This problem is compounded because contractors often pay workers in lump sums at the end of their period of employment. Whilst these sums may appear large to the often innumerate workers that are employed, when calculated on a daily basis these wage rates are frequently pitifully low.

It has therefore been a central task both for Lokadrusti and Agramee to ensure that people in their areas of activity are fully aware that they have a legal right to demand this minimum wage. The voluntary organisation has also attempted to mobilise people to take collective action to press for this minimum.

In a number of villages in the Kashipur region, workers recognised they were being exploited by contractors and other employers through underpayment of wages. In response these persons petitioned the relevant authorities to make back payments of wages owed. These actions provoked similar activities in other villages, such that a chain-effect response was provoked as people saw their colleagues in nearby villages acting to redress their exploited position. It is suggested that, in consequence, arrears were repaid in more than 50 villages in the Kashipur area for the period July to September 1990. Back payments totalling Rs. 3,48,371.50 were obtained to cover money owed in 30 villages.²⁰

Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour - Efforts to generate employment, to improve the self-confidence and self-respect of tribal people, and to strengthen the nexus between the state and the people, have been important in reducing the level of bondedness in the region. Also important in this respect have been Government managed rehabilitation programmes for bonded labourers. These have helped to raise and stabilise income,

²⁰ This issue is discussed further in Agramee(a)

and to encourage them to build-up savings and purchase land and other assets.
(Aragamee (b):11)

Training for Animators, Women's Groups and Village Committees Aragamee concentrates particularly on training women, animators and village committee members.²¹ The members of these committees, alongside village animators, are key figures in mobilising inhabitants of the village to support development programmes and to participate in community-based activities. These people also provide a useful nexus between the voluntary organisation and the people of the village. This is particularly valuable in providing feedback on the effectiveness of schemes in operation in the community, and on problems which must be addressed. This is also a useful means of conveying necessary information and advice to villagers.(Aragamee (a): 4) Such roles are important to promote public confidence in such programmes and to ensure that there is community participation in programme design. This is crucial to overcome suspicion and scepticism which may exist amongst villagers to projects coming from outside, and to avoid the 'externally-imposed' feel which such projects may create.

Village committees may also be important in overseeing the village operated P.D.S., grain banks, and community bank accounts, in order to ensure that these are efficiently managed and free from malpractice. Activators have played an important role in villages in checking corruption. If dishonesty or malpractice is detected in a village, then those culpable may be identified to other villagers in a meeting called for that purpose, or alternatively in a less overt manner whilst they work in the fields. It is hoped that when offenders became aware that their deceit has become public knowledge, or when pressured by other villagers, then they will admit to their dishonesty and cease their malpractice. If these practices continue, then it was

²¹ Village committees tend to be made up primarily of landless, small and marginal farmers, composed generally of five male members and two female members.(Aragamee (a) and interviews with Aragamee workers, March/April 1992)

suggested that other villagers may cease to cooperate with these persons in the village.

Such problems, it was suggested, were particularly prevalent in mixed villages with a combination of S.C., S.T. and forward caste populations. As previously argued in chapter 4, in such villages Brahmins and forward castes may attempt to monopolise privileges and benefits. In such situations Agramee members suggested that they would attempt to explain to other village members that these people had a vested interest, and that others should not cooperate with them. If the deprived in the village continued to cooperate with these exploiters, then Agramee would withdraw their support from that village.²²

Establishing Cooperatives To address the problem of the exploitation faced by many persons in market processes²³, tribals from 30 villages in panchayats of Dongasil, Kucheipadar and Kodipari organised collectively to form the Kashipur Vegetable Grower's Marketing Cooperative Society Ltd. (K.V.G.M.C.S.) The principal object of this collective has been to increase the bargaining power of these producers in the market process by helping them to market vegetables and other agricultural products for proper returns. The society has also taken up marketing of niger oil seeds, which is a major cash crop for the region.

During the rainy season when they are short of food, many producers have been forced to mortgage their niger crop at between one fifth and one tenth of the price which they would have been able to receive for this in the open market. In response, attempts have been made through the KVGMCS, with Agramee assistance, to provide loans to these persons during these times of hardship and to purchase their niger at remunerative prices.²⁴ The intention is to widen the range of

²² It was again hoped that on seeing the benefits gained by other villages still working with Agramee these persons would change their mind, and in order to regain its cooperation would sever their links with their exploiters. (Interviews, Agramee, Kashipur, March 1992)

²³ As discussed in previous chapters.

²⁴ During 1990 such purchases amounted to Rs.2,00,000 worth of niger. On these purchases it is argued that the society was able to make Rs.50,000 in profit, in addition to providing to niger farmers better returns than previously for their crop. During the second year of its operation the society participated in sale of Rs. 4,60,000 of niger. (Agramee (a):10)

products in which the KVGMCs is involved as further part of a policy to reduce market exploitation of tribals. (Aragamee (a):10)

7.2 Operational Problems

These voluntary organisations have experienced a range of difficulties in their areas of operation in establishing schemes and in winning the support and confidence of local people. In Boden, a number of Lokadrusti workers suggested that this task had been complicated by the considerable number of Government schemes and N.G.O. operations that had already been implemented in the block. As discussed in chapter 4.9, the region has previously been visited by Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi during the severe drought in 1965-66, and by Rajiv Gandhi in 1985. Following both these visits, increased assistance had been sanctioned for the area. Consequently local people were already familiar with external agencies. This had accordingly changed their demands and expectations. On trying to initially organise programmes in the region, Lokadrusti workers were commonly met with the question 'What can Lokadrusti do for us?' Immediately they were faced with expectations that Lokadrusti was there to provide.

A crucial task for Lokadrusti was therefore to avoid creating through its activities a sense of dependency, where people would expect to rely on Lokadrusti for handouts, grants, loans and other needs. In consequence it has been a crucial task for the organisation to rapidly establish that its role was not simply to provide for the local community, but rather to enhance within this community levels of self-sufficiency, motivation and self-respect. This has involved using interventions to strengthen the skills and capacity which people have to access food and other commodities, to secure employment, and more generally to enhance their awareness and self-confidence.

Such problems have been exacerbated by the relative lack of effectiveness of a number of other voluntary organisations which have previously operated in the

block. Oxfam is one agency which operated in the block for several years, but eventually felt the need to withdraw its operations. It was argued by a number of Lokadrusti operatives that the disillusion which inappropriate programmes administered by other organisations have developed amongst some local people has reduced public confidence in the ability of Lokadrusti to carry out useful action in Boden. For this reason gaining the initial support and cooperation of local persons in the Boden region has been a significant problem. In contrast, it was suggested that the relative absence of N.G.O.'s in the Kashipur area before Agramee initiated activities there, enabled the latter to launch a projects which immediately made a favourable impression with local people. This helped the organisation to gain respect amongst the local community. Particularly significant in this respect were measures introduced to build check dams, using water from perennial streams in the surrounding area to improve irrigation potential for local villages. For Lokadrusti this option was largely excluded owing to the lack of surface water in the Boden region, and the fact that streams in the area are regularly already dry by November.

Other means used elsewhere to secure local confidence and support were also less available for Lokadrusti in Mahalpadar. Voluntary organisations working in Phulbani district had previously been able to develop links with local people by encouraging networks through which these people could borrow money from the organisation to collect mahua flower. This mahua could then be sold by these persons at a profit. In Mahalpadar this option was less available, since marwaris in the area had already established networks through which their agents would buy the mahua flower from the local people and sell it in other areas at high gain. The latter benefitted little from this system, since they were paid at very low rates by the agents. This again limited Lokadrusti's capacity to establish links in these areas, and to 'show themselves to be good' through similar interventions.

In addition to the problem of establishing support and cooperation from local people with whom they are working, other factors have also created obstacles to the work of these organisations. In particular these agencies have met with criticisms

or obstruction from actors who feel their power and capacity for making profits to be threatened by the attempts of Agramee and Lokadrusti to promote the capabilities and consciousness of the poor. Such actors have included landlords, moneylenders, merchants, employers, and others who have been able to use the lack of power and voice, and low levels of organisation amongst the poor, to exploit them for their own profit.

An unwillingness to cooperate with local N.G.O.'s was also evident amongst some elected representatives. Subhas Naik, the Kalahandi M.P., argued during interview that 'voluntary organisations were a bluff'.²⁵ He further suggested that these organisations had no authority to operate in Kalahandi. As elected Lok Sabha M.P. he instead argued that 'all work should be done by Lok Sabha member, Subhas Naik'.²⁶ He was categorical that voluntary organisations were operating on corrupt lines in the district, arguing that Agramee was not working properly for the rural people and that its members were only interested in themselves. Indeed he stated that he had:

'got information from the people that Agramee was bluffing... that they were all suffering to their people - all taking money for themselves'.

Indeed, Sri. Naik argued that he was unable to work with Orissa based voluntary agencies and would work only alongside an overseas organisation. For this reason he asked me to 'send him a voluntary organisation from England which would provide clothes and food'. Local N.G.O.'s he suggested were too small and lacked integrity.²⁷

Activities initiated by Agramee and other locally based N.G.O.'s have received some cooperation from sections of the State Government and Administration. Achyut Das, one of the Agramee's founding members, has been made a member of the Government of Orissa's State Planning Committee. A number of officers in the District Level Administration in Koraput or Kalahandi also worked efficiently in

²⁵ Interviewed in New Delhi, 13.6.92.

²⁶ op. cit.

²⁷ A similar lack of confidence in the activities of Agramee were expressed by R.C. Lenka, Minister of Agriculture, Government of India. Interviewed in New Delhi, July 1992

cooperation with local voluntary organisations. However in several instances this relationship appeared to be competitive or obstructive. Accusations were made by a number of Orissa M.L.A.'s during 1992 that Agramee workers had been abusing tribal women in regions in which they were working. These allegations were declared to be unfounded by a subsequent investigation ordered into this matter by Chief Minister Biju Patnaik. In some cases Government officers also demonstrated little preparedness to work alongside N.G.O.'s in the district.

7.3 Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that a number of voluntary organisations visited in Kalahandi, and in other parts of Orissa, have carried out a range of well prepared and efficiently implemented interventions to assist the vulnerable. These may offer important implications for interventions from the Government and other agencies. Being located in the region in which they operate and having workers themselves coming from this locality has strengthened the contact of these organisations with the local public and their knowledge of local requirements. This proximity has enhanced their ability to monitor whether interventions are compatible with local lifestyles and 'coping mechanisms'. In addition, these agencies have recognised the need to incorporate local people into programme planning and implementation, where possible leaving operation of these programmes to local people themselves. Alongside measures designed to enhance people's ability to act collectively in response to exploitation and poor social conditions, this has been important in heightening local levels of self-confidence and self-reliance. People's ability to maintain access to food has been further strengthened through measures to provide education and skills training, and to promote access to 'intermediate needs' such as health services, equitable market facilities and communications. Further, these organisations have tended to be more receptive than the Government to the importance of access to forest, fodder and a range of C.P.R.'s in the lives of those most vulnerable,

particularly adivasis. Measures to promote and redevelop such resources have therefore been given priority.

Importantly, these organisations have given emphasis to targeting the measures directly towards the vulnerable. Such targeting is important to reduce the monopoly which higher castes, and others with a high position in the village power structure, have held on assets from many Government programmes. In addition, the direct attention given to promoting needs of women, adivasis and specific deprived sections needs to be incorporated more fully into the programmes of the state and other agencies..

However operations of voluntary organisations in Kalahandi are not without their critics. Some agencies were identified in village level interviews as being either ineffective or lacking integrity. An interviewee in a different area suggested that he felt several locally based N.G.O.'s operate as if they are 'presiding over 'kingdoms'.²⁸ For example Mahalpadar, he suggested, is 'Ajit and Abani's kingdom'; Kashipur is 'Achyut's kingdom'; Bishwanatpur is 'FARR's kingdom' and so on. Whilst persons working in N.G.O.'s regularly enjoy considerable prestige and have considerable control over financial resources, he felt these offer little cooperation to the Government and other N.G.O.'s who tried to operate in their area, feeling that by doing so others are encroaching onto their territory. The need to strengthen the nexus between Government, N.G.O.'s, the public, and other actors in the relief and development process, is explored further in chapter 10.

²⁸ Name supplied, interview Khariar, March 1992.

Chapter 8: Legal Action and Food Security in Kalahandi

8.1 Introduction

It was argued in chapter 2 of this thesis that alongside mechanisms which protect a person's access to food and other crucial inputs, a range of other factors may also influence the ability of a particular population to maintain food security. Such factors include an active and unrestricted press; an adversarial system of multiparty politics; an active judicial system independent from executive and legislature, and free from control and interference from other interests; and a politically conscious population with channels for political action. It is a combination of these factors which has brought particular importance to the food issue in Kalahandi when compared with other similarly affected regions. The activities of the media, opposition and dissident Congress (I) politicians, social activists, voluntary organisations, law courts and other agencies, have been of major significance in placing pressure on the State Government to make necessary interventions in the district.

Within this set of factors the role of the legal system has been of primary significance. A petition sent in 1985 to the Supreme Court of India by two Kalahandi social workers, Kishan Pattnayak and Kapil Tiwari, drew attention to the failure of the State Government to take satisfactory measures to promote development in Kalahandi, and to administer relief in response to drought and starvation in the district. As discussed in chapter 5, responsibility for these interventions is stated in the Orissa Relief Code of 1980 to fall squarely with the State Government.

This public interest litigation initiated an extended inquiry process in the Supreme Court of India, and later in the Orissa High Court. On the basis of the subsequent Orissa High Court inquiry carried out in 1990 by Sri Baidyanath Mishra, the Government of Orissa was declared to have shown 'complete apathy in the

matter' and to have 'done nothing to ameliorate the distress which prevailed in the district'.(Mishra Commission, 1990) The latter inquiry confirmed that during recent drought periods deaths had occurred due to 'starvation'. This point had been long denied by the Congress (I) Orissa State Government of the time, under Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik. Further, the District Collector of Kalahandi at this time, Sri. Aurobindo Behera, received severe criticism for failure to carry out his duties as specified in the guidelines of the Orissa Relief Code. This set of proceedings under public interest litigation is largely unprecedented in India.

This legal process also acted as a trigger for a range of other forms of public response. This action had an important influence on the attention which Kalahandi received from the media at both state and national level. It also had a key bearing on the level of political debate which the issue of hunger and drought in Kalahandi received in the Lok Sabha¹ and in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Further, this initiated activity from a range of other political and social activists. These issues are given wider attention in the Kalahandi context in chapter 9 of this thesis.

8.2 Inquiry Process Initiated by the Supreme Court of India

Petition of Sri Kishan Pattnayak and Sri. Kapil Tiwari to the Supreme Court²
Problems created by drought, exploitation and food insecurity in Kalahandi were brought to the attention of the Supreme Court of India in a petition sent to the Chief Justice on the 21st. October 1985 by two social workers from the district, Sri Kishan Pattnayak and Sri Kapil Tiwari. This petition also highlighted the failure of the Government of Orissa to fulfill its responsibility to address these problems as specified in the 1980 Orissa Relief Code. The basic concerns of the petitioners, as spelt out in the opening paragraph of the petition, relate to the following issues:

¹ The Lok Sabha represents the India's Lower House of Parliament in New Delhi. This is effectively the equivalent of Great Britain's House of Commons.

² Writ Petition (Civil) No. 12847 of 1985

'... a specific matter of utmost urgency concerning the famine afflicted area of Kalahandi, a district of Orissa. The extremely wretched condition of the people here could be highlighted only by a visit of the Prime Minister in July 1985. It can be imagined, therefore, to what extent the people are neglected by very organ of the society. These people are beyond the pale of juristic justice and what we are trying to present as a case is only one aspect of the unlawful and oppressive system that has replaced the legitimate functioning of the state.'(para.1)

In this statement the petitioners therefore highlight the failure of the safety-net provided by the state and the judicial process to support the vulnerable and to improve their social and economic condition. They focus on issues of particular urgency which characterise the exploitation and suffering faced by the affected population, and which must be immediately addressed if further deterioration in their condition is to be prevented. These include the following:

1. *Distress sales of paddy* The petition states that poor cultivators are regularly forced to sell off their paddy crop after harvesting at distress sale prices. It argues that:

'About ninety per cent of the farmers of the Nawapara subdivision of Kalahandi district are among the poorest in the country. They live in subhuman conditions and are unable to resist the pressure of the unlawful system which has replaced the state administration. They are compelled to sell their only product (Paddy) at the rate of rupees fifty a bag (weighing 75 Kgs.) while the statutory minimum rate is Rs.106.50.'(para.4)

Such a system prevails in Kalahandi for a number of reasons. Firstly, as discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis, when harvesting time is reached in October and November, any stores of foodgrains and other essentials which cultivators have been able to keep from previous years have often been used up many months beforehand. To overcome immediate shortages many cultivators are therefore urgent to sell their crops as soon after the harvest as possible. Because many cultivators share this intention, high supply to markets at this time of year regularly forces down selling prices for these commodities, creating a situation where purchasers are poorly remunerated for their produce.

These unfavourable seasonal variations in terms of trade for poorer cultivators regularly contribute to the situations of indebtedness, distress sales of land and other assets, and the other pernicious consequences for people's ability to maintain food security discussed more fully in chapter 4 of this thesis.

The petition directs attention to the failure of measures taken by the State Government to prevent distress sales of paddy. It maintains that:

'Definite laws and rules have been laid down by the centre and the state for preventing what is known as 'distress sale' of foodgrains by peasants. The relevant state machinery headed by the district Collector is expected by law to prevent sale of paddy at a price below the minimum price....(T)he administration is expected to make necessary grassroot arrangements for fair price purchase if it is unable to curb the unlawful practice of the private traders, some of whom have obtained purchase licence from the state Government.(generally there are intermediaries who act on behalf of these licenced purchasers). The price-loot per bag in the case of farmers in some districts like Sambalpur is Rs.20/- per bag. But in the Nawapara subdivision of Kalahandi and adjoining areas it is Rs.50/- to Rs.70/- per bag. How can the farmers and peasants who suffer such huge losses every year withstand the ravages of drought which has been a regular feature since 1984.' (original emphasis)

Indeed in Orissa codified legal provisions do exist to protect cultivators from being forced to sell paddy at distress sale prices. However, as with a range of other legislation designed to protect the vulnerable in Orissa (eg. regulations designed to prevent land alienation from adivasis.), the administration has regularly failed to implement such provisions with sufficient rigour to prevent such practices taking place.³

2. *Land mortgage* The petition further highlights the difficulties which many poor members of the district have in obtaining loans from banks. This regularly forces them to borrow at unfavourable rates from private lenders. Many in the district are forced to mortgage land and other productive assets in order to obtain credit. However faced with repeated years of harvest failure, and limited access to alternative employment which may enable them to generate purchasing power through other means, many borrowers are unable to repay loans. This is particularly the case at the inflated rates of interest which are often demanded. The consequence has commonly been that this land is therefore forfeited to the lender.

³ For further discussion again refer to chapter 4 and chapter 6 of this thesis.

This statement corresponds with the findings of fieldwork for this thesis, discussed in chapter 4.10. These indicate that in the seven year period between the initiation of this public interest litigation in the Supreme Court in 1985 and the period of fieldwork for this thesis in 1992, that the Government has been unable to tighten up implementation of regulations preventing land alienation sufficiently to prevent their continued occurrence.

3. *Labour bondage* The petition states that owing to the acute shortage of employment opportunities in the district, and the impoverished condition of many of the farmers to whom agricultural labourers would look to provide work, labourers were frequently being 'forced to starve' or otherwise to take work as bonded labour.⁴ This bonded labour system is known locally as *vahabanch*, or 'hands are bound'. In this system labourers agree to work for the lender during the harvesting season in return for a loan. Commonly the borrower is bound by oral contract to carry out three days' work for the landlord to repay a loan equivalent to two days's wages.⁵ Unlike laws which at least in theory prevented 'distress sales of paddy', the petitioners point out that in Orissa there is no similar law preventing 'distress sales of labour'.

In sending this statement to the Supreme Court of India the petitioners specify that they do not consider problems of this nature to be unique to Kalahandi. Instead they emphasise that throughout a wide area of Orissa there was an urgent need to address such a range of problems faced by impoverished sections of the population.

They further stipulate that it is not their intention in sending this petition to seek punishment for those responsible for the forms of exploitation discussed above. Instead they state that their aim was to draw attention to the issues discussed, and to

⁴ A more complete discussion of forms of labour bondage which still exists in Kalahandi is provided in chapter 4.10.

⁵ At this time local wage rates were approximately Rs.4 per day.

make this information known to wider numbers of people. The crux of the petitioners' objectives are detailed in the following statement:

'Our prayer is implied in the narration of the case. The state government has to be directed to do its legal duty, to function properly and efficiently so as to eliminate the unlawful system of bondage whereby the farmers are compelled to sell their produce at an exorbitantly low rate and the labourers are forced to work for low wages. We are not interested about the punitive steps either against the petty traders or about the petty wagegivers. The Court in its wisdom may do anything. The Court may devise its own method of dealing with the case. We however suggest that the Court may immediately, even pending enquiry, direct the state of Orissa to take steps on a war-footing to prevent the distress sale of paddy in Kalahandi and neighbouring areas. Secondly the Court may appoint an investigating team to get a full picture and wide implications of this phenomemon. Thirdly the Court may at a later and more convenient date take up the consideration of the case on a grand scale. Such a consideration is necessary because the problem is not limited to a small part of Orissa. It is destroying the economic backbone of the agrarian population of the State.'

Petition sent to the Supreme Court of India by the Indian People's Front The Supreme Court received a further petition in 1987 filed by a group entitled the Indian People's Front.⁶ This similarly refers to the miserable condition of many inhabitants of Kalahandi and also of Koraput district. It states that drought, disease and famine have been a regular occurrence in these areas since 1985. However it suggests that the State Government is guilty of 'utter failure' to protect the lives of the people of the two districts. In consequence, deaths which occurred in these districts during this period were due to the utter callousness and negligence of the Administration and the Government of Orissa.⁷

In response to this petition, and to the earlier petition sent to the Supreme Court by Sri. Pattnayak and Sri Tiwari, the Government of Orissa filed counter-affadavits to the Supreme Court denying the allegations which they made. The Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik, maintained that there was nothing 'abnormal' about the prevailing situation in Kalahandi. He also strongly denied that deaths due to starvation had taken place in the district.

⁶ Writ Petition (Civil) Nos. 1081 of 1987

⁷ 1989 Supp(1) Supreme Court Cases 258, parag. 3

Process of Inquiry On receiving the initial Pattnayak/Tiwari petition the Supreme Court in January 1986 appointed a two-man inquiry commission of Sri Ambika Prasad Guru, a retired District and Sessions Judge from Sambalpur, and Sri Shyam Sundar Das, a social worker. Central aims of this investigation were to assess the condition of the affected population of the district, and the validity of the State Government's claims that it had carried out satisfactory social welfare provisions in the district.

This inquiry experienced considerable delays and had still not commenced when the two investigators originally appointed were replaced by District and Sessions judge Sri Pratab Chandra Panda. Critics of the Chief Minister and his Congress (I) Government maintained that these delays were the result of heavy obstruction by the latter to the inquiry process.

I have been unable to establish during research for this thesis an unambiguous explanation for why the original investigating team was replaced. However it was argued in a number of press articles that Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik considered the commissioning of an inquiry by the Supreme Court of India to be a personal rebuff to him, in the face of his claim that there was 'nothing exceptional' about conditions prevailing in the district. Critics of the Chief Minister maintain that the replacement investigator, Sri Panda, was more sympathetic to J.B. Patnaik's case than the original inquiry partnership under Sri Guru and Sri Das.

Such suspicions called into doubt the objectivity of the resulting inquiry. The impartiality and effectiveness of the Panda investigation was further drawn into question following the Inquiring Officer's decision that nobody should accompany him during his assessment in affected areas, when this was carried out in July 1987. This reversed an earlier request that the petitioners should assist him in his investigation. Indeed, the Inquiring Officer had initially written to Sri Kapil Tiwari in a letter dated 16.5.87, requesting that the petitioners and representatives of the

State Government, but no other outsiders, be present at the inquiry. (Appendix 8.1) In a second letter dated 16.6.87 the Inquiring Judge requested Sri Tiwari's further assistance in suggesting places which should be visited during the investigation. (Appendix 8.2) However, in a third dated 20.6.87 the Judge nullified these previous requests, stating that nobody including Sri Tiwari accompany him in his inquiry. (Appendix 8.3)

The investigator's decision to carry out the inquiry unaccompanied raised a number of doubts about the validity of its method and its conclusions. In a meeting held on 20.7.87 the Kalahandi Bar Association in Bhawanipatna formulated a statement for the attention of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as well as for the petitioners stating that:

'... it is dismal to observe that the learned District-Judge has denied the mere legal opportunity of being heard or to be present at the enquiry to the petitioners as well other leading public workers while the whole Govt. machinery is geared up to be alert and make efforts to frustrate the purpose of enquiry.(sic) The enquiry is secret in nature as done by the District-Judge, for petitioners, people of Kalahandi and Journalists and not for Govt. machinery. No intelligetia (sic) or social organization or people in the know of Kalahandi topography are consulted or called for discussion for future development of Kalahandi.

The statement concludes:

'This being the grim situation the Kalahandi Bar-Association humbly submit by unanimously resolving that they feel and do justly feel that the enquiry may not be impartial and the fate of the down trodden people of Kalahandi will be sealed for ever as Govt. will rely on the said report and we very painfully bring it to the notice of Hon'ble Court for their kind intervention by directing a sitting judge of Hon'ble Orissa High Court instead of the present agency for proper enquiry a fresh.'(sic)

Further doubts on the validity of the inquiry were expressed by the petitioners themselves⁸, along with a range of other persons familiar with the conditions prevailing in the district. These derived in part from the change in the attitude of the Inquiring Officer regarding whether or not the petitioners should accompany him in his investigation in the district, and whether they should provide information to assist the inquiry. These also derive from the delay in the commencement of the inquiry until after the onset of the monsoon. This prevented the Investigator from gaining access to some of the worst affected villages in interior

⁸ Interviews with Kishan Pattanayak and Kapil Tiwari, op. cit.

areas. For this reason it was felt that the resulting report would understate the seriousness of the prevailing conditions.⁹ The central conclusions of the Commission are listed more fully in the following section.

Central Conclusions of the Report of the Panda Commission ¹⁰ The report submitted by the Inquiry Officer makes a number of key points relating to issues raised in the petition sent by Sri. Pattnayak and Sri. Tiwari to the Supreme Court, and other aspects of prevailing conditions in Kalahandi. These refer in particular to the following issues:

Condition of Weavers The report rejects the assertion that weavers in Sinapali block were in an 'unfavourable condition' as a result of adverse market conditions and a lack of looms on which to work. The Inquiring Officer suggests that the Government had for a considerable time provided looms to weavers and training to improve their weaving skills. Further he comments that a number of those who had been given looms by the state had sold them rather than keeping them to use for weaving. He suggests that a number of non-weavers were also benefitting from this assistance. This somewhat negated the object of this intervention.

Therefore whilst implicitly criticising Government interventions for their lack of adequate targeting, the investigator largely clears the Government of failing to fulfill its responsibility to provide necessary protection to weavers. Instead his report suggests that considerable blame for their condition must be placed on weavers themselves for misutilising assistance provided in the form of looms.

Condition of Labourers The investigator concludes that the condition of labourers in the district was 'very precarious'. Availability of agricultural work was far from adequate to meet the high demand of agricultural labourers for employment.

⁹ A number of doubts regarding the bona fides of the inquiry are expressed in a letter sent by Kapil Tiwari in reply to those received from the Inquiring Officer. This is reproduced in full in Appendix D.

¹⁰ Dated 29.1.88 in the matter of the Writ Petition (Civil) no. 12487 of 1985.

Further, many labourers continued to be paid below the state imposed minimum wage level.¹¹ The report argues that

'... in most parts of this area the labourers are getting Rs.10 per day for their work and in some interior parts they are getting less wages'.(p.124)

Contractors in particular were identified as failing to pay minimum wages to workers they employ.(p.133) However the report attributes the persistence of these low wage rates in part to the low education and consciousness of the labouring population. It argues that when these workers become aware that such a minimum wage exists then they 'will definitely demand the legitimate dues'. (p.157)

The findings of the investigator therefore correspond with conclusions drawn in chapter 4.2 and 4.4. of this thesis. These indicate, on the basis of my fieldwork carried out in Kalahandi, that low wages and inadequate availability of work in agriculture, as the principal source of employment in the district, are key determinants of the limited ability of many poorer persons in the district to maintain food security. The report also implicitly recognises the importance of limited education and consciousness amongst these sections as an important explanatory variable in this process. Improved access to these 'intermediate needs', as they are defined in chapter 2, are therefore important factors in improving the ability of agricultural labourers and other poor people to maintain a food secure position.

Loans The report casts doubt upon the effectiveness of loans, both in kind and in cash, provided to the vulnerable population. It suggests that many who have received loans in kind have sold the commodities they have received back to the same shopkeeper from which they were obtained at reduced price. On occasions the latter have then sold the same goods to the Government at considerable profit. Similarly it was argued that cash loans were frequently misutilised. The investigator is critical

¹¹ Between 15.7.85 and 19.7.86 the state enforced minimum wage in Orissa was Rs. 7.50 per day.(Under S.R.O. No.475/85 dated 8.7.85). From 20.7.86 this rate was increased to Rs. 10 per day for unskilled labour.(Under S.R.O. 103/87 dated 20.7.87)

of the state for providing little 'follow-up' action and taking little action to ensure that loans in cash and kind are used for the intended purpose. (p.251)

Medical Facilities Whilst dedicating little space to this issue, the report suggests that coverage by medical facilities in Kalahandi is inadequate. It further suggests that medical officers do not want to come to Kalahandi, and that although financial incentives have been provided to attract medical personnel from outside the district, these may be too low to be effective.

Government Development Programmes in Kalahandi The report of the Inquiring Officer generally supports the Government of Orissa in its assertion that it has introduced a wide range of schemes to promote development and to prevent crises caused by 'natural calamities' in Kalahandi.¹² This infers that a number of problems faced by poors in the district are largely the result of their own laziness or lack of initiative.

Firstly, it suggests that many taking loans do not use them for the required purpose. In a number of instances the investigators found borrowers to be spending these on liquor. The report indeed argues that

'It is widely known in this area that the liquor vendors and shopkeepers are only benefitting and persons who are getting loans with the provisos of subsidy for their economic development are not using the same and as such it is felt that these people are not taking an interest in their own economic development' (p. 251)

Secondly, it states that 'labourers mostly in this part are lazy' and in that those taking employment in government works fail to do the quantity of work required to get full wages.(p.123/4)¹³

¹² The report suggests the Government of Orissa has implemented a wide range of schemes for promoting development in the district. These include: (1) forest development - such forest development schemes were designed to (a) promote social forest to meet the elementary needs of villagers for forest materials such as firewood, needs for cattle, wood for house building and for preparing agricultural implements (b) supply the raw material needs of industries dependent on forest produce. Forest schemes are included under the N.R.E.P., R.G.L.E.P., I.R.D.P., D.P.A.P. and soil conservation schemes ; (2) marketing of milk and Schemes for Improvement of Cattle; (3) Schemes for mulberry and other fruit plantations.

¹³ The report suggests that 'It is also seen in many areas that the labourers are not doing the work for the stipulated period of 8 hours and with some plea or other they are passing away their time during the working period. This attitude of the labourers should be removed in order to make them eligible to get required minimum wages for the stipulated period of work'. (p.157)

It further argues that conditions for receiving relief from state run kitchens are too lax. It implies that this has provided a disincentive for people to attempt to meet their requirements for food and other essentials from their own initiative and from their own resources. Instead it suggests that these people will simply become dependent upon handouts from feeding centres, thereby reducing their self-reliance and increasing their reliance on the state. Indeed the investigator observes that:

'It is noticed that many people came to the feeding centres from the early morning and sit there until food is served. There is a common feeling with the people that if they make "hullah" then the Government will continue in supplying free food to them.'(p.346)

More generally the Inquiry Officer largely absolves the Government of blame for neglecting its responsibility to protect the vulnerable and to take timely and effective measures to deal with the deteriorating social conditions in Kalahandi. His general conclusion is that:

'The Government has taken different steps for uplifting poor people but it is found in most parts of this area that the people themselves are not showing any interest for their own social welfare and misutilising the benefits conferred on them in many ways ... '

Similarly he suggests that:

'At this period, it cannot be said that various social welfare measures taken by the Government are sufficient or not, but enough measures have been taken by the Government to develop the people, specially the poor and downtrodden economically. In spite of all efforts of the Government, there is no marked development with the people or they are misutilising the different benefits conferred upon them and diverting those benefits in other manners and not for the purposes for which the benefits have been conferred.'(p.133)

The investigator therefore concludes that the blame for limited effectiveness of state interventions does not lie directly with the state itself, which has largely carried out its responsibilities in the required manner. Instead he attributes this primarily to the lack of interest which the people of the district have shown in taking advantage of these state interventions to promote their own 'self-improvement'. He argues that:

'... it is the people who must aspire for their own development and without that no government can lift the people who are not internally interested for their own self-development in socio-economic matters'.(p.274)

This conclusion is of considerable significance and demands further attention. As discussed in chapters 4 and 6, such views were similarly forwarded by a number of Government officers interviewed during fieldwork for this project in Kalahandi.

One Revenue Inspector stated that:

'people in the area are largely responsible for their own condition. They feel that drought is inevitable and so do nothing to improve their situation - they just sit and wait for drought to arrive'.¹⁴

For this reason he argued that loans should be ceased to the vulnerable since they make people lazy. A Block Development Officer interviewed in the district expressed similar sentiments, arguing that many 'just spent spent their loans on drink and do not want to work'. He suggested that people in the block 'want easy earning and do not have faith in agriculture'. Instead they would prefer to migrate than try to earn a living in Kalahandi. He argued that these people have 'no mind to work here'. However, whilst critical of their reluctance to work, this officer remained sympathetic to the problems faced by these people, arguing that they had 'no good food, no employment outside agriculture, and no industry'.¹⁵

In this context it is argued here that it is simplistic and inaccurate to attribute the bulk of problems faced in Kalahandi to their own laziness and lack of initiative, as implied by the Panda Commission and a number of Government officials mentioned above.

Firstly, as outlined in chapter 2, it is important that Government interventions to protect food security should play an enabling role. Rather than simply being the dependent recipients of Government relief, the vulnerable should as far as possible be placed in a position where they are able to maintain food security through their own activities, whether these be cultivation, waged labour or other means. For this task to be satisfactorily performed it is necessary that people have access to a range of 'intermediate needs', which may include adequate health care services, education, drinking water, sanitation and so forth.

¹⁴ Name supplied, interviewed 3.3.92.

¹⁵ Name supplied, interviewed 4.3.92.

These issues are largely overlooked by the Pande Commission in accusing the vulnerable population of Kalahandi of laziness, and a failure to take an interest in their own self-development. The lack of access which many in the district have to such facilities limits their ability to maintain food security and a stable livelihood. Despite efforts in certain areas, the Government has failed to reinforce and protect people's capabilities to the extent necessary to enable them to perform this task. In these circumstances it is inaccurate to blame this failure on lack of motivation or lack of initiative amongst the affected population.

Secondly, observers in a number of parts of the district will be correct to conclude that during certain times of the year the level of activity of some sections of the population is low. This problem exacerbated by regular consumption of liquor in some cases. However to attribute this problem wholly to laziness is again to overlook important issues. Firstly people's morale and self-respect have been eroded by regular years of drought and food crisis and a constant deterioration of their fall-back position.¹⁶ For this reason their motivation to work, and their confidence in their ability to meet their requirements, has in some instances been greatly reduced. Many have lost land and other productive assets through distress sales. Some have experienced disruption in their family and community structure due to migration. In some cases people have lost relatives through deaths from illness or malnutrition related causes. In these circumstances it is unsurprising that people's will to work has been reduced. The terms 'lazy' and 'unmotivated' masks the reasons behind why people may have become inactive, and fails to adequately explain their state of mind.

Thirdly, constant shortages of employment has meant that many who have been unable to migrate to other regions to find work have been forced to remain inactive for many months outside of the cropping season.¹⁷ This enforced unemployment may create the impression of laziness in the eyes of certain

¹⁶ This problem is addressed further in chapters 4, 5, and 10.

¹⁷ Some people also being unable to find work during this cultivation period.

observers. However this inactivity is in many instances largely unavoidable for the population concerned until new avenues for employment can be created within the region. The Panda Commission's conclusion that opportunities have been created for the poor through Government programmes, and that these persons have remained impoverished due to their failure to take a stronger interest in their own self-development, misrepresents this situation.¹⁸

Fourthly, the Panda Commission observes that many people attending relief works fail to do the requisite amount of work necessary to obtain full wages. The Inquiry Officer reports that those attending feeding centres come in the early morning and merely sit there until food is served. This observation may be a valid in some instances. However it is of greater importance to explain why these people are reluctant to work in these schemes and choose simply to 'sit' in feeding centres.

It is again both simplistic and incorrect to attribute this to laziness. Persons attending relief works and feeding centres are in many cases already likely to be of low morale, and well advanced along the process of crisis-induced immiseration described earlier in chapter 4 of this thesis. In such circumstances the principal objective of those attending these centres is likely to be obtain food or purchasing power with minimum expenditure of effort. Little incentive to work hard is provided in relief works, since additional effort is unlikely to provide them with increased wages. It seems likely that often those capable of expending additional effort many would prefer to do this outside of relief schemes.¹⁹ Whilst some persons may attend Government schemes despite being able to meet their requirements from their own means, it seems less likely that such a tendency is generalised.

Reaction to the findings of the Panda Commission The conclusions of this report were received largely with incredulity by the petitioners and other concerned

¹⁸ The limited success of many of these self-created businesses and the limited employment opportunities which these create for others have been discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

¹⁹ For example through cultivation on their own plots (for those that have them); through collecting forest produce and other wild foods, and through other activities which may benefit them more directly.

persons from Kalahandi and other areas. A number challenged the accuracy of its findings, particularly its conclusion that no starvation deaths had taken place in the district during the period under investigation. It was widely felt by the petitioners and other parties that the Inquiring Officer had failed to gain an accurate impression of the prevailing conditions in the district. He had also failed to appreciate the full level of the suffering which was experienced by the affected population.

As discussed more fully in a later section, many felt that he had overstated the efforts made by the Government to promote relief and to mitigate suffering. His conclusion that the impoverished position of the affected population was largely due to their own laziness, and lack of initiative in taking advantage of state interventions, was also seen to be an insult to the affected population. However faith in the validity of the Pande Commission's findings was drawn into question in particular by the Inquiry Officer's final conclusion in his report. Here he suggests that:

'... due to the massive efforts of the State Government, the land and the people of Kalahandi are now undergoing a process of dynamic change which will definitely result not only in the socio-economic upliftment of the people but will also ensure complete change of the district into one of the prosperous districts of Orissa'.

This statement appears in the eyes of some local persons have been so divorced from reality in Kalahandi, and so praising of the interventions made by the Government, that the objectivity of the investigator was called into doubt.

The Supreme Court itself demonstrated a mixed reaction to the findings of the inquiry which it commissioned from District Judge Panda. It generally supported the conclusion that the state had taken necessary measures to address the problems which prevailed in Kalahandi and Koraput districts. Indeed the Supreme Court itself argues that:

'There is no reason not to accept the statements made on behalf of the State of Orissa that the measures stated above are being taken for the purpose of mitigating hunger, poverty, starvation deaths etc. of the people of Kalahandi. If such measures are taken, there can be no doubt that it will alleviate to a great extent the miseries of the people of Kalahandi. Such measures are also being taken in respect of the district of Koraput.' (ibid, para:20)

However the Supreme Court did not accept the conclusion of the Panda Commission that no starvation deaths had taken place in Kalahandi during the period under investigation. Rather it states that:

'Although the learned District Judge's report is against the alleged starvation deaths, we are of the view that the happening of one or two cases of starvation deaths cannot altogether be ruled out.' (emphasis added) (Supreme Court (1989): para. 7)

In terms of policy recommendations the Supreme Court recommended that a District Level Natural Calamities Committee should be established and should meet at least once every two months. It supported the suggestion of Sri Kishan Pattnayak that this should include at least five non-official and non-political members belonging to known social work organisations and registered voluntary organisations. The function of this committee should be to 'look after the welfare of the people of the district' as well as to prevent starvation deaths.²⁰ Sri Pattanayak agreed to the operation of such a Committee organised along these lines.

The findings of the Panda Commission inquiry reported in this section therefore failed, in the eyes of considerable numbers of activists and members of the Kalahandi public, to provide an accurate analysis of conditions faced by the poor and hungry in the district. The failure of this report to identify what some felt to be obvious deficiencies in Government programmes generated a sentiment that this investigation would contribute little to preventing similar future distress in Kalahandi

In response to this failure a number of further cases relating to a similar set of issues were brought before the Orissa High Court. These cases, and the resulting legal investigation, are discussed further in the following section.

²⁰ However the Supreme Court did not consider it necessary to form a separate Kalahandi Relief Implementation Committee as recommended originally by Sri Pattnayak. The latter intended that this should be an 11 member committee, the majority of which should not be members of a political party and should be members of respected social work organisations or voluntary agencies contained in the approved State list of voluntary organisations. (Supreme Court (1989): para 7)

8.3 Inquiry Process Initiated by the Orissa High Court

A further inquiry into the prevailing social conditions in Kalahandi was initiated by the Orissa High Court in response to two further cases.²¹ The first was initiated in response to allegations made in the Sun Times of Orissa on 17th October 1988, sent to the Court by Sri Bhawani Mund of Sinapali.²² The second case was initiated by a petition sent to the Court by Sri A.C. Pradhan, an advocate from Cuttack.²³ The main points raised in the two cases are discussed below.

Basis of Case No. 3517/88 Relating to Allegations in an Article in the Sun Times This case brought before the High Court of Orissa was founded upon points made in the English language Orissa daily, the Sun Times. This article argues that the District Administration in Kalahandi has taken 'hardly any steps' to prevent local adivasis from being forced into bonded labour relations with local Gountias in the district. Further, as pointed out in the petition sent to the Supreme Court of India by Sri Pattnayak and Sri Tiwari, poor adivasis in Kalahandi are frequently forced to mortgage their land as a condition for obtaining credit from moneylenders. On being unable to satisfy repayments of such loans, land alienations from adivasis under such lending arrangements have been a common occurrence in the district. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, this problem is accentuated by the low levels of literacy and knowledge of credit relations which prevail amongst many of those most vulnerable. Frequently these persons are not properly aware of alternative sources of credit available to them.²⁴

The article forwarded to the Orissa High Court rightly identifies that adivasis in the district frequently do not perceive moneylenders to be their exploiters. Instead, as a result of their ability to lend even in times of great

²¹ These original jurisdiction cases brought before the High Court were public interest litigations relating to matters of social justice and not to the settlement of any dispute. The Court in exercising constitutional powers has the power to direct the executive Government where appropriate to take necessary relief measures.

²² O.J.C. No. 3517/88.

²³ O.J.C. No.525/89.

²⁴ See further in chapter 4.10 and 6.3.

hardship, the latter are commonly seen to be 'demi-gods' and 'bread givers' in the eyes of the impoverished population.²⁵ It further suggests that the Government assists the Mahajans in such forms of exploitation by failing to react to complaints made against these moneylenders, and even harassing adivasis on the latter's behalf.

Generally the implications of the article suggest that the problems which form the content of these allegations continue to prevail in the district as a result of the 'lax administrative machinery' and the Government's 'apathy' towards these problems.(Mishra Commission, 1990: para.2)

The Orissa High Court requested Senior Council, Sri Jagannath Patnaik, to represent Bhawani Mund in this case.

Allegations made under O.J.C.No.525/89 This petition, sent by Sri A.C. Pradhan, suggests that 'due to chronic spells of acute drought since 1985 and consequent crop loss for successive years the economic back-bone of the residents of both the districts of Bolangir and Kalahandi has been shattered'. As a result villagers have started to migrate 'enmass' to other States in search of food and employment. They have also been forced to sell off their belongings and sometimes even their children to avoid starvation.

As in the accompanying case, based on allegations made in the Sun Times, the petitioner points to the exploitation of people in the district by private money lenders (Gountias) He argues that in the current circumstances these people do not have access to alternative means of credit to enable them to avoid this exploitation. This is made worse because even in these circumstances banks and Government agencies have started a 'ruthless drive' to recover loans from people who had borrowed under anti-poverty and welfare schemes.

Finally, press cuttings are included in annexes to the main petition relating to instances of starvation death, sale of children, mass outmigration from the area

²⁵ This issue has been discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.10, and corresponds closely with my own observations in Kalahandi.

and pressure being applied to villagers by banks to recover loans. These factors, it is stated, have forced people to sell off assets such as ornaments and cattle.(ibid: para.3)

The two above cases again illustrate the key role which may be played by the press and the law courts in the process of maintaining food security, supporting the hypothesis made to this effect in chapter 2.²⁶ In this instance media coverage and legal activity have been important in identifying the suffering faced by sections of the Kalahandi population. These have also drawn attention to the lack of responsibility of some Government officers in assisting in exploitation of the vulnerable, or by failing to initialise necessary measures to relieve distress. Further, the media and the legal system have played an important role in this case by bringing these factors to the attention of a wider public, and in motivating an inquiry into this set of issues.

Procedure for Investigation under the Baidyanath Mishra Commission In response to the allegations made in the above two cases, the Orissa High Court appointed an inquiry into the allegations made in the above two cases through an order dated 2.3.90. This inquiry was to be carried out under Sri. Baidyanath Mishra.

The launch of this inquiry was initially delayed by the failure of the Government to provide an immediate guarantee that it would cooperate with the inquiry process, as directed by the above court order. On receiving confirmation of Government cooperation the investigator met with the Collector of Kalahandi for initial discussion on the 1st. October 1990. The latter assured full assistance, apart from agreeing to provide an officer to assist the Investigator with the inquiry. In lieu the Collector agreed to provide him with the help of the District Development Officer, who was instructed to assist the inquiry in addition to carrying out his

²⁶ This is particularly through the pressure which these institutions may place on Government and other agencies to implement necessary interventions to assist those in distress. By making these issues known to a wider public these institutions may also motivate further public collective action of the forms discussed further in chapter 4.10 and 9.2.

normal tasks.(ibid:para.53) It is mentioned by the Inquiring Officer in his final report that he felt that the failure of the Administration to provide him with an experienced officer to assist him in his tasks had handicapped him in carrying out his investigation. (ibid:para.5)

A number of agencies were instructed by the High Court to provide information and reports to the Inquiring Officer which were of relevance to the cases under investigation. These include AWARE, a voluntary organisation operating in Kalahandi, and Sri A.C. Pradhan, the petitioner in the second case.

After its launch the following procedure was adopted for the investigation:

1. public notices were issued inviting reports and information from Social Organisations and from individuals as directed by the High Court. These notices were published in newspapers. Copies were also published at Panchayat level in Kalahandi and Bolangir districts in which the investigation was taking place. These contained a summary of allegations filed in the cases and requested information from the public relating to the following key issues:

1.1. a. Exploitation of adivasis and illiterate rural poor by moneylenders and ex-gountias, including land alienation.

b. Laxity amongst the administration in preventing such exploitation and even collusion between government officials and moneylenders.

c. Harsh and drastic steps to realise loans disbursed in anti-poverty schemes, despite the conditions of economic misery which follow drought.

1.2. Economic misery of the Rural Population Consequent to Droughts

a. Distress sale by villagers of their properties and in some cases even their children to avoid starvation.

b. Starvation death.

c. Mass exodus of villagers to other States for employment and food.

1.3. Alleged apathy of the Government

a. Allocation of funds and utilisation thereof.

- b. Steps taken to combat the consequences of drought.
 - c. Measures taken to generate employment opportunity.
 - d. Developmental activities under various welfare schemes and their achievements.
2. A questionnaire was issued to the district administrations and official agencies of Bolangir and Kalahandi. This requested blockwide information relating to:
- a. the population of each block according to the last census;
 - b. landowners and landless persons;
 - c. irrigation facilities;
 - d. water harvesting schemes;
 - e. employment opportunities since 1985 in areas other than agriculture and social welfare schemes;
 - f. provision of funds in Rural Development and Employment Schemes such as DPAP, RGLEP and poverty alleviation schemes including ERRP, ERDP and ITDA.

This set of questions indicates a relatively clear understanding of issues requiring investigation on the part of the Inquiring Officer. It also provides evidence of a well constructed inquiry into the roots of hunger and exploitation in Kalahandi, and the alleged failure of the Government of Orissa and the District Administration to implement necessary programmes to promote development and to provide relief during periods of crisis.

It is of significance that the Investigator notes that there was poor response to these notices. No responses were obtained from private individuals, the media, or any elected representative in the district. Only two replies were obtained from voluntary organisations: one of these being from FARR, based in Bishwanathpur in Lanjigarh block; the other from AWARE, operative in Thuamur Rampur. These organisations provided information relating to land alienation of land previously owned by poors in the district to moneylenders.

The low response from the public obtained during this investigation is an issue of significance. Given the impoverished condition of many amongst the populations of Kalahandi and Bolangir, and the limited avenues open to them to express their needs and to voice their problems, it may be expected that many would be enthusiastic to utilise such an opportunity to draw attention to their immiseration, exploitation and limited access to food. The lack of any response at all may be indicative of a number of factors. These may include the following:

1. public awareness of the inquiry was lower than is indicated by the Investigator in his report. Low levels of education and literacy prevailing amongst many of those most vulnerable indicates that they may not have seen notices published in newspapers. For this reason they may have been aware of these notices only if somebody at panchayat level brought them to their attention.
2. Following from this point, low education levels and low levels of political consciousness meant some persons had limited awareness of the significance of this inquiry and limited interest in contributing information to it.
3. Disillusionment created by the findings of the previous Panda Commission report had reduced public interest in further legal inquiry. Some persons may have perceived that conclusions drawn from this subsequent study would again be unreflective of conditions prevailing in reality in the region. The previous Panda Commission inquiry may also have caused some to feel that the legal channels through which these inquiries operate in Kalahandi are not properly independent. For this reason it was assumed that the Mishra Inquiry would be similarly biased its findings in favour of the Government.
4. Related to the above, there was limited faith amongst the public that, even if the Mishra Inquiry drew conclusions which were reflective of prevailing conditions in Kalahandi, these finding would be ignored by the Government and other relevant parties. In these circumstances contributing information to the inquiry would do

little to ensure that Government officers carried out more rigorously their responsibility to administer programmes to relieve poverty and hunger.

5. Some people may have feared that they would suffer recriminations if they provided evidence against persons exploiting them. Some may also have felt that they would encounter difficulties in obtaining further loans if these become necessary in the future.

6. The physical health and morale of sections of the affected population had been eroded to a level where they were not able to respond to such public notices.

In his final report the Inquiring Officer suggests that he failed to receive any information to assist his investigation from either the Collector of Kalahandi or Bolangir. Such a statement indicates that officials in these District Administrations did not provide requisite cooperation for this inquiry. However this statement contradicts evidence from my own interviews carried out for this study in Orissa. When I interviewed him in Bhubaneswar, Sri Aurobinda Behera, the Collector of Kalahandi at that time, suggested that he had at no time been consulted by this inquiry. Rather than failing to supply information to the inquiry as suggested in Sri. Mishra's report, the former Collector stated that the Inquiring Officer had made no attempt to incorporate his evidence into the investigation. This point is discussed further during analysis in chapter 8.5.

Central Findings of the Mishra Inquiry The findings of the Inquiring Officer relate to the following issues, discussed here in a summarised form.

Exploitation and Land Appropriations by Ex-Gountias and Moneylenders of Impoverished Adivasis The inquiry confirmed the occurrence of the mentioned forms of exploitation and land alienation in Kalahandi and Bolangir districts. The investigator suggests that these practices are particularly common due to the lower education and literacy of adivasis relative to their exploiters. Although, as discussed in chapter 4.10, on

paper appropriation of land from tribals in the designated tribal blocks, Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur, is prevented by Orissa Regulation 2/56, in practice land alienations clearly continued to occur despite this provision..

The report argues that this failure is not due to the ineffectiveness of Orissa Regulation 2/56 itself, which is sufficiently far reaching and well designed to eliminate the problem.²⁷ Instead the investigator attributes this directly to the failure of the State Government to rigorously implement its provisions,. and to negligence or lack of integrity on the part of Government Officers in carrying out their responsibilities. He suggests that:

'if exploitation subsists and lands of Tribals (are) usurped by moneylenders despite such law, the administration must shoulder the blame for laxity and connivance, if not collusion'.(para.8)

The Investigator is also highly critical of the Administration for its lack of preparation for managing relief measures, and for its minimal awareness of the suffering prevailing within the district. He concludes that until 1988 the authorities were 'unmindful of the problem'. Only after the situation was brought to their attention by the social organisation AWARE, did the Government initiate any significant programmes to assist the affected population.²⁸(para.106)

Indeed the investigator concludes that 'obviously the District Administration was in stupor and was perhaps unaware of the problem'. Further he argues that it has 'not taken such action being inspired by sense of duty' but only acted when pressured by outside agencies such as AWARE and the Orissa Legal Aid Board, which was chaired by a High Court Judge.(para.14)

Collusion of Government Officials With Moneylenders and Gountias The investigator states that as a result of being unable to collect sufficient information he was unable

²⁷ The report argues that 'the law as such is potent enough to protect the Adivasis or Tribals from exploitation by non-Tribals in usurping their lands by any means'.(Mishra Commission, 1990: para.8)

²⁸ The latter reports that it made the problem known to the district administration at the District Level Coordination Committee meeting on 23.3.88 and submitted a list of cases where transfers of land had occurred. The Collector advised the S.D.O.'s and Tahasildars to take the appropriate action. The Project Officer of AWARE also supplied a report to the Orissa Legal Aid Board, subsequent to which the S.D.O. held 'camp courts'.

to make a decision regarding whether such collusion had taken place in the district. However he argues that the Administration is at fault for its lack of effort and initiative in addressing this problem. He suggests that:

'Although direct evidence of collusion of corrupt officials with the money lenders or harassing the Adivasis at their instance is not available, the inaction of the administration regarding this problem is nothing but laxity'.(para.14)

The inquiry also discovered exploitation in non-scheduled regions of Kalahandi and Bolangir by moneylenders and Ex-Gountias. In these regions Regulation 2/56 does not operate. However they are covered by Sections 22 and 23 of the Orissa Land Reforms Act. The latter provides similar coverage to Regulation 2/56, but in the eyes of the inquiry is perhaps of 'greater potency' since they also cover the interests of S.C.'s.(ibid:para.29) However, although these legal provisions do exist, at least on paper, to protect scheduled sections of the population from exploitation and land alienation, the report is again highly critical of the administration for being 'slack' in enforcing the provisions of these acts, along with other relevant legislations such as the Orissa Money Lenders' Act and the Bonded Labour Act .

During his inquiry the investigator mentions that many people were unwilling to supply him with names of moneylenders allegedly exploiting people within their village. This was particularly due to fear that they would be unable to take loans from these moneylenders in the future, should they again meet with times of hardship. This point is an important one. As discussed in chapter 4.10, the terms of these loans are frequently highly exploitative for the borrower. Rising indebtedness has regularly led to a pernicious spiral of alienation of land and other crucial assets, labour bondage and other punitive repercussions for the borrower. However such loans still continue to represent an important survival strategy for the vulnerable during times of hardship. Many amongst the vulnerable are therefore unlikely to be unwilling to endanger their opportunities for taking further loans in the future by supplying information relating to their exploitation by these moneylenders to this legal inquiry.

Moneylenders and Gountias seen by the Poor as 'Demi Gods' The report confirms that there is some truth in the suggestion made in the Sun Times that illiterate villagers approach gountias and moneylenders for loans because they respect them and 'think they provide their daily bread'. Ex-gountias, who were previously the village headmen, are argued to be 'practically in charge of the village administration'. It is suggested that villagers tend to look at these people with awe and 'respect them as Demi Gods'. The Government is again found to be culpable regarding this issue. The report suggests that Government officials, who it argues 'cannot be expected to be unaware of the exploitation by these rich ex-gountias', do not take any action to prevent it and indeed 'appear to connive' in the process.(para.108)

In response to this problem the Inquiring Officer suggests that it is necessary for the State Government to instruct Revenue Officers to rigorously implement legislation to prevent exploitation and land alienation by ex-gountias and moneylenders. He rightly argues that there is also a need for the state to introduce measures to raise the consciousness of the population, in order to reduce their vulnerability to these forms of exploitation. As discussed in chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis, these factors represent important explanatory variables in the process of maintaining food security.

The importance of ensuring that the vulnerable have channels through which they can express their needs and voice protest against their impoverished social conditions is also recognised. Significantly, the investigator states in his report that officials in the welfare department, in a similar manner to social organisations, should attempt to increase awareness amongst the victims of their rights and how to assert them by legal and constitutional means. (ibid)

Availability of Credit The investigator rejects the other allegation made by the Sun Times that villagers are unaware of alternative loan facilities available from banks. He suggests that finance from IRDP and rural development schemes are reaching

most villages and that many villages are taking loans which they are unable to repay. Consequently banks and cooperative societies are adopting drastic steps in attempts to recover these loans.

Charging of Compound Interest The report confirms that in some instances banks were found to be charging compound interest to borrowers.²⁹ However the Inquiring Officer takes a sympathetic line towards the banks. He argues that because banks are paying compound interest to their depositors they are justified in charging compound interest on money that they lend. It also argues that since it is in the public interest that banks recover loans, they may on occasions also be justified in adopting certain 'coercive processes of law', such as attachment and sale of the borrower's property, which may 'cause harassment' to the borrower.

The inquiry suggests that 'no reasonable solution' is to be found to the problem by writing off loans. Because banks are safeguarded by the Government the costs of debt write-offs will eventually be passed on to the public. It cites instances where loans of upto Rs.10,000/- have been cleared. On then being given a clean slate previous debtors have then been able to take out further loans and again become indebted.

However instead the investigator suggests that banks should perhaps liberalise the recovery of interest on loans to provide the borrower with greater opportunity to repay.³⁰ He also advises that banks charge simple interest rather than compound interest to increase recovery rates.(para.16)

Economic Misery of the Rural Population The report confirms that the rural economies of Kalahandi and Bolangir have been shattered by repeated droughts. It argues that it is therefore 'no wonder that the people suffered immense misery'. Further it suggests that development activities and relief measures designed to provide labour

²⁹ The inquiring officer points out that whilst the Orissa Moneylender's Act prevents recovery of interest at more than 12%, and this being to simple interest, this restriction does not apply to banking.(para. 17)

³⁰ This may involve reducing interest rates or increasing the number of installments so that the loan is repaid over a longer period.

employment were not effective in adequately reducing suffering. In consequence many people, including 'well to do' farmers, had to sell possessions to obtain food. Some were also forced to migrate to other States in search of employment. At the time when the report was written many had not returned to their villages and people were still continuing to migrate in search of work.

The report suggests that the Government has made little effort to combat this rising trend of outmigration of Kalahandi people to other areas. In the case instituted by Sri Pradhan (O.J.C.No.525/89) it is alleged that the Government of Orissa is 'unmoved and hungry villagers leaving their villages are moving to the neighbouring States like Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam etc. for jobs and that the State and Central Governments have remained mum'.(para.43) Evidence was also cited in this case that works taken up in some places would provide only employment for short periods and that workers were being exploited by the low wages that they were being paid.

It is significant that in his reply to questions from the Investigating Officer the Collector of Bolangir suggested that this outmigration was not 'an abnormal occurrence'. Instead this represented 'a common action of the local population'.(para.48) He suggests that:

'it is a regular phenomenon in some parts of the district that agricultural labourers are going out to nearest towns and industrial areas to get lucrative wages and come back to their native villages at the time of agricultural operations, and this is not at all migration or exodus'. (para 48)

This point made by the Collector is again an important one. As has been discussed in previous chapters, outmigration from Kalahandi and Bolangir is an action which is regularly employed in these districts on a seasonal and permanent basis. This action may represent a coping mechanism implemented in response to food insecurity, but is not a strategy which is employed in these districts only during times to crisis. In this respect the Collector of Bolangir is therefore correct to assert that migration from his district is not an 'abnormal occurrence'.

However, conversely it would be wrong to imply from this assessment that, because outmigration is a regular component of the survival strategies employed by

persons in these regions, the conditions prevailing in these districts were not serious at this time, or that there was little need for the Government to intervene to prevent suffering. It must be recognised that people still tend to migrate from Kalahandi and Bolangir largely due to the seasonal and long term shortages of work in their districts. Such action is in some instances also motivated by severe shortages of food and other essentials. The incidence of migration is therefore itself an indicator of the need for state interventions designed to promote people's access to employment (and other means to generate purchasing power), as well as to food. Long term strategies to address these deficiencies are therefore of major importance, in addition to relief operations to provide assistance to those in distress during times of crisis.

Similarly, the Inquiring Officer implicitly argues that the Collector was unduly complacent in exercising this view. He reports that:

'such a casual view is contrary to ground reality. The evidence as discussed before clearly establish that villagers in large numbers have left their home with women and children which is but exodus and some of them have not returned, their houses have collapsed in the meantime'. (para.48)

Indeed his report indicates that Government officials underestimated the scale of distress which prevailed in Kalahandi and other affected districts.

Child Sale The report refutes the allegation that parents in the district sold their children to avoid starvation. This issue has been discussed in chapter 4.10 of this thesis. A number of cases highlighted in newspaper reports were investigated during the inquiry.

One such case, that of Premasila, has received considerable media attention. She is alleged to have been sold by her brother to a motor mechanic named Jisu Sagar working in Khariar. On being interviewed by the Collector, she stated to the inquiry that after her parents died she went to Raipur in M.P. and met her needs by begging. She was then brought from Raipur by her maternal uncle's son, Sital Tandi, and was

sold by him to Jisu Sagar for Rs.50. Sital Tandi informed the girl that she would be looked after by the latter.

When Jisu Sagar, a widower, left for Bissam-cuttack she was no longer maintained by his brother as intended. Again she returned to Raipur, having walked to Kantabunji railway station and then travelled by train without a ticket, to continue begging. Following this she was brought back from Raipur, this time by her uncle who worked occasionally in the city as a rickshaw puller. Again she returned to her own village of Chhatrang to live in her father's delapidated hut, but her uncle claimed to have insufficient money to keep her.

Relating to this case the court concluded that Premasila was actually sold, but not by her brother to avoid starvation as alleged. It argues that:

'Premasila is not a good looking girl and also physically weak. Obviously her maternal uncle's son who works as Rickshaw puller at Raipur exploited her and make some money by selling her to Jisu Sagar as maid servant. This is clearly a case of exploitation but not a case child sale due to starvation'. (para.35)

A second case investigated during the inquiry involves a boy of 13 or 14 years old called Punit. This boy was sold during a time of drought by his widower father when Punit was 2 or 3 years old, at a time when his father could not afford to keep him. Although his father comes from a higher potter caste, the boy was sold to a landless Harijan, Nisat Sunani, who frequently takes employment as a rickshaw puller in Raipur. On interviewing the latter and his wife during the inquiry, it was stated that Punit was sold for Rs.10 and a banion. Since then he has been maintained by Nisat and has been receiving education. The report concludes that in this instance this again cannot be considered to be a case of child sale to avoid starvation. Further, being 10 years ago it was suggested that this case certainly does not relate to the recent drought, as reported in the press reports. Rather it suggests that

'the reason is obviously for the well being of the child. He was a poor man and also a widower and gave the child to a person who having lost his own son wanted a child for adoption. This is a case of adoption on humanitarian grounds and cannot be considered as a sale of child to avoid starvation'.(para.36)

The conclusions correspond with the findings of my own study in Kalahandi. These indicate, as discussed in chapter 4.10, that parents commonly sold children to work as maid servants in the homes of more affluent and higher caste families. This was particularly common in Gaud caste families. However the reasons for sale were rarely purely economic, in terms of providing immediate purchasing power to buy food and other essentials, made necessary by their immediate hunger. Nor was this an action intended primarily to improve the survival chances of remaining family or community members, as indicated in reports of child sale in the work of Greenhough and Arnold³¹. Instead parents more commonly sold their children into more economically advantaged families, on the grounds that the child was likely to have a better quality of life and a better chance of survival in their new family.

Starvation Deaths As discussed further in chapter 9.1, the Government of Orissa under Chief Minister J.B.Patnaik, repeatedly denied that deaths had taken place due to starvation in Kalahandi. This assertion was contradicted by the petitioners in the cases brought against the State Government discussed in this chapter. This is also contradicted in a range of press reports, as discussed further in chapter 8.1 and 9.3. This issue was therefore central to the investigation conducted by Sri. Mishra on behalf of the Orissa High Court. Three instances of starvation death were reported to the inquiry:

1. the first was based upon a newspaper report which pictures two inhabitants of Darlipada village in Komna block of Kalahandi who were said to have died of starvation. However one of these, Trilochan Sunani, was found by the investigator on visiting the village to be still living there. The other, his wife Pat, was said to have died recently. The photos were deemed to have been taken in Jan.1989 by a press photographer, at a time when the villagers were in distress from drought and the authorities were doing nothing to rectify the situation. Consequently the photos were

³¹ As discussed further in chapter 4.10.

taken to bring home to the authorities the need for action. However the inquiry refutes the allegation in the newspaper that these people had died of starvation, even if they may have been starving when the photo was taken. Both had been receiving a pension.

2. The second case received attention when a report dated 30.6.89 was sent to the Collector by the Sarpanch, Kishore Chandra Bhanja Deo, informing him that an Adivasis family of Sukha Jani from Deypur had been starving for around one month and had been unable to earn any income. In this time they had been supported by other villagers who were equally distressed, and it was suggested that unless food and medicine were sent then all members of this family were likely to die. After visiting the affected family, the Sarpanch the next day sent a report to the B.D.O. and the Collector. Two or three days later Sukha Jani died. Following this the Additional Tahasildar arrived to reportedly provide some assistance to his mother and wife. In the newspaper it was reported that this visit represented an attempt to suppress starvation deaths.

Relating to this case the inquiring officer concluded that 'Sukha Jani of Deypur is dead and there can be no doubt that he died of starvation'. (para.39)

3. The third incident the inquiry describes as 'similar and more distressing'. On 20.2.89 the residents of Sindhibhadi sent a petition to their B.D.O. through Sarpanch Nadia Tandi of Badachergaon. This stated that four people had died of starvation in the village³² and that a further seven or eight people were likely to die imminently if timely action was not taken by the state.

The inquiry officer made a visit to village on 21.12.90, along with the B.D.O. himself Sri D. Majhi. There he spoke to about 80 villagers who attended his investigation. These, according to investigator, stated that the four who had died had

³² These persons were Pamuli Sabar who died on 10.2.89; Musila Sabar who died on 14.2.89; Parbati Sabar who died on 14.2.89; and her husband Bandaki Sabar who also died on 14.2.89. (Mishra Commission para.40)

done so 'because they could not get any food'. - in common parlance 'kichhi khaiba ku na pahi mori gole', which the investigator suggests is exactly as starvation death is locally known. For some time previously villagers who were 'equally poor' had helped these people in their impoverished state. The remaining persons who had been starving were 'saved' on being taken to hospital by the authorities. This statement, signed by the literate members amongst those attending, was mentioned to have 'come as a surprise to the B.D.O., who was said to have been 'unaware of the incident'.

After conducting inquiries, the B.D.O. reportedly collected a statement concerning the health of other persons who had been taken to hospital from the Public Health Centre concerned in Chaparia. This was forwarded to the Collector. This statement states that these people had been suffering from anaemia, and that they were discharged after being treated.

The Inquiring Officer suggests that the fact that these 'starving persons' were suffering from anaemia confirms that they had gone for 'a long time' without food. He suggests that this supports evidence supplied by villagers that those who had died had done so from starvation. This corresponds with the evidence supplied by the Sarpanch at the time, Sri Nadia Tandi, who had also come to this conclusion after his own investigations. (para.41)

A number of issues of importance arise in these cases. Firstly, these again illustrate the role played by the press in giving publicity to suffering and alleged Government indifference in Kalahandi. Two of the cases discussed above were initiated on the basis of information reported in press articles. Secondly, the third case indicates the important role which assistance from community members played in supporting starving and acutely distressed persons in the Sindhibhadi. Thirdly, although no starvation deaths were confirmed in Bolangir district, the Mishra Commission Inquiry revealed five cases of starvation death in Kalahandi. This included the death of four people in Feb.1989 in Sindhibhadi. Two of these persons were wife and husband, leaving as orphans their two children aged 8 and 5 years.

This is the first instance when a legal inquiry in India has confirmed that deaths have taken place due to starvation. As discussed further in chapter 9, the Government of Orissa denied repeatedly that starvation was the cause of any deaths in the district. Instead it repeatedly asserted that these were the result of factors including meningitis, 'epidemics' and 'natural causes'.

This issue is of considerable importance. The incidence of starvation deaths - that people have died as a result of being unable to eat sufficient quantities of the correct types of food - cannot be easily technically proven. Such a situation presents a requirement for quantitative data regarding the cross section of foodstuffs to which people have access, and how these are utilised.³³ Such data may make it possible to determine whether starvation or malnutrition-related factors did indeed contribute to death.

When instances of starvation death have been reported in Kalahandi, the procedure has tended to be for a doctor to be instructed to report upon the cause of death. However the resulting reports have generally tended to indicate only the immediate physiological disorder at the time of death. These have in most cases failed to identify other precipitating factors which may have contributed to this condition. A number of cases of death have, for example, been attributed to states such as gastro-enteritis or dysentery, without indicating that the acuteness of these conditions may have been precipitated by the person concerned being malnourished, and having markedly reduced resistance as a result of their already poor health. It has also been widely suggested that the condition of those that died has also been exacerbated in many instances by being forced, due to their lack of access to other foodstuffs, into eating toxic leaves, berries and other wild foods which may be highly dangerous to health.

³³ Loans and sale of paddy represent virtually the only sources of cash for many persons living in Kalahandi. Ragi is grown by some cultivators, but is generally produced for own consumption rather than for sale. Consequently it is possible to gain an estimate of the purchasing power of poorer sections of the population and how this affected during a bad year. This information can be supplemented by a parallel investigation of which foods are eaten during a 'normal year', and how eating habits change if a year is bad. Such a method was felt to be essential by Kishan Pattnayak, one of the petitioners in the initial case brought before the Supreme Court, to verify that deaths were due to starvation or malnutrition related factors, and to counter repeated denials by the Government that starvation deaths have occurred in Kalahandi or elsewhere in Orissa. (Interview, op.cit.)

There is a widespread sentiment that Governments have used this factor as a mechanism for denying the incidence of starvation death, not only in Kalahandi and elsewhere in Orissa, but also in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and other States. This section indicates the importance of the legal system in refuting such denials by the state, and in placing pressure on the Government to make necessary interventions to prevent further incidence of such conditions.

These conclusions also call into question the assertion in the Orissa Relief Code that improvements in communications, and in the availability of food, mean that famine is no longer a consideration in Orissa. Whilst the legal proceedings have confirmed that five starvations did take place in Kalahandi during the period of this investigation, my own interviews in the district suggest that public opinion is generally that real numbers of deaths due to starvation during recent years to have been considerably higher than this figure. Whether this may be considered to represent 'famine' evidently hinges upon the semantic issue of how famine is defined. However confirmation by the law courts that starvation deaths have taken place in the district, emphasises that there should be no complacency regarding the infallability of the system of relief administration in Orissa.

Overall Performance of the Government in Dealing with the Drought Situation. In its report the inquiry provides a slightly contradictory assessment of the State Government's performance in addressing the misery of poor persons in the district and in administering development activities. Initially the investigator argues that:

'(T)he Government both Centre and State have remained apathetic to the calamity following droughts and no steps are being taken to alleviate the misery of the suffering people to provide employment and to stop the exodus and rehabilitate the migrating villagers.'(para.53)

Later in his statement he provides a more mixed assessment of the state's performance. This suggests that whilst the Government has not been entirely negligent in fulfilling its responsibilities to protect those at risk, a significant proportion of the large sums which have been spent have not been used effectively. It argues that:

'Generally speaking, it will not be correct to say that Government is apathetic to the misery of the people following droughts, as Government have placed substantially large funds for developmental works and poverty alleviation schemes in both the districts. Placement of funds under the scheme for poverty termination ADAPT in the district of Kalahandi is a step in the right direction. It can not also be said the administration have not done any work or generate any employment to combat the calamity. however, huge amounts appear to have been spent hurriedly without proper planning and also faulty execution of projects resulting in wasteful expenditure'(sic) (para.111)

The investigator cites examples of schemes which have been mismanaged and where there has been waste which could have been avoided. He also suggests evidence of fraud and leakages of funds, and non-use or misuse of finance in poverty schemes and elsewhere.³⁴

Such a conclusion corresponds closely with those drawn in chapter 6 of this thesis. In this section it was similarly argued that the Government of Orissa has spent considerable sums in promoting development programmes and relief provisions in Kalahandi. However lack of adequate research into the specific needs of the vulnerable, lack of effective targeting of resources, high levels of wastage and corruption, and lack of adequate post-implementation monitoring and backup have, alongside other factors, meant that optimal benefits have not been obtained from the resources utilised.

8.4 Orissa High Court Ruling

On the basis of the findings of the Mishra Commission the Orissa High Court confirmed in February 1992 that starvation deaths had taken place in Kalahandi, as had been alleged by the petitioners and other parties. This represented an important reversal of the findings of the Panda Commission, which had reported that deaths from starvation had not taken place in Kalahandi or in other districts. It also expressed shock regarding the negligence of the State Government in prevention of the sale of Premasila, a young Bolangir woman.

³⁴ However the evaluation reports produced by the Government Planning and Evaluation Department suggest that the Government is already aware of these shortfalls.

In what has been described as a 'landmark judgement' in sections of the press, the Division Bench of the Court, notably Chief Justice Sri. Banwirilal Hansaria and Justice Sri. B.N. Das, ordered the Orissa State Government to pay compensation to the bereaved families. The Bench observed that because all the victims were from the 'lower stratum of society' and were contributing to the maintenance of their respective families, then the Orissa Government should pay Rs.25000 to each of four of these families, and Rs.40000 in compensation to the remaining family of Bondiki Sabar and Parbati Sabar who were wife and husband. The High Court also ordered the State Government to pay Rs. 5000 to cover the expenses of Sri A.C. Pradhan, the Cuttack advocate who had filed one of the petitions to the Orissa High Court.³⁵

The Bench stated that the Collector in office at the time of these deaths had failed in his duties. As discussed in chapter 5, the Collector is obliged by Section 39 of the Orissa Relief Code to order an immediate inquiry by a gazetted officer if reports of starvation deaths in the press come to his notice. However the Investigating Officer reports that:

'Despite such alarming report, the Collector did nothing to ameliorate the distress in the village. Using a little discretion, he should have visited the village and reported the matter to Government on the analogy of Rule 39.'(sic) (para.52)

The Investigator also indicts the Collector for failing in his responsibility as specified in chapter ten of the Orissa Relief Code to act as the 'temporary guardian' of orphaned children until they are taken into an established orphanage or other place where they may be cared for. He argues that had the Collector made an effort to visit distressed villages then he would have been aware of the orphaned children of two of the deceased persons, Bondiki and Parbati. The Collector failed to make the necessary arrangements to look after these children. On these grounds the Mishra Commission ruled him 'to have failed in his duties', and argues that 'the Government is vicariously responsible for his apathy and inaction'.(1990, para.52).³⁶

³⁵ *The Samaja* (Cuttack) 15.2.92 'The Starvation Deaths in Kalahandi are True: Court Order to the Government to Pay Compensation'; *Sambad* 16.2.92 'The Starvation Death in Kalahandi is True: Government Instructed to Pay Compensation'; *The Statesman* (Calcutta) 15.2.92 'Orissa Court Confirms Kalahandi Deaths'

³⁶ As discussed in chapter 8.5, such proceedings are largely unprecedented in response to public interest litigation in Orissa, although court action of a similar nature has been taken in Gujarat. The High Court of Gujarat

Further the Court dismissed the State Government's claims to have spent Rs. 14,196.21 Crore on poverty alleviation. The latter asserted that this had benefitted 197,468 people, raising more than 50% of the district's population above the poverty line.³⁷ The Court declared these figures to be 'fantasic ie. not based on reality'.³⁸

It also expressed doubts in the efficiency of assistance managed by the Government, and in the administration of Government Plans. The Judges argued that corruption was the factor primarily responsible for these 'lapses'. For this reason they suggested that the state must be careful in future in carrying out poverty programmes in Kalahandi and other districts. Importantly, they also specified that Kalahandi was not 'a case apart'. Similar problems were also experienced in Koraput and other districts, and these also demanded serious and immediate attention.³⁹ This conclusion corresponds with similar findings obtained from interviews for this project, as discussed further in chapter 4 of this thesis.

8.5 Wider Implications of legal action in the Kalahandi context

On the basis of issues discussed in this chapter, and the resulting ruling of the Orissa High Court discussed in section 8.4, it is argued in this thesis that legal action taken against the Government of Orissa in the law courts potentially represents an important form of public action for promoting food security in Kalahandi. However a range of issues deriving from interviews conducted during fieldwork for this project hold wider implications for the organisation of the relief process in Kalahandi and other regions.

Firstly, the effectiveness and rigour of the inquiry instituted by the Orissa High Court is to some extent called into doubt by the assertion of the former

indicted the State Government and particularly the Director of Relief in Kutich district for the death of two labourers from starvation. Both of these were engaged in relief operations but payments had not been made even after three weeks. K. Chandriah (retired I.A.S. officer), *Indian Express*, (Vizag.) 17.3.92

³⁷ Although it does not specify which poverty line this refers to.

³⁸ *Sambad* 16.2.92 op. cit.

³⁹ *ibid.*

Collector, Aurobinda Behera, when interviewed for this study, that he had never been consulted during the course of this Inquiry.⁴⁰ The former Collector suggested during this interview that the pattern of events which led up to the incident when he was declared by the Orissa High Court inquiry to have failed in his responsibility (as laid down in the Orissa Relief Code, as discussed in chapter 5.6 of this thesis) to prevent starvation deaths, and to take care of orphaned children, was as follows: a petition was sent by the village Sarpanch to the B.D.O. of Golamunda block reporting the death of four people, and the imminent death of others if immediate and appropriate action was not taken by the District Administration. The B.D.O. then traced the sick and took them to hospital. The hospital report concluded that these deaths had not taken place for lack of food, but had occurred due to 'other medical reasons'.⁴¹

However Sri Behera argues that when this petition was forwarded to the District Magistrate's office he was away from the district. Consequently this was received and filed by the Assistant District Magistrate (Deputy Collector), who (as discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis) has virtually the full powers of Collector, and is expected to carry out the Collector's responsibilities in his absence. Behera argues that it was not reported to him that this petition had been received until several days later, following his return to Kalahandi.

This issue appears to hold crucial implications for the resulting legal inquiry into these events. Owing to its alleged failure to consult the former Collector during the investigation process, the inquiry did not take into account his absence from the district at the time the report was received. This omission also meant that it did not examine important evidence from this officer concerning the chain of events leading to the reported incidents of starvation death and administrative failure. This evidence is further necessary for identifying deficiencies in the administrative system which must be rectified if similar occurrences are to be avoided in the

⁴⁰ Interview Sunday 26th. April 1992, Bhubaneswar.

⁴¹ Regarding these issues the account supplied by the Collector therefore corresponds closely with the course of events detailed by the Mishra Commission.

future. These points therefore indicate significant deficiencies in the process of inquiry commissioned by the Orissa High Court.

Further, whilst it is possible to attribute blame to the Collector for his failure to make himself aware of all events taking place in his district, his ability to fulfill this task is clearly contingent on expeditious and efficient communication of important information to him from his fellow officers. However in this instance, the alleged failure of the A.D.M. to ensure that the Collector was immediately made aware of the arrival of the petition indicates that such communication was lacking. In addition, whilst the former Collector was the only officer to be specifically identified for criticism under the ruling of the Orissa High Court, the above discussion clearly also indicates individual failure on the part of the A.D.M.

During interview the Collector questioned whether, even if the petition had been brought to this notice at an earlier point, he would have been able to prevent the starvation deaths which occurred in his district. Sri Behera suggested that if he had been made aware of this statement at an earlier juncture, he would have probably have tried to immediately visit the village concerned. During this visit he would have ensured that tubewells and feeding programmes were working properly, and on the basis of his observations may possibly have sanctioned additional relief works. However he stated that relief works and feeding programmes were already proceeding on an 'considerable scale'. For this reason he argued that further extending these measures may not have improved conditions sufficiently, and in adequate time, to prevent deaths taking place.

Indeed Sri Behera suggested that he felt that his administration had made considerable efforts to provide assistance under test relief and special nutrition programmes. He stated that as Collector he had attempted to organise relief according to a 'three pronged strategy':

(1) through relief works;

(2) by strengthening the P.D.S.⁴²

(3) by providing Special Nutritional Programme Feeding to the weakest, along with supplementary feeding for women and children under the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

During 1988-89, when 870 villages out of approximately 2500 villages in Kalahandi were considered on the basis of crop-cutting experiments to have been drought affected, he argued that considerable assistance had been provided through labour intensive works. He suggested that although 1988-89 had been a year of drought, and therefore levels of migration may be expected to be higher than normal, according to figures provided by the present Collector of Kalahandi migration during this period had been less than average owing to the wide availability of employment on relief works.⁴³

Also central to Behera's policy were measures to provide the vulnerable with greater control over their own resources. These include measures to redistribute land under ceiling surplus, and measures such as building open wells for S.C.'s and S.T.'s, designed to give them greater control over their limited irrigation and water system. These measures he felt to have been far more extensive in terms of redistributing assets and providing assistance to the poor than any implemented under previous Collectors in the district. For this reason, whilst he expressed regret that deaths had occurred in Kalahandi during his period as Collector, he also felt his suspension from his post to have been unfortunate.

Deriving from the issues discussed in this chapter, and analysis of the responsibilities of individual officers in the relief process provided in chapter 5, it is argued in this thesis that the tasks and responsibilities of the Collector in this relief system may be excessive. This officer is required to be aware of all events,

⁴² By providing subsidised commodities through this scheme he suggested that 'the wages of the poor became worth much more'. This may be essentially seen as a means of boosting their purchasing power of the poor at a given wage by ensuring that their consumption items can be bought at reduced prices. (Behera interview, op.cit.)

⁴³ As a means of providing employment and relief during periods of hardship he suggested that he placed 'great faith' in such relief works. During particularly bad periods he stated that I.C.D.S. coverage was also extended to the sick, the elderly, the disabled, and to those unable to work. In periods of crisis 'extra scarcity relief' was substituted for relief doles.

and to make decisions relating to all fields of policy, within his district. However the likelihood that an individual officer has the necessary level of specialist skills or experience to make such a wide set of crucial decisions is low. It is similarly unlikely that a single officer is able to remain fully aware of all that is happening within every region within his district.

This point highlights the need to reduce the responsibilities and powers accorded to the District Collector. Greater emphasis should be placed on improving coordination and rapid information transfer between officers within this system. Greater use should also be made of specialist officers with specific training and experience in particular aspects of relief administration. Current recruitment systems for I.A.S. and O.A.S. through cross-disciplinary competitive examinations tends to create 'generalists' who, after a brief training period, are expected to acquire the requisite skills for relief administration through practical experience in the field. Such a system may leave newly-posted officers lacking the necessary training and experience to address 'life or death' situations within their districts shortly after their appointment. Changes in training, recruitment and allocations of responsibilities to members of the Administration is an issue which requires further research in the Kalahandi context and in comparative studies. This issue is discussed further in chapter 10 of this thesis.

Finally, whilst this thesis has emphasised the potential importance of an independent and active legal system in promoting food security, in this context it must be emphasised that the lasting value of legal action discussed in this chapter in placing pressure on the Government of Orissa to improve systems of relief administration should perhaps not be overstated. Already it appears that the importance of policy implications deriving out of these legal cases seems to be fading. Because the starvation deaths and the other administrative failures identified in the Orissa High Court ruling took place under the previous Congress(I) Government of J.B. Patnaik, the current Biju Patnaik Janata Dal Government appears to have shown little urgency in implementing policy recommendations designed to prevent

repetition of similar events. Instead it appears that these criticisms have been used more as a tool to gain political capital at the cost of the Congress(I) in office at this time, and now the principal opposition in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Similar controversy and 'politicking' has surrounded the instruction to the current State Government from the Orissa High Court to pay compensation to the families of persons that died from starvation. Through this order the current Government of Orissa has been instructed to pay financial compensation for deaths which it deems to have resulted from the negligence of the previous Congress(I) Government.

Whilst the High Court has power in original jurisdiction cases deriving from public action litigation to force the State Government to act upon its recommendations, evidence from this study suggests that such instructions need to be enforced more rigorously if legal action is to have required effectiveness in promoting food security. In this context a cross-party and cross-disciplinary committee⁴⁴ may be of value to oversee the implementation of such rulings. Monitoring from such a committee may be vital to ensure that such policy recommendations are efficiently incorporated in future policy guidelines, rather than being used primarily as a means for politicians to gain political mileage out of the issues of starvation and poverty.

The next chapter will give attention, in the Kalahandi context, to the role of a range of other variables already mentioned in this thesis in the process of promoting and maintaining food security. Firstly, it will examine action channelled through political representatives in the State Legislative Assembly, in Panchayat Samiti, Gram Panchayat, and other forum. Secondly, it will examine non-Parliamentary protest action directed through direct demonstrations, and other forms of collective

⁴⁴ Such a committee may include cross party, democratically elected and accountable representatives (M.P.'s, M.L.A.'s and members of local assemblies); State and District level administrators; health workers, education workers, social workers; representatives from locally operative N.G.O.'s; legal representatives; and other relevant persons with specialist knowledge of issues relating to the process of promoting food security in the region concerned. Such a cross-section of representation is necessary to ensure the legitimacy and accountability of such a committee, and to ensure inputs are provided by persons with specialist knowledge of the local region and factors essential to food security in that region.

action such as rioting and looting. This may also include political activity channelled through organisations which do not participate in representative style Parliamentary politics, such as Maoist-oriented Naxalite groups. These issues have been introduced in chapter 4.10. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the role of the press. This has been identified in previous chapters as playing an important role in giving publicity to the Kalahandi issue, and in highlighting alleged failures by the Government or Administration to address problems in the district.

Appendix 8.1

No. 3473(3) of 16.5.87

Before: The District & Sessions Judge, Kalahandi and Enquiring Officer, in Writ
Petition Nos. 1, 2,8,47 of 1985.

To: Shri Kapil Narayan Tiwari ⁴⁵

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has sent the Xerox Copy of two statements filed by the Government and the copy of the petitions with copy affidavits. The order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court shows that I will only have to find the truth of the facts mentioned in those papers and therefore *there is absolutely no necessity for any outsiders to render me any assistance during the enquiry-except the petitioners and the representatives of the State Government*. I will take up the enquiry in the month of July 1987 and as such the parties are directed to submit the relevant papers within June, 87 in order to enable me to find the truth of the controversial contentions by personally going to different places if required. If no documents are submitted within the month of June, 87 it will be treated that the parties do not want to file any papers concerning this enquiry. (emphasis added)

signed: District & Sessions Judge, Kalahandi's Enquiring Officer in Writ
Petition Nos.1,2,8,47 of Civil No.12847 of 1985.

⁴⁵ Address is given.

Appendix 8.2

No. 3787 Dt. 16.6.89

From : Shri P. Ch. Panda, LL.B., District Judge-cum-Enquiring Officer, Kalahandi, Bhawanipatna.

To: Shri Kapil Narayan Tiwari ⁴⁶

'You are hereby requested to submit the names of places in Kalahandi District where people had died due to starvation. Further you are requested to give the names of places from where there were child selling and migration of the labourers to M.P. and other places for my personal enquiry without being assisted by any agency. Your information should reach me within first July 1987'(sic).

signed: District Judge-cum-Enquiring Officer: Kalahandi, Bhawanipatna)

⁴⁶ Address is given.

Appendix 8.3

No. 3860 Dt. 20.6.89

To: Shri Kapil Narayan Tiwari, Khariar

Notice is hereby given to the petitioners that I will be visiting some places of Kalahandi District for enquiry on 1.7.87 to 3.7.87, 13.7.87 to 17.7.87, 20.7.87 to 22.7.87 and 27.7.87 to 29.7.87. *As this is a fact for finding enquiry, nobody should follow me to any place of enquiry.* (sic) (emphasis added)

signed: District Judge-cum-Enquiring Officer: Kalahandi, Bhawanipatna)

Appendix 8.4

To: The District and Sessions Judge, Kalahandi cum Enquiring Officer in writ petition No. 1,2,8,47 of 1985.

Sir,

In your letter No. 3475(3) dt. 16.5.87 you have intimated that you would be finding the truth of the facts yourself as mentioned in the petitions and that therefore there was absolutely no necessity for any outsiders to render you any assistance during the enquiry except the petitioners and representatives of the State Government. By this letter you intimated that it is only the petitioners who are to be present at the enquiry. In your second letter vide letter No. 3787 dt. 16.6.87 you intimated to me to mention the names of the places in Kalahandi district where people are dying of starvation. You also further intimated to me to name the places from where there were child selling and migration of labourers to M.P. and other places and that you have to go to for personal enquiry without being assisted by any agency. In your third letter vide letter No.3860 dt. 20.6.87 you mentioned that you would be visiting some places of Kalahandi for enquiry on 1.7.87 to 3.7.87, 13.7.87 to 17.7.87, 20.7.87 to 22.7.87 and 27.7.87 to 29.7.87. You have further intimated in this letter that since it was a fact finding enquiry, nobody should follow you to any place of enquiry. From all three letters I am not in a position to know what to do in the matter. I am living at Khariar whereas your headquarter is Bhawanipatna. In your first letter you intimated me to be present at the time of the fact finding enquiry. In your second letter you intimated me to mention the names of places and in your third letter you have fixed the dates of your enquiry without mentioning the names of the places. If as per the first letter I am to be present at your fact finding enquiry, then the names of places where you would hold your enquiry is required to be intimated to me. Your third letter is silent about the same. In the month of July you have fixed your fact finding enquiry for 14 days but surprisingly the villages

have not been mentioned. So therefore I am at a loss to know the place where you would be holding your fact finding enquiry during these 14 days. From your third letter it appears that you are going to have the fact finding enquiry without taking the assistance of me. That in your first letter you have specifically intimated me about the presence of the petitioners. Therefore from all the circumstances it appears to me that you are going to have the enquiry behind my back, as a result the said enquiry would be unilateral and no proper facts would be placed before you in my absence. Lastly I am to point out that the rainy season has already commenced and within a day or two there will be heavy rain in Kalahandi as predicted. After that happens the interior villages will be cut off from regular communications. In that event it will be impossible to move the interior villages as there will be natural obstacles to reach these places. Therefore in such circumstances kindly intimate me the names of the villages where you would be holding your fact finding enquiry during all those above 14 days so that I will try to remain present as per your first letter referred to above....'(sic).

From: Kapil Tiwari, Khariar 25.6.87

Chapter 9: Politics, Media, Collective Action and Food Security in Kalahandi

9.1 Representative Politics through Parliamentary or Assembly-based Channels

It has been proposed in the theoretical framework in chapter 2 of this thesis that adversarial politics may play an important role in protecting food security in a particular region. Pressure which elected representatives may place on the Government in Parliament, or through regional assemblies, may be a significant factor in motivating the Government to take necessary action to provide relief and to promote development. Such representation, at least in theory, also provides a channel through which the vulnerable can express their problems and needs. This factor is again essential in promoting their ability to maintain access to food.

Political pressure from elected representatives in the Orissa Legislative Assembly and in other committees may be seen to have forwarded the cause of the vulnerable in Kalahandi in a number of ways. Firstly, political activity in the State Assembly (and to some extent in the Lok Sabha) has been an important factor in motivating inquiries into reported instances of starvation in the Law Courts and from its own House Committee¹. Public interest litigation cases brought against the Government of Orissa in the Supreme Court of India and the Orissa High Court² have been given added attention by the irregular, but significant, debate that the Kalahandi issue has received in the State Legislative Assembly. This factor is likely also to have contributed to heightened interest shown in these issues by sections of the national and Oriya press.

Secondly, debate in the State Legislative Assembly has been significant in placing pressure on the Chief Minister and his Government to take necessary action to address the suffering prevailing in the district, especially through motions

¹ As discussed later in this section.

² As discussed in chapter 8 of this thesis.

brought against the Government, supported by Opposition and dissident Congress M.L.A.'s. J.B. Patnaik, the Congress(I) Chief Minister in office in Kalahandi during the period of the Supreme Court Inquiry had maintained throughout this investigation that there was 'nothing abnormal' about the Kalahandi situation. Indeed, shortly before this inquiry commenced in the district, the Government of Orissa placed a quarter page sized advertisement in a number of national dailies entitled 'The Changing Landscape of Kalahandi'. This stated that:

'There can be no doubt that due to massive efforts of the State Government, the land and people of the district of Kalahandi are now undergoing a process of dynamic change which will result not only in the socio-economic uplift of the people but will also ensure transformation of the district of Kalahandi into one of the prosperous districts of Orissa'.³

This statement was described as 'black lies' by the Opposition Janata Party leader in Orissa Biju Patnaik.⁴

Considerable doubts were also expressed by political opponents in the State Legislative Assembly regarding the Chief Minister's repeated denials that starvation deaths had taken place in Kalahandi during the period of his administration. Any deaths which did take place during this time were attributed by Sri Patnaik and other Government officers to a range of other causes, including 'epidemics', meningitis or 'natural causes'.

As discussed in chapter 8.4, this issue has remained a contentious one. Incidence of starvation death cannot be easily technically proven. On hearing reports of starvation death, collectors are instructed under Paragraph 39 of the Orissa Relief Code to launch an immediate inquiry and to initiate necessary remedial action. However reports issued by Medical Officers verifying reasons for death have tended to indicate only the physiological disorder at the time of death. These have tended not to identify factors which may have precipitated these disorders, including malnourishment, or persons being forced through lack of access to alternative foodstuffs to eat poisonous items such as berries and roots. It has been widely argued

³ Indian Express, 8.7.87

⁴ ibid

by Opposition politicians that this factor has been used as a mechanism by the State Executive to reject reports of starvation death in Kalahandi and other parts of Orissa.

Reports have differed widely regarding numbers of death which have taken place in Kalahandi during recent periods of drought, and reasons why these occurred. Between January and June of 1987, a statement from the Chief Minister suggested that 80 people had died in the district. This statement conflicts with claims of a range of other parties. Revenue Minister and the House Committee Inquiry Officer Sri. Jugal Kishore Patnaik argued that 120 persons had died during this period. Former Janata Party Secretary Bhakta Charan Das, who was later to become Kalahandi Lok Sabha M.P. and Minister for Railways in V.P. Singh's Government, argued in contrast that 541 people had died in the district during this time. An 'independent investigation' carried out by the English language national daily *The Indian Express* placed the figure at around 600 deaths.⁵

In contrast the Collector of Kalahandi at that time, Mr. Chinmoy Basu, stated at an emergency meeting in Bhubaneswar on 28.3.87 that the total number of deaths in the district since Feb. 1st. had been 136. Of these 72 had died of meningitis and the remainder of 'natural causes'. The meningitis epidemic, he suggested, had spread rapidly because the disease was of 'a virulent type'. He denied any possibility that starvation deaths had taken place in Kalahandi, arguing in support of this conclusion that one of the persons who died was a maidservant of a local B.D.O. who used to eat in his kitchen. Further, the Collector suggests that attempts to help affected persons had been hindered because the 'ignorance of the villagers stood in the way'. Many of these persons, he suggested, continued to prefer to rely on quacks rather than on 'expert medical advice'.⁶

Whilst my own fieldwork for this project in Kalahandi indicates that there is likely to be truth in this assertion, this factor again illustrates the importance of improving education in health practice in Government programmes. This official is

⁵ *Indian Express*, 8.7.87; *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 14.6.87; *Hindu* (Madras), 13.6.87

⁶ *Statesman* (New Delhi), 29.3.87

quick to try to alleviate his Administration of any blame by emphasising that it had initiated interventions, and that it was the fault of the villagers themselves that these had not been successful. It further provides evidence of the lack of sensitivity of some Government officers to local customs and culture. In this case traditional health care practices adopted by local persons are automatically perceived to be inferior to supposedly 'expert' allopathic medical advice. However local people still have limited knowledge and faith in the use of these allopathic health practices in some areas.

As mentioned, there are significant methodological problems in attempting to verify that deaths were caused directly by starvation. This is particularly the case in the absence of adequate inquiries by the State authorities themselves at the time of death⁷. However indicative evidence from my own fieldwork in Kalahandi, on the basis of reports of persons living in the district, suggests that it is likely that a number of deaths were the result of malnutrition-related diseases or due to people being forced to eat poisonous foods.⁸

Sri Bikram Keshari Deo, a Janata M.L.A. from Kalahandi, suggested in the State Legislative Assembly that 'people were being forced to eat weeds and other 'sub-human food' as they could not get a proper meal'.⁹ He estimated that there had been about 200 deaths in Kalahandi since December, most of whom were in the 25 to 40 age group. This situation was aggravated by the failure of the State Government to keep stocks of grain, sugar and kerosene in the drought-hit district. Also he suggested that because land-ceiling laws had not been properly implemented, poor farmers were left with 'no provision in the event of crop failure'.

His statement indicates that any mutual support and reciprocal mechanisms which may have previously existed within the community had been drastically eroded. Landowners and more affluent community members were doing little to

⁷ As mentioned by the appointed House Committee as discussed above.

⁸ For example it was argued that instead of their normal *mandia* some *advasis* in Lanjigarh block had been forced to eat *kai* (red ants), white larvae, salt and *haldi* due to their lack of access to food. (Sunday Observer, 29.3.87)

⁹ Statesman (New Delhi), 29.3.87

benefit the poor when the need arose. The principal concerns of the 'better-off' were to ensure their own well-being and survival rather than that of more vulnerable sections. A number took advantage of the impoverished condition of persons in distress to make profits at their expense.¹⁰

Similar challenges to the J.B. Patnaik's assertions also came from other parties. This included members of District Administrations working within the State. The S.D.O. of Gunpur in Koraput district, Mr A.M. Dalavi, submitted a report stating that 67 starvation deaths had recently taken place in his subdistrict in 1987. Again the Chief Minister rigorously denied that these were deaths due to starvation or malnutrition. This Officer's allegations were refuted by the State Government on the grounds that the Revenue Minister, Mr Jugal Kishore Patnaik, had visited some of the affected villages in question and had failed to discover any starvation deaths. Instead the Revenue Minister's investigations found these deaths to have been caused by 'various other ailments and old age'.¹¹

Differing interpretations regarding these issues were also forwarded by a number of members of J.B. Patnaik's own Congress(I) Government. During the Mishra Commission hearing instituted by the Orissa High Court¹² the Health Minister, Sri. Niranjan Patnaik, after previously claiming to be ignorant of the situation, told the Court that on the previous Thursday 30 people had died in Keonjhar 'due to lack of adequate food'. After touring the area the Chief Minister continued to maintain that not one person had died of starvation.¹³

Criticism was also levelled at the J.B. Patnaik State Government from Opposition and Congress (I) M.L.A.'s in the Orissa Legislative Assembly for its

¹⁰ This conclusion corresponds with those drawn from fieldwork for this study, discussed further in chapter 4.10. This section discussed in further detail, evidence of breakdown of support networks, and of exploitation of impoverished and hungry persons through mechanisms such as lending at usurious rates of interest, labour bondage, and by appropriating land and assets from persons unable to repay loans (or purchasing these at distress sale prices).

¹¹ Shortly after filing this report the officer was transferred from his post, despite having held it for only one year. The S.D.O. is said to have also incurred the ire of the State Government for his failure to seize hoarded paddy stocks from influential people; his refusal to allow the Congress (I) Panchayat Samiti Chairman and his followers permission to use Government vehicles; and his orders to reopen land ceiling cases against a number of landlords, which is said to have angered Congress (I) leaders. *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 24.9.87

¹² Discussed in chapter 8.3 and 8.4 of this thesis.

¹³ *Statesman* (New Delhi), 11.10.87

alleged failure to properly manage its relations with the Government of India during the drought period. Its failure to immediately submit a report to Central Government was seen by these politicians to have deprived Orissa of immediate Central assistance which could have prevented the situation deteriorating. A number of M.L.A.'s argued that 'as a result of its coyness' the State Government had failed to make the Central Government fully aware of the severity of the situation in the State from the beginning of the difficulties.¹⁴

It was also suggested that in 1985 the Government of Orissa had applied to Central Government for Rs. 100 Crore in assistance and had received only Rs.4 Crore. For this reason the State Government had deliberately underestimated its demand in the current year for fear that its requests would again be seen by the Government of India to be exaggerated. Whilst voluntary organisations and members of Opposition parties assessed crop damages in 1987 to be around Rs. 1000 Crore, the State Government after its assessment requested only Rs. 249.75 Crore

In response to these allegations the main Opposition Janata party demanded an all-party committee, under the chairmanship of the Governor of Orissa, to monitor and regulate fund expenditure for drought relief works in the State. 18 Congress (I) M.L.A's also advocated that the Assembly be dissolved, and that the State be run under President's Rule, in response to the failure of the J.B. Patnaik Government to deal with the drought situation.¹⁵

Dissidence amongst J.B. Patnaik's own party came to a head in the Orissa Assembly in March 1987, when 19 dissident Congress(I) M.L.A.'s supported an Opposition motion calling for the Government to set up a House Committee to investigate allegations of starvation deaths in Kalahandi. After the defeat of a similar motion in early March, the Government conceded to this demand on March 11th. when the Congress party's Chief Whip, Mr S. Sanu, stated that it was willing to form a

¹⁴ Indian Express, 29.8.87

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

committee to study the conditions prevailing in the chronically drought affected areas of the State.¹⁶

The resulting House Committee, Chaired by the Speaker of the Orissa Legislative Assembly Mr Prasanna Kumar Das, instructed such an investigation to be made in Kalahandi by the Revenue Minister, Mr Jugal Kishore Patnaik. The resulting report of the Revenue Minister suggested that in villages he had visited, 'bacillary dysentery, fever and in some cases vomiting had taken a toll of 82 lives'.¹⁷ Two days previously he had informed newsmen that 39 of these deaths had occurred due to bacillary dysentery and cerebral malaria, whilst 'natural causes' had accounted for the other deaths. This officer again partly blamed these deaths on the villagers' own failure to take allopathic medical assistance when they became ill. He expressed regret regarding what he termed 'the villagers aversion to proper treatment' and their 'faith in quacks'.

Committee members also gave attention to a range of other issues of importance which had been raised in connection with problems of drought and starvation in Kalahandi. These included the following:

1. the failure of the Revenue Department and the Special Relief Commissioner to give proper guidance to District Collectors in adequate time for a formal inquiry into reports of starvation death to be carried out, as required by Section 39(ii.) of the Orissa Relief Code.¹⁸ In the absence of such inquiries the Committee suggested that reports forwarded by the State authorities during discussions in the Orissa Assembly had 'lost credibility'.
2. The reasons why medical officers in charge of P.H.C.'s and their subordinate officers had not carried out inquiries into the causes of these deaths. In the absence of such inquiries at the time of death, it was subsequently a problem to later

¹⁶ Tribune (Chandigarh), 16.3.87

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ As discussed in further detail in chapter 5 of this thesis.

determine accurately the causes of death in the cases reported between November and January.

3. Problems with the current system of using multipurpose workers in P.H.C's. The House Committee reported that this system was 'not working well'. It stated that since there was currently no system for cross-checking reports of death, the previous system through which cases of death were reported to Police Stations by Gram Rakshakas should be revived.¹⁹

The House Committee made a number of further recommendations relating to the administration of relief and development programmes.²⁰ Firstly, it suggested that crop-cutting experiments should be modified to include crops which are staples for the poorer sections. Since many poor persons rely on consumption crops such as ragi and other millets, rather than primarily on paddy, these crops such be included in assessments of crop loss. Secondly, because large-scale and extended feeding programmes may have a demoralising effect on the persons attending them, these should be kept to short duration and restricted to emergencies. Thirdly, further measures must be taken to ensure that tubewells are properly maintained by field staff or the Public Health Engineering Dept. As found in my own study, the House Committee reported that considerable numbers of tubewells installed by the Government were not working properly. Fourthly, the Committee advised that the recommendations of an All-India Cost-Benefit regime should be relaxed to ensure that a reasonable number of minor irrigation projects can be implemented to counter the long-term problem of drought. It suggests that in the current conditions in Kalahandi and Koraput it is not possible to adhere to such a regime. This had led to the termination of minor irrigation schemes under the Drought Prone Area Programme two years previously.²¹

¹⁹ *The Hindu* (Madras), 15.8.87.

²⁰ A number of these conclusions correspond with findings from fieldwork for this study, discussed more fully in chapters 4,5 and 7 of this thesis.

²¹ *ibid*

J.B. Patnaik responded to dissidents in his own party, and allegations levelled at his Government by politicians from Opposition parties, by suggesting that these persons were trying to make political mileage out of the Kalahandi issue, and thereby further their own political careers. He was quick to accuse dissidents within his own party of political opportunism, and of trying to 'settle old scores'. Their supposed lack of confidence in the way he was administering the State, he argued, was instead a cover for their reaction against the fact that they had not been given posts in his Government.²²

The Chief Minister directed a number of similar allegations of political opportunism against politicians from other parties. He accused the neighbouring C.P.M. Government in West Bengal of seeking to gain political advantage when it began to provide relief and medical assistance in Kalahandi. J.B. Patnaik branded this to be 'mean politicking' by the West Bengal party in an attempt to widen its influence into Western Orissa, an area where the C.P.M. has had little organisational base.²³

Allegations and counter-allegations surrounded these interventions. J.B. Patnaik himself suggested that the West Bengal C.P.M. should take care of the 'hundreds dying due to starvation' in Calcutta and other parts of its own State, rather than indulging in political opportunism in Kalahandi. The allegation that there was starvation in Calcutta was in turn denied by the West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, who invited J.B. Patnaik to visit Calcutta to verify this fact.²⁴

Further, the Congress (I) President in West Bengal, Sri. Priyaranjan Das Munshi expressed doubts about the genuineness of medical supplies being used by the C.P.M. He declared that a number of saline bottles supplied from West Bengal were found to contain kerosene oil. Dr. B.P. Mohanty, a member of the West Bengal team of doctors, argued conversely that medical teams from that State were subjected to harassment from officials of the Orissa Government. This doctor refuted the

²² *ibid*

²³ *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), 5.7.87

²⁴ *ibid*.

assertion of J.B. Patnaik's Assembly that there had been no starvation deaths in Kalahandi. Instead he argued to the contrary, that people were dying having been attacked by diseases such as diarrhoea, fever and anaemia, all resulting from malnutrition. Similarly Mr Biman Basu, a member of the C.P.M.'s Central Committee, along with two other C.P.M. ministers, also alleged that at least 560 people, mostly poor adivasis and harijans, had died in the district. These deaths were attributed either directly to starvation, and diseases resulting from malnutrition, or otherwise to related causes such as people being forced out of hunger to consume poisonous foods²⁵

On the basis of the above evidence it is argued here that in some instances political action through Governmental channels has been an important variable in promoting food security in Kalahandi. This corresponds with the hypothesis forwarded to this effect in chapter 2 of this thesis. Debate and other political activity in the Orissa Legislative Assembly, and in other forum, has heightened attention drawn towards suffering faced by sections of the district's population.

Secondly, this activity has acted as a trigger for heightened activity and attention from other institutions. This factor almost certainly raised the attention which the issues of drought and hunger have received in the Oriya and National press. This is likely to be similarly true for the investigations initiated into the Kalahandi issue by the Supreme Court of India and the Orissa High Court.

Thirdly, the Orissa Legislative Assembly itself initiated a motion to investigate prevailing conditions in Kalahandi, and the validity of the State Government's claims to have initiated widespread measures to prevent distress and to promote developments in the district. This Committee called into question reports made by the State Government during the drought period for their failure to provide a clear picture of the current situation. It further criticised the J.B. Patnaik

²⁵ See, for example, *Sunday Observer*, 29.3.87

Government for its failure to 'rise to the situation' in terms of taking necessary action as described above.

However whilst in this instance it can be seen that adversarial political processes have performed these roles, the long term consequences of such action should perhaps not be overstated. Despite its findings and recommendations relating to state intervention and incidence of starvation deaths, the conclusions of the House Committee received little further attention in the Orissa Legislative Assembly or in other political arenas.

Further it is highly contestable whether such activity has led to any lasting improvement in the condition of the vulnerable. As discussed further in chapter 8.5, there has been little obvious tightening up of Government policy following political action in the State Legislative Assembly. This is similarly the case regarding findings of the House Committee and the conclusions of the Supreme Court and Orissa High Court inquiries. As mentioned, political pressure from Opposition and dissident Congress M.L.A.'s was frequently dismissed as being based on political self-interest and opportunism. It has been suggested that the interest of Opposition parties in pursuing these issues lasted only as long as they were a convenient means to discredit the J.B. Patnaik Congress (I) Government. On gaining election the succeeding Janata Dal Government under Biju Patnaik has done little to improve the situation in Kalahandi and other districts.

Indeed, it has been argued that the situation currently prevailing in the district under the current Biju Patnaik Janata Dal Government, is perhaps worse than it was under the J.B. Patnaik Congress(I) Government which it replaced in 1990. Former Janata Dal Lok Sabha M.P. for Kalahandi, Bhakta Charan Das, and Rajya Sabha M.P. Basant Kumar Das, have suggested that the starvation deaths which took place during the period of J.B. Patnaik's Chief Ministership are still continuing. They have argued that there has been little significant improvement in the perpetually 'famine-ridden' condition of the district. As a result of the failure of

both Congress(I) and Janata politicians to improve conditions in the district, thousands are migrating to other States.²⁶

This lack of significant change in the effectiveness of relief and development administration by the Government of Orissa has reduced the impact of the conclusions of the Orissa High Court that the State Government under J.B. Patnaik neglected its duty to carry out its responsibilities in the district. Many of the criticisms and recommendations of this Code have been passed off by the current Government as failures under the J.B. Patnaik Administration, and therefore not its own responsibility. This change of administration has also created a point of controversy regarding the payment of compensation to the families of victims of starvation deaths in Kalahandi. These Rs.25000 lumps sums (Rs.40000 in the case of two of the deceased who were married) are to be paid by the current Janata Dal Biju Patnaik Government, despite its assertion that these were due to the negligence during the period of the previous State Government.

Further there is indication that the reaction of the current Biju Patnaik Government to instances of starvation death in the State has not differed markedly from that of the previous administration. Whilst admitting that deaths had taken place in Kalahandi, Revenue Minister Surendra Nath Naik has claimed recently that:

'Not a single one is due to starvation, though in some cases the causes have not been natural ones but diseases, epidemics, bad water, and so on'.²⁷

The Minister concerned stated in the State Assembly in October 1992 that he 'was proud' to have made such a statement. He continued:

'Show me another Minister who has admitted as much. I have visited the entire area and verified each case'.²⁸

Indeed like the previous Congress (I) Government, it appears that the current administration continues to deny instances of starvation death in Kalahandi.

²⁶ Sembed 15.2.92 'Even today there is Starvation Death in Kalahandi', Report of Special Correspondent - (translated by Dr. Subrata Mitra) Although many persons in Kalahandi have argued that these two persons are themselves motivated primarily by self-interest in drawing attention to the needs of the poor.

²⁷ Quoted in Tapas Ray, 'Valley of death: hunger, thirst stalk Orissa', Frontline 4.6.93

²⁸ Ibid

These deaths are similarly attributed to epidemics and other health problems unrelated to starvation and malnutrition.

9.2 Extra-Parliamentary Protest Action

Alongside political action through elected representatives in political assemblies, impoverished persons in some situations may choose to adopt a range of other actions to express their demands and to protest against their deprived condition. As discussed in chapter 4.10, this may take the form of collective protest through riot, demonstrations or looting. In some parts of India, this has also taken the form of political action through organisations such as Naxalite groups which do not directly participate in parliamentary politics.

In a number of areas proximate to western Orissa, efforts have been made by Naxalite groups to organise local people in activities directed against state officials, traders, landed interests, and other perceived 'class enemies'. Such activities are comparatively prevalent, for example, in the Bastar and Chattisgarh districts of Madhya Pradesh, and in Telangana and Rayalseema regions of Andhra Pradesh. In contrast, radical political action organised by similar groups has not formed a major component of collective activities adopted amongst the vulnerable in Kalahandi to counter their hunger and immiseration.

Comparative fieldwork conducted for this thesis in the Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh provides some revealing insights relating to this issue. In addition to political activity of a representative nature through parliamentary institutions, there was also evidence of significant levels of extra-parliamentary political activity organised particularly by the Naxalite-oriented People's War Group²⁹.

Declaredly operating amongst the poor and on behalf of the poor, as per Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles, this organisation has drawn on a range of

²⁹ This organisation is linked with the 'naxalite' Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).(C.P.I.(M-L)) This organisation was made illegal by the Government of Andhra Pradesh during the period of my fieldwork in this State in May and June 1992.

activities to pressurise the Government to implement programmes to improve social and economic conditions for the vulnerable. Efforts have also been made to force contractors and other employers to pay adequate wages, and to pressure merchants into adequately remunerating local people for their produce. In some instances this has included actions to prevent traders transporting food and other commodities out of the area during times of shortage. In situations where local people did not themselves have sufficient access to these goods to meet their requirements, such interventions may have been significant in some cases in protecting the entitlements of the vulnerable.

It is important not to glamorise the violent activities carried out by such groups. These have included numerous 'eliminations' or hijackings of state employees. These have also involved the bombing of passenger trains in Andhra Pradesh in recent years. In a number of instances it appears that the principal motivation for kidnapping businessmen and Government officers has been to extort ransom money. However in terms of the response amongst local people to problems of hunger and exploitation, there is evidence of a higher tendency amongst vulnerable sections to utilise collective action to protest against their deprived social condition in areas where Naxalite groups have attempted to organise them than has been the case in Kalahandi. Such a difference may be the result of a number of factors.

Firstly, Naxalite groups have given greater attention to mobilising the deprived in Rayalseema and other parts of Andhra Pradesh than is the case in Kalahandi. In western Orissa Naxalite groups have been comparatively unsuccessful in providing an agenda which holds an appeal for local people in the area.³⁰ This is similarly the case with the C.P.M. and the C.P.I., the two Communist Parties of India which do participate in parliamentary politics.

³⁰ This may be partly the result of language problems which Telugu-speaking Naxalite groups from Andhra Pradesh have encountered in organising the poor in Orissa. Whilst some people have argued that this problem is primarily due to western Orissa's high adivasi population, this argument is at least partially refuted by the comparatively greater success which the Naxalite movements have had in organising the local tribal population in the Bastar region of M.P., and in hilly areas proximate to Vizagpatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

Secondly, this may be attributed to low levels of education, and of social and political consciousness, which prevail in western Orissa. Despite the poverty in Rayalseema, each child in this region reportedly has the opportunity to study from first standard until tenth standard (ie. roughly from five until fifteen years of age) This was said to be largely the case throughout Andhra Pradesh. In contrast, as discussed in chapter 4.10, access of the poor to education in Kalahandi (and some other parts of western Orissa) was still highly limited in many areas.

Indeed, in Rayalseema there was evidence of a higher concomitant awareness amongst the vulnerable of the exploitation which they faced in labour and market/exchange relationships, along with a clearer understanding of the roots of their poverty. These higher levels of social awareness and political consciousness placed them in a better position to resist exploitation. This was also demonstrated by higher numbers of people supporting Naxal-based activities, and in some cases marked by a higher tendency to themselves demand equitable wages from employers and better terms from traders.

Political participation which is in evidence amongst the downtrodden in Kalahandi has generally centred on electoral support for mainstream political parties such as the Congress(I) and the Janata Dal, rather than being channelled through radical political movements such as the P.W.G. As mentioned in chapter 3 and 4.9, the memory of Indira Gandhi, and to a lesser extent Rajiv Gandhi, continues to provide considerable support for the Congress(I) in sections of the district. Other political groups operating in Kalahandi, and more widely in Western Orissa, such as the Kalahandi Liberation Front (K.L.F.) and the Western Orissa Liberation Front (W.O.L.F.) have similarly failed to secure a mass-base amongst the local populations. Active support for these groups remains numerically low, and largely concentrated amongst students and 'middle-classes'. The concerns of these groups have tended to focus primarily on subnationalist demands for separate States for Kalahandi or for Western Orissa. The need to alleviate poverty, hunger and social

inequality in these areas has tended to be voiced as an adjunct of this pressure for greater regional autonomy, rather than as a primary demand in itself.

Within the community there was evidence of shared beliefs that those holding power should not misuse this power to the detriment of the vulnerable, confirming the hypothesis forwarded in 4.10. Amongst the poor in Kalahandi there was evidence of a common sentiment that 'superordinates' did have a responsibility to protect those less fortunate. However where the Kalahandi situation did differ from that described by Arnold during famine in Madras in 1874-76 (also previously discussed in 4.10) was the absence of obvious action designed to remind more powerful and affluent community members of their proper use of power; and to punish neglect of their perceived responsibility (in the eyes of the poor) to assist the vulnerable during times of distress.

Whilst there was at times considerable ill-feeling amongst the deprived towards moneylenders, landholders, and others perceived as exploiters (particularly those referred to as 'marwaris'), there was also little evidence of communal action from the impoverished public designed to humiliate those responsible for profiteering, hoarding and other forms of exploitation. Arnold has suggested that such forms of activity were relatively frequent occurrences during this Madras famine.(1984: 85)³¹

Further, despite the widespread hunger, deprivation and social inequality prevailing in Kalahandi, there were little evidence of collective action through demonstrations and rioting, as discussed in chapter 4.10. This appears to bear out the assertion made by E.P. Thompson, mentioned previously, that the fact that people are poor and hungry does not dictate that they will inevitably riot. (1991; 263) These are issues which demand further attention in future research in the western Orissa context.

³¹ Similarly there is little evidence of similar action described by Arnold amongst the hungry in South India in 1917-18, aimed again to humiliate those whom the crowd felt to be guilty of profiteering and hoarding, but also to destroy account books and promissory notes which belonged to traders. He argues because a number of such traders also operated as moneylenders this perhaps represented an action intended not only to protest against the inflated prices which many such traders were charging, but also to destroy evidence of the debts which they owed. (1979: 127)

9.3 Role of the Media

It was suggested in chapter 2 that the existence of a free and active press is another important factor in the process of maintaining food security. In this section it is argued that the media may play an active role in this process through: (a) informational transfer and dissemination; (b) in an adversarial capacity via the pressure which it place on the government to make necessary interventions to combat long-term endemic hunger and to provide relief during times of food crisis; (c) as a trigger for action for action from other agencies, whether political or extra-political.

In each of these capacities the press has be seen to play an active role in the Kalahandi context. Firstly, in terms of disseminating information relating to the hunger and suffering faced by many living within the district, both the Oriya and the national press have dramatically heightened public awareness of this issue in other regions. Indeed it is arguably Kalahandi more than any other district in India which has come to be associated in the eyes of the Indian public with problems of drought and starvation. During periods spent in research for this project in Delhi and Andhra Pradesh, many persons having regular access to the press and other media appeared be aware of Kalahandi, and immediately associated the district's name with problems of drought and starvation.³² This point is one indicator of the major influence which news media has had upon public consciousness of the food security problem in the district.

Secondly, during periods of drought and food insecurity in Kalahandi press activity heightened pressure on the Government to initiate programmes for relief and development in the district. This action reinforced pressure similarly applied

³² People's familiarity with other districts in Orissa appeared to be generally low, with the possible exception of Puri district which was familiar to many people due to the Jagannath Temple. There can be little doubt that it is the issues of drought and food crisis which have brought Kalahandi to the attention of the wider public through the newsmedia. This public awareness has similarly been heightened by press attention given to the legal cases (Supreme Court of India and Orissa High Court, discussed in chapter 8) and political activity (in the Orissa Legislative Assembly and other forum, as discussed in chapter 9.1 and 9.2 of this thesis) relating to Kalahandi.

by social activists, Opposition politicians and through the legal process. Criticisms in news reports were widespread that the State Government had been negligent in failing to fulfil its responsibility to initiate such action.

In response to such statements, media reports indicate that the Chief Minister tended regularly tried either to deny the accuracy of press reporting, or to restrict the access of the press to information of sensitive nature. A number of reporters argued that considerable obstacles were placed in their path when attempting to collect information about prevailing conditions in the district. Officers at block, subdivision and district levels were said to be unwilling to provide even official data normally available in Bhawantipatna, largely it was argued '... for fear of their political bosses'.³³ More generally, district level officials reportedly admitted to being under instructions 'not to talk to the press', and therefore asked to be excused from requests to do so.³⁴

The Chief Minister in a number of instances questioned the veracity of eyewitness accounts reported in the press. Allegations in newspaper reports that starvation deaths were taking place in Kalahandi in considerable number were, as discussed, repeatedly denied. These were regularly dismissed as an Opposition ploy to extract political mileage out of the situation.³⁵ A number of vernacular and national papers suggested that the State Administration rigorously maintained secrecy regarding the deaths which they claimed had taken place from 'acute malnutrition, starvation and disease in Koraput and Kalahandi'.³⁶ These argued that it was instead other members of J.B. Patnaik's Government whose admissions were 'calling his bluff', and were 'giving the game away'. This was after the Chief Minister had, for more than two years, suppressed facts about drought in Orissa and widespread starvation in Kalahandi, Koraput and Keonjhar. J.B. Patnaik also directed criticisms against sections of the press that development work in Kalahandi

³³ *Times of India* 4.5.87

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ *Statesman* (New Delhi), 11.10.87

³⁶ *Times of India*, 9.5.87

was being constantly hampered by overzealous news reporters constantly pestering the District Administration.³⁷

In the terms described above, it may therefore be argued that pressure generated by media coverage of the Kalahandi issue has been a significant factor in ensuring that measures for relief and development were initiated by the State Government in the district. In instances where the Government of Orissa neglected these responsibilities, press reporting has been an important factor in drawing attention to this negligence.

It should also be recognised that press coverage has acted as a trigger for heightened action from other actors and institutions. As mentioned in chapter 8.2, allegations made in an article published in the English language daily 'The Sun Times', sent to the Orissa High Court by Sri. Bhawani Mund, provided the basis for one of the public interest litigation cases brought against the Government of Orissa in the Orissa High Court. These allegations were central to the agenda investigated by the Mishra Commission inquiry.

Media coverage at State and National level is also likely to have been an important factor in contributing to the increased attention paid by the Central Government to the Kalahandi issue. A visit was made to the district by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the severe drought of 1965-66. After this visit large-scale funds and relief were allocated to the district from Central funds.³⁸ Two further visits were made by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during droughts in the mid-1980's, resulting in its being made a priority district under the AWARE scheme and receiving additional resources from Central Government³⁹ A further

³⁷ Indian Express, 8.7.87

³⁸ As discussed in 4.9, this intervention not only produced a marked improvement in conditions prevailing in the district, but also produced major support for Mrs. Gandhi as a 'saviour' of the hungry and impoverished sections of the Kalahandi population. Such respect has continued well beyond her death and continues to accord a significant bank of support for the Congress (I) party during elections.

³⁹ Considerable media attention was also directed to Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the district. One television conducted between the Prime Minister and a group of impoverished persons in the district is still much referred to by many local people. When asked about their access to food by the P.M., one person from this group replied on T.V. that regularly this access to food was very poor. However, the Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik, translated this reply for Rajiv Gandhi (who did not understand Oriya) to mean that food was readily available. In front of large numbers of T.V. viewers, the Chief Minister is therefore reported to have misrepresented the respondent's reply in order to convey to Rajiv Gandhi a more favourable impression of conditions in the district. District's population.

visit has been made to the district by the current Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao during 1993, in response to the continued attention which Kalahandi has received from the media, the Indian public, and from politicians in Central and State Government.

The heightened attention which has been given to Kalahandi in the national press may again be seen as been a central motivating factor for these visits. With the district's problems becoming familiar via this coverage to large numbers of people throughout India, many politicians have become increasingly conscious of the need to be seen in the eyes of the Indian public to be taking appropriate action to address the problems of starvation and poverty.

However again it is perhaps important not to overstate the *de facto* changes which such media activity has induced in Government action. As discussed in chapter 6.6, a range of deficiencies highlighted in press reports from 1985 appear, on the basis of my fieldwork in the region, still to prevail during 1992.

Further, whilst evidence from my study in Kalahandi supports the hypothesis (forwarded in chapter 2 of this thesis) that a free and active press may be an important variable in the process of promoting and maintaining food security, it should also be recognised that there have been deficiencies in the way that the Kalahandi issue has been reported by the media.

Firstly, press reports have tended often to focus on sensational or dramatic events, particularly instances of death and child sale. However these in many instances have failed to its readership a more complete treatment of why hunger persists in Kalahandi. The capacity which journalists have to provide more comprehensive analysis is evidently limited by constraints imposed by limits of article length and the need to meet newspaper deadlines. However a consequence of this restricted coverage is that many articles manage only to convey to readers reports of what are essentially indicators or symptoms of food crisis.⁴⁰ What the

⁴⁰ Such as starvation deaths, child sale, increased levels of prostitution, people being forced out of hunger to consume poisonous foods, and so on.

press has often failed to do is to provide to the wider population a more complete understanding of underlying factors which explain why these indicators of food crisis are evidenced in the district.

Secondly, press reports have tended to direct large amounts of coverage to Kalahandi, whilst giving minimal attention to other districts in Orissa, and in other parts of India, where problems of a similar nature, and at times greater severity, also prevail on a regular basis. Indeed, Kishan Pattnayak, one of the two Kalahandi social workers who sent the original petition to the Supreme Court of India⁴¹, suggested to me during interview that perhaps ten percent of India's surface area is affected to some degree by problems of drought and food insecurity of similar nature.⁴² Certainly in Orissa, with the possible exception of a number of districts in the coastal region, similar problems are experienced by sections of the population in a range of other districts in the State. Many of these remain unknown to much of the Indian population. Similar observations can also be made in other parts of India.

Thirdly, there has been a tendency for press coverage to understate the heterogeneity of problems which prevail across the district and between different sections of the district's population. The problems faced by sections of the population living in the predominantly tribal Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur blocks may differ substantially from those living in the less hilly but highly arid Nawapara subdivision.⁴³ Conditions in these areas in turn may differ substantially from those prevailing in the better irrigated central Tel basin area.

A similar trend has tended to mask the social inequality which exists within the population of the district. It is incorrect to assume that everyone in Kalahandi is starving. Some sections of the population (eg. those in a position to purchase the land, assets and produce of the destitute at distress sale prices) may have benefited considerably during periods of drought and hardship. Press coverage has tended to

⁴¹ See chapter 8.2

⁴² Interviewed in New Delhi, June 1992 op. cit.

⁴³ Nawapara subdivision now forms Nawapara district after the reorganisation of districts in Orissa during 1993.

hide the internal diversity of terrain, populations and problems faced within the district.

Fourthly, there are clearly instances where issues have been misreported in the press. For example the Mishra Commission identifies an instance where a newspaper published a photograph of villagers, described as inhabitants of Mahabal in Belpada block in Bolangir district, about to migrate from the State. However during the inquiry the Subcollector of Patnagarh and the B.D.O. of Belpada informed the investigator that there was no such village in the block. The investigator had considered that Mahabal may instead have been mistaken for another village named Bahabal. However inhabitants of the latter village also stated that there was nobody in the village resembling the persons shown in the photograph. The report of the Mishra Commission therefore concludes that the village Mahabal mentioned in the new article is either a misprint, or has been mistaken for another village.⁴⁴ (Mishra Commission, 1990: para.44)

Finally, a consequence of the coverage which Kalahandi has received from vernacular and national media is that in eyes of many amongst the Indian population the district has come to be inextricably linked with drought, starvation and suffering. It was regularly mentioned in news articles that if translated into English, 'Kala-handi' can be interpreted to mean 'Black Pot'.⁴⁵, probably inferring that there was a marked lack of colour and opportunity in the district.

Whilst correctly emphasising the major destitution and suffering faced by significant sections of its population, this pessimistic impression created by such reporting understates the considerable potential which exists in the region if members of the population are able to use their skills and resources to full potential. This requires that they are freed from the constraining effects of malnutrition, agricultural instability, poor access to education and other facilities, and the wider

⁴⁴ However this report does suggest that a number of people were taken from the village by contractors through local recruiting agents or 'contractmen'. To prevent their names being detected by the police the migrants were often told not to disclose their real identity and to give false addresses when questioned by the authorities. It suggests that this factor may explain why the name of the village supplied does not in fact exist. (Mishra Commission, 1990: para.44)

⁴⁵ This was seemingly used to infer that the district demonstrated a lack of attraction and talent.

range of limitations which prevail in Kalahandi.⁴⁶ By portraying the area only as one of suffering and disaster, persons living there have in turn come to be viewed by many as helpless victims with no capacity to meet their needs through their own initiative. Such a portrayal neglects the rich history, culture and potential of the district and those living there.

This chapter has highlighted the roles played by political activity and media coverage in raising the profile of hunger and starvation in Kalahandi and in placing pressure on the state to take necessary action to address these problems. The relevance of these factors to wider task of promoting food security in other regions is discussed further in the next, concluding, chapter of this thesis.

⁴⁶ See further in chapter 4,6,7 and 8 of this thesis.

Chapter 10: Conclusions and Wider Implications of this study

Despite considerable resources directed into relief and development measures by Government and Non Government Organisations during the past three decades, problems of drought and hunger continue to affect large sections of Kalahandi's population. Although problems of this nature are far from unique to Kalahandi, this district perhaps more than any other in India has come to be associated in the eyes of the Indian public with suffering, starvation and state neglect.

This study has demonstrated that the limited access which sections of the population have to food cannot be attributed to monocausal explanations such as inadequate rainfall or production shortfalls. Kalahandi represents one of only five districts in Orissa (out of thirteen at the time of this study) which is a net exporter of foodgrains. Per capita production of food in the district (Rs. 348 in value terms) lies significantly above the Orissa average (Rs. 248 in value terms) at 1988-89 prices. For this reason it has been necessary to look to a wider set of variables to explain this phenomenon, these relating to people's access to food, and to a broader set of factors which place them in a position to 'optimise' this access and the use they make of food and other essentials which they are able to obtain.

Within the district itself significant variations are found to exist between regions and between sections of the population in people's ability to cope with periods of hunger. On the basis of this study, evidence of food insecurity is found to be high in remote pockets in the hilly, predominantly adivasis Lanjigarh and Thuamur Rampur regions, where podu cultivation is still relatively common; and in the arid, mixed terrain Nawapara subdivision (Boden, Sinapali, Khariar, Nawapara blocks) where irrigation potential is particularly low.

Incidence of food insecurity varies markedly between sections of the population within the district. Those particularly vulnerable include the landless, or those with marginal access to land (particularly irrigated land); those unemployed for many or all months of the year, and with limited access to other

sources of purchasing power which they can use to buy food and other requirements; those with limited access to community support networks, or other forms of safety-net provided by the household, the community, or by the state (particularly when these have been eroded/disrupted); those with limited access to common property resources, forest produce or 'wild foods'; and those with little access to education and adequate forms of representation, leaving them with inadequate means to voice their problems and to protest against their deprived social condition.

Vulnerability is also contingent on gender, age, caste/tribe background and state of health. For this reason, women, the young and the elderly, adivasis and lower castes, and those far advanced down the downward cycle of immiseration and social deprivation which has accompanied repeated years of drought and food crisis in Kalahandi, are found to be particularly vulnerable to possible food insecurity.

However it is wrong to assume that everyone is starving in Kalahandi. It has been suggested that some persons may conversely have benefited during recent periods of food crisis. This may include a range of persons who have been able to buy up land and other assets from impoverished persons at distress sale prices, to reap usurious rates of interest through lending, and to exploit the suffering of the vulnerable through a range of other means.

People living in Kalahandi were found to implement a range of strategies to cope with day to day hardships and to see themselves through periods of crisis. These have included changing cropping patterns, drawing on patterns of mutual support existing within the household and within the community, maintaining stores which can be used during times of shortage, and selling household items deemed to be of low importance to household survival. During situations when levels of distress become more severe, some household members tend to take out loans, and to mortgage or sell land and crucial productive assets such as tools or draught animals. These strategies are regularly found to have a severely detrimental affect on the ability of the persons concerned to resume productive activities after the difficulties have lessened. Land

alienation and indebtedness are central to a process of progressive social deprivation and immiseration which has markedly impaired their ability to maintain necessary access to food and other essentials in future times. This has increased their vulnerability during subsequent periods of hardship.

Migration, an often mentioned survival strategy in literature on food crisis, was common amongst members of villagers interviewed in mixed population villages, but far less common from adivasis households. Levels of migration from Kalahandi, particularly to Raipur, are high on a seasonal and permanent basis in 'normal' years as well as in periods of drought. Whilst motivated by lack of employment and limited opportunities for generating household income, this is therefore not a strategy which is only adopted as a 'last resort' coping mechanism to withstand crisis. Similarly, sale of children, widely publicised in news articles in Kalahandi, was found to take place in some instances, but represents an action which has long existed amongst some sections of the Kalahandi population, particularly Gauds, and is not a sudden crisis response newly adopted during recent years of hunger and drought.

Evidence of radical political action amongst poorer sections in Kalahandi through naxalite groups is limited when compared with other areas proximate to western Orissa such as Bastar in Madhya Pradesh and Telangana in Andhra Pradesh. This may be partly explained by low levels of education, and low social and political consciousness, amongst vulnerable sections in Kalahandi. However Government data and field interviews in Kalahandi indicate a significant rise in other forms of criminal activity during recent years of drought, including theft of crops.

On the basis of this study it has been suggested that it is incorrect to attribute the persistence of hunger and poverty in Kalahandi simply to the failure of the Government to direct adequate funds into measures to provide relief and to promote development in the district. It was argued in chapter 6 that development expenditure in Kalahandi between 1987-88 and 1989-90 averaged Rs. 2.76 lakh (Rs. 276,000) per year for each village in the district. This figure is considerably higher if

total plan expenditure is taken into account. On these grounds it appears to be more inadequacies in how these funds are used, rather than shortfalls in allocation per se, which account for this factor.

Indeed, Government officers have at their disposal a range of, in many respects, well-designed provisions which may be implemented during times of drought, flood or other crisis listed in the Orissa Relief Code. There also exists broad ranging legislation for land redistribution (ceiling surplus laws), for preventing alienation of land from adivasis to non-adivasis (Orissa Regulation (2) of 1956), and for restricting moneylending and bonded labour. However in many instances failure of Government officials to rigorously implement these provisions limits the protection which these provide to the vulnerable.

These deficiencies also derive from inadequate training given to officers in how these should be put into practice, or from breakdowns in communication and cooperation between officers in carrying out different tasks expected of them in the relief process. Difficulties also develop in some instances through poor compatibility of Government measures with strategies which local people themselves adopt to cope with periods of hardship, such that state interventions become a substitute for people's own initiatives and coping strategies rather than a means to reinforce them.

Stronger channels for representation and public cooperation, particularly to include women, adivasis and backward castes, also represent a key factor in improving the efficiency of targeting in Government programmes. Regularly assets and resources allocated through such measures never reach targeted persons in remote areas, but are monopolised by towns, by forward castes and by male members of the community concerned. More regular visits of Government officers to remote areas to promote stronger direct links between programme administrators and the vulnerable is a necessary measure to ensure that programme allocations reach those for whom they are intended.

Attention is further required to the process of recruiting and training officers to work in Kalahandi. Amongst some officials Kalahandi is still regarded as a 'punishment posting' and therefore to be avoided if a more 'comfortable' placement can be found elsewhere. Such disinterest and lack of commitment impairs the efficiency of implementation of schemes in the district. Lack of sympathy of some officials with local culture, motivations and condition of the vulnerable also limits the strength of the rapport which they are able to develop with the public.

A study of the operations of two locally-based Non-governmental Organisations carried out in this study holds a range of wider implications for programmes implemented by the state and other agencies. These underline the importance of incorporating target groups as far as possible into the design and implementation of programmes designed to assist them. Techniques used by these organisations such as use of 'animators', and establishing village committees with equitable participation of women, adivasis and lower castes, may provide an effective means of promoting this aim. The emphasis given to ensuring that programmes are compatible with sustainable use of the environment, and that they reinforce people's traditionally used coping techniques, are crucial in minimising the disruption caused not only by food crisis, but also by the process of post-crisis recovery. A focus on providing education and non-formal training may be increasingly incorporated into Government programmes as a strategy to enhance the means which people have to generate purchasing power and to maintain access to food and other essentials.

On the basis of analysis in this study it has been argued that components of programmes operative in Kalahandi to promote food security bear further relevance for programmes designed to perform a similar role in other parts of India and in other countries. The applicability of India's model of relief administration to situations in famine-affected countries in Africa and elsewhere has been given attention by Dreze(1988) and a range of other authors.

Evidence from this thesis¹ suggests that relief measures implemented in Orissa, based on guaranteed employment on relief works with provision of 'gratuitous relief' for those unable to work, may be of value in addressing food crisis in parts of Africa and in other countries. Relief works have been used with some success to counter situations of food insecurity in Southern Africa, particularly in Botswana. However shortfalls identified in the operation of these programmes in Kalahandi clearly need to be eliminated if such programmes are to achieve optimum effectiveness elsewhere.

Further, the transferability of these ideas must again be seen to be contingent upon prevailing conditions in the country concerned, and the effectiveness with which provisions can be tailored by implementing agencies to meet the requirements of the particular circumstances in that country. This issue requires further research into the specific set of variables contributing to food insecurity in the situation concerned.

Again it should be emphasised that a wider agenda of issues, in addition to the above, must also be taken into account in planning and implementing measures to promote food security in other countries. These include: increased avenues for participation of the vulnerable in policy formulation and implementation; promotion of activities to extend the access of excluded sections (including women and minority races/groups) to resources and decision making; use of local personnel and agencies for implementation and consultancy; promotion of formal and non-formal education, social and political consciousness, and health education; and use of activators, village committees, street plays, padyatra, balmela and other means to promote awareness of food and development related issues amongst the vulnerable.

It is argued here that these policy implications are not only relevant to programmes implemented by governments to promote food security in different

¹ This discussion refers in particular to analysis of variables contributing to food insecurity in Kalahandi in chapter 4 of this thesis; to the study of guidelines for relief administration as laid in down in the Orissa Relief Code in chapter 5; to the specific case-study of Government interventions implemented in Kalahandi between 1985 and 1991 in chapter 6; comparative study with interventions implemented in Kalahandi by Lokadrusti and Agragamee in chapter 7; and legal investigations into the effectiveness of recent Government interventions in chapter 8.

countries. This agenda is also of importance for N.G.O.'s and development agencies operating in India and overseas. In particular, a number of European-based N.G.O.'s have financed programmes implemented through locally based voluntary organisations in Kalahandi with considerable success. This cooperation has enabled the external N.G.O. to take advantage of local knowledge of problems and needs in target areas. This has also reduced problems faced by the external agency in establishing a nexus with local people, and in gaining local contacts and assistance.

Further, this cooperation has helped to reduce the 'externally imposed' feel which has been created by some programmes implemented by Western-based organisations. Increased use of such cooperation with local N.G.O.'s may be of considerable value for larger development agencies, such as the World Bank, in making their interventions more specific to local requirements. A long standing criticism of interventions of the World Bank, and a number of other development agencies, is that it has tended to apply a standard package of programmes across a wide range of countries, and to a broad range of populations, without taking into account the major differences in problems and requirements between these different contexts. More effective research and targeting of requirements by locally-based agencies with extensive local knowledge, may be an important means of making interventions from Western-based N.G.O.'s and development agencies more effective in promoting food security amongst vulnerable sections in the country concerned.

This study also indicates a crucial need to improve cooperation between the different actors concerned with development and relief in Kalahandi. In many instances levels of mutual trust between locally based N.G.O.'s, and the District and State Administrations have been low. Whilst Agramee and Lokadrusti workers were observed to maintain regular cooperative links with Government officers whose commitment and *bonafides* they respected, perceived ineffectiveness of many Government programmes and corruption within the administration has limited levels of information exchange between these actors. Considerable distrust also prevailed in a number of instances between N.G.O.'s and politicians at Lok Sabha, State

Assembly, and at local government levels. Evidence of allegations directed against Agramee in the Orissa Legislative Assembly have been already mentioned. Kalahandi Lok Sabha M.P. Subhas Naik similarly refused to cooperate with Agramee and other local N.G.O.'s, arguing that as elected Lok Sabha M.P. he alone was legitimately in a position to initiate programmes to promote food security in the district. He also expressed reluctance to work with the Kalahandi administration, arguing that Government officials in the district were 'agents of Biju Patnaik' and should be immediately replaced.²

These factors underline the need to improve exchange of information and cooperation between these different actors involved with relief and development programmes in Kalahandi. These also emphasise the need to concomitantly strengthen the nexus between each of these actors and the vulnerable themselves. Evidence from this study suggests that much of the mistrust and rivalry between these actors is based upon sentiments that the others lack integrity, or do not possess the necessary skills and commitment to effectively implement interventions to help the vulnerable.

In this context, improved means of establishing the accountability of each of these actors to the public, and to the agencies concerned with programme management, may reinforce mutual confidence in their credentials. This may also remove the basis for further allegations of malpractice or incompetence. Widely represented committees (as discussed further in chapter 8) consisting of cross-party politicians, administrators, voluntary organisation workers, social workers, persons employed in health and education, along with committed and accountable members of the vulnerable public, may play an important role in such a monitoring process.

In Kalahandi a range of wider variables have been important in drawing attention to the prevailing poverty and hunger, and in placing pressure on the state

² Sri Naik further suggested that: 'officers in the district are agents of the Orissa Government so money from the Centre to improve districts is being taken by officers, people are getting none'. (Interview June 1992, New Delhi)

and other relevant agencies to take necessary action. These include a multi-party system of adversarial politics; an active and independent judiciary; an active and objective free press; a politically conscious population with channels for voicing their needs and protesting against suffering and exploitation; and a range of other forms of collective public action.

Some authors (eg. Dreze, 1988) have argued that lack of 'political will' amongst governments in Africa (eg. Ethiopia, Sudan) to implement necessary measures to promote food security and to provide relief, are possibly central to explaining the incidence of large-scale deaths in their states in recent decades. This thesis confirms the importance of representative politics in placing pressure on governments to take necessary action. In multi-party systems demonstrating regular free and fair elections, governments in many cases are likely to be reluctant to allow themselves to be seen, in the eyes of the voting public, not to be taking necessary action to protect and assist the vulnerable. In such circumstances pressures to retain electoral support may be an important motivator for necessary action. In this context it is argued here that the role of an unrestricted and objective press in keeping the public informed of instances of starvation and poverty is similarly an important variable in this process.

However we should perhaps recognise that in some parts of India, including Kalahandi, the effectiveness of representation of the vulnerable public has been limited in many cases. Also, the political will of Governments in India to protect the ability of the population to maintain food security is not always as highly developed as some may imply from comparative studies. This is the case in spite of the existence of 'free and fair' elections and a multi-party political system. This conclusion is supported by the ruling of the Orissa High Court, on the basis of the findings of the Mishra Commission inquiry, that the Government of Orissa neglected its duty to adequately protect the vulnerable during periods of drought in Kalahandi. Further, current debates in the press and in the Orissa Legislative Assembly indicate that political discussion surrounding hunger and starvation in political forum is not

always motivated by the responsibilities of elected representatives to their constituents, or out of a wider empathy for the poor. Instead this regularly derives out of a desire to gain political mileage at the expense of politicians from opposition parties. It must also be recognised that situations of food crisis may represent times when representatives are able to get access to considerable funds designated for relief, and to exercise considerable power in the name of providing assistance to those in distress. Those able to exploit such situations effectively may find food crises of considerable value in enhancing their political support and economic status.³

Public action taken in the law courts through public interest litigation may similarly provide added protection to the vulnerable against Government neglect during times of suffering. The public interest litigation cases which have been highlighted in this study, launched against the Government of Orissa in the Supreme Court and the Orissa High Court, are particularly significant. Firstly, this is the first instance where such action has been taken against a State Government under original jurisdiction cases for failing to prevent starvation deaths and to curb exploitation. Secondly, this is the first case to confirm the occurrence of starvation deaths and to lay the blame squarely with the Government.

However it is again important not to overestimate the long-term importance of this legal process, in the Kalahandi context, in placing pressure on the State Government to eliminate deficiencies identified in its system of relief administration. The significance of the recommendations of the Mishra Commission and High Court ruling already appear to fading. Many of the problems and administrative deficiencies identified in these reports still appeared to be in evidence in the district when research for this thesis was carried out during 1992.

³ These situations similarly represent times when some officers in the State and District Administrations are given considerable control over relief funds, and have the chance to 'make a name for themselves' through implementing relief measures efficiently.

This study further argues that whilst the High Court in Orissa has power to force Governments to implement its rulings, there is a need to ensure that these powers are more strictly enforced if legal action is to have necessary the effect in terms of protecting the vulnerable. This indicates the possible need for a cross-party and cross-disciplinary committee to oversee the efficient implementation of legal rulings. Presence of elected representatives, of a cross-party nature, on such committees may be essential to add legitimacy to what may be otherwise dismissed by members of the Government as an undemocratic set of instructions from unelected and unaccountable judges. The need to ensure the accountability of such a committee to the public themselves must also be highlighted. In this context it should be emphasised that without necessary independence of the judiciary, and without the required powers to enforce its recommendations, legal action may represent little more than a substitute for action to promote food security, rather than an initiator of it.

Through these studies, this thesis has attempted to extend literature relating to food security and relief administration by providing concrete case-study material detailing how legal action, representative politics, and a free and active media, may represent important variables in the process of promoting food security. Similar case-study evidence has been largely absent from other studies which have discussed these variables in the context of food security.

It would be incorrect to confuse the scale of deaths which have taken place in Kalahandi during recent periods of food crisis with the large scale starvation deaths which occurred, for example, during the Bengal famine 1943 (and during earlier famines in India), the massive famine in China in 1958-60, and during similar incidents in Ethiopia, Somalia, and a number of other African states during recent decades. However a range of key issues from this study bear relevance to the task of eliminating hunger in other states. In this respect, the extent to which 'one-party' political systems, restrictions on media activity, and a lack of judicial independence have contributed to the high incidence of starvation deaths in famine-affected states

in Africa and other regions in recent decades is an issue which requires further research in a comparative context.

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Sri. Majhi, Member of Orissa Legislative Assembly for Boden
Sri Sahendra Sahoo Special Relief Commissioner, Orissa (Bhubaneswar)
Collector, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
Assistant District Magistrate (A.D.M.) (Deputy Collector), Kalahandi District
(Bhawanipatna)
District Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division (Khariar)
Deputy Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division (Khariar)
District Forest Officer, Kalahandi Forest Division (Bhawanipatna)
District Agricultural Officer, Khariar Agricultural Division (Khariar)
District Statistical Officer, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
District Civil Supplies Officer, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
District Social Work Officer, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
Chairman, District Planning Office, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
Officer in Charge, Drought Area Development Project, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
Judicial Magistrate, Kalahandi District (Bhawanipatna)
Organiser, Total Literacy Programme (Bhawanipatna)
Relocation and Rehabilitation Officer, Indravati Dam Project (Mukiguda, Kalahandi)
Block Development Officer, Khariar block (Khariar)
Tahasildar, Khariar Tahasil (Khariar)
Additional Tahasildar, Khariar Tahasil (Khariar)
Revenue Inspector, Sinapali Revenue Circle, (Sinapali)
Chief Medical Officer, Khariar Public Health Centre
Sri. Kishan Pattnayak, petitioner in case brought against Government of Orissa in Supreme
Court (New Delhi)
Sri Kapil Tiwari, ditto
Sri Ashok Panda, Supreme Court lawyer and legal representative of Government of Orissa
Advocate, Bhawanipatna and representative of the Kalahandi Bar Association
Press reporter, Samaj newspaper, Cuttack

Press reporter, Sunday Observer, New Delhi

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