

NRI Project No: V0133

NRI Report No: 2715

Rural Non-Farm Economy Project

Orissa State Case Study

Bolangir District fieldwork report

PHASE ONE

(February 2002 to April 2002)

Conducted by

ActionAid India, Bhubaneshwar Region

For

Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich

*The views of this document are solely those of the authors
and not necessarily those of the DFID or World Bank*



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Executive summary

This report contains the results of field work in two blocks of Bolangir District, and includes case studies of four villages (and their significant hamlets in some cases), Self-Help Groups, and individual entrepreneurs. There is a parallel study of a similar sample in Nyagarh District (NRI Report No. 2715), and this summary is common to both. These all help to illustrate both the personal struggles of many of the people in the District, and also some of the more general issues affecting the potential of non-farm activities and income-generating activities (IGAs). The report is part of a study of the factors that can contribute to the expansion of the non-farm rural economy in India, which also includes a case study in Madhya Pradesh. The purpose is to identify policy interventions that can expand non-farm activities through the understanding of how to promote peoples' access to them, and how to provide the governance framework that is most conducive to their promotion.

A notable feature of the fieldwork is how significant *seasonality* is in peoples' livelihoods, even for those not working directly with farm products. In some cases this is a reflection of the climate: some tasks are not easily done in the *rainy season*, and so those activities are suspended. The highs and lows of agriculture also have a marked effect on how much demand there is for other goods and services (because customers' income goes up and down). They even affect whether some artisans are available or not to work: in almost all these case studies, the people have some land and *engage in farming* even when non-farm activities are their main livelihood activity. They cannot afford to relinquish cultivation entirely, and may have family members who remain in farming but who need assistance at busy times. The fieldwork in Nyagarh therefore confirms much work elsewhere which demonstrates that people do not necessarily see a non-farm activity as a *replacement* for cultivation, but that farming remains as an adjunct and safety net, with access to land a significant feature. It is unlikely that policies to increase non-farm activities at the expense of agriculture will be welcomed. In almost every village, the significance of wage labour is highlighted as a crucial part of the livelihood strategy for many poor people, whether or not they have adequate land or non-farm IGAs. Going away to work, or finding wage work locally, are essential to the smoothing of seasonal variations, and as the source of cash within farming households.

Households perceive different livelihood activities as part of a range of opportunities that create different income streams and reduce risks. Linked with that, groups which are restricted in the range of IGAs that they can pursue are likely to be most at risk of seasonality and fluctuations in demand for their outputs (whether through fashion, competition or breaks in the marketing chain). Often these restrictions of opportunity are because activities are defined in caste or gender terms. But there may be new dangers in the increased dependence of some groups on activities such as leaf-plate making, where the marketing is highly dependent on one official buyer, and where the very process of expanding the activity is bringing the resource base into crisis (as the leaves become more and more scarce). This connection between sustainable use of natural resources and expanded IGAs deserves greater attention. But also some activities are constrained because of bureaucratic and expensive barriers (whether licenses or bribes) to the use of available forest products.

Of the constraints on the expansion or initiation of IGAs, *credit* emerges as a key factor, for both initiating and maintaining non-farm activities. The individual case studies (Annex) tend to be of the relatively successful entrepreneurs (those who fail and decline are less obvious candidates for interviews). Notably, several of them obtained start up credit from within the family, so that risks and costs were lower. The difficulty of getting further credit in order to expand apparently fairly successful enterprises seems significant in some cases. On the other

hand, many entrepreneurs and artisans are critical of the expectations that their customers have of being allowed credit or delayed payments, and this seems to disrupt their cash flow and also their ability to take risks and make further investments. However, it is clear that some also are quite willing to organise purchasing cartels in order to reduce prices they have to pay to producers (e.g. of agricultural produce), while at the same time many smaller artisans and SHGs complain that having better access to markets and less reliance on middlemen would increase their income significantly.

The functioning of these markets is seen as unfair by some, and essential for their success by others, and it seems that simplistic claims that better access to markets and what is in effect a plea for the reduction in power of merchants and traders is more complex than seems admitted. Linked to this is the plea that some rural (cottage) industries deserve protecting and would flourish if they had better access to markets and/or the ability to retain some of the later value-adding processes locally. The economics of this need to be worked out a lot more thoroughly: if some young men are willing to migrate a thousand miles to Kashmir to work in textiles, it would seem to indicate that working locally in weaving is not an attractive alternative.

The acquisition of relevant skills is clearly crucial to the emergence of many of these enterprises, and notably they are all from private individuals who are already in the business (there are few examples of government training schemes in the fieldwork sample). In a number of cases, the current entrepreneur was willing to undergo months or over a year of apprenticeship, often with no or very low pay, in order to be able to establish themselves independently. It is probably important to look at the conditions in their family circumstances that enable such a sacrifice to be made. It is also clear that such entrepreneurs are fearful of creating competitors when they train others, and that government training initiatives should likewise take account of the potential problem of oversupply. The weaving SHG also illustrates the problem of official or NGO training, where women's enthusiasm to participate was not matched by the expansion of the equipment that would provide them with jobs.

In most cases, IGAs are being done by people who have relatively high levels of school education. It is possible that the education itself is not so significant as the confidence that it imparts, or even that the people who are inquisitive enough to pass in school are also open-minded enough to seek new opportunities. Several of the new artisan activities in the Annex are people who were inspired to take up their new trade by the example of others, and this informal demonstration effect seems important.

While caste-specific occupations and some gender discrimination (most of the entrepreneurs are men) are clearly still present in all the villages, among a few cases in the Annex it is evident that the mould has been broken, and a new IGA has enabled a few women and men to escape their traditional boundaries. However, these seem to be a result of initiative combined with need, and it is not clear what sort of policy intervention might enable this type of shift to be widened to the many thousands who remain constrained by custom.

The report is an edited and abbreviated version of the report of phase 1 of the fieldwork completed by the local consultants in 2002.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the RNFE research in Orissa

The role of rural non-farm sector in alleviating rural poverty has been widely acknowledged. It needs to be given due recognition in the policy framework at Central, State and local levels. The policy research project on the Rural Non-Farm Economy (RNFE) reflects a growing realisation within governments and development agencies that the conventional emphasis on the agricultural sector is an insufficient means by which to tackle rural poverty, and that an improved understanding of the non-farm components of the rural economy is also required.

Orissa is one of the case studies of the RNFE project in India. In Orissa the research is being conducted in Nayagarh and Bolangir districts. The former is relatively close to Bhubaneswar (the state capital), and is more advantaged agriculturally. Bolangir suffers frequent droughts and is regarded as one of the poorest districts in India. These two districts offer contrasts in agricultural conditions that might inform the analysis of RNFE, in particular the links between agriculture (in the broader sense) and non-farm activities. The Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) is the local research partner organisation for research in Nayagarh District, while ActionAid is partner in Bolangir, where it has been well established for several years in village-level development and advocacy. This pilot study was conducted by CEPRA-CYSD in collaboration with the Natural Resources Institute (NRI). This report presents the findings of Phase I of research in Nayagarh district.

Purpose of the RNFE research in Orissa

The main purpose of the present research is to inform and assist governments, the Department for International Development (the UK foreign aid ministry) and the World Bank in formulating pro-poor RNFE policies in India. This is in the context of the likely continued inadequacy of the agricultural sector to provide sufficient employment or other livelihoods, and the wish to avoid the negative environmental and social consequences of increased levels of migration into large towns and cities.

The research in Orissa has two components:

- Local Governance and the rural non-farm economy;
- Access to rural livelihoods and barriers to participation and diversification; and

The **Access component** will identify (a) factors that condition access to rural non-farm employment for the poor and (b) mechanisms for integrating these research results into relevant policy processes. Its focus is the household-level or individual-level factors that hinder or facilitate participation in rural non-farm activities.

The **Local Governance** (LG) component analyses how institutions (constitutional and informal, public and private) operate at the local level (small towns and districts) in relation to non-farm activities. It is concerned with understanding what conditions and what type of wider political and economic framework is best for improving and expanding the RNFE. This involves examining the potential positive and negative impacts of local governance on the RNFE.

Definitions

Research on the rural non-farm economy is sometimes thwarted by definitional debates. It is therefore useful to clarify terms at the outset:

- “Employment” here refers to wage and self-employment, whether on own farm or as wage labour on someone else’s farm;

- “Non-farm” is defined by what it is not – it is not primary agriculture (crops or livestock), nor does it normally include forestry or fisheries (though in practice, non-timber forest products are often a source of raw materials for some non-farm activities).

The research centres on *non-farm* activities that contribute to rural livelihoods. Income from migratory activities is included where the individual is considered to still reside in rural areas (rural-rural migration, daily commuting from a rural area to local town, or seasonal or weekly commuting). In all these situations migration could be viewed as part of a rural household livelihood strategy. Where permanent migration has occurred, or where migration has taken a former household member to a larger city, and remittances are sent back to the rural area, this would be captured as a rural household asset and income stream, rather than as non-farm activity.

DISTRICT PROFILE

Introduction

Bolangir (sometimes transcribed Balangir) is in the western part of Orissa, and is flanked in the north-west by the Gandhamardan hill range. Its neighbour on the north is Bargarh district, on the east Sonepur, with Kalahandi to the south and Nuapada to the west. The district is 6,569 sq. km, and has a population of about 1.34 million (2001 Census, provisional). The growth in 1981-91 was nearly 16 percent, but was supposedly only 8.5 percent from 1991 to 2001, the lowest population growth in the state. However, this particular figure could be misleading. The census took place at a time (January-February and May-June) when about 100,000 people were not at home but working in distant places to earn wages. Out-migration is a very significant feature of the district and a means for many households to survive. In the 1991 census the schedule caste and tribal population of the district was 189,471 and 271,511 respectively (2001 census figures are not yet available). The density of population in 1991 census was 187 per sq. km and in 2001 census (provisional) it had increased to 203.

The western part of the district is rugged and isolated, with hill ranges running in various directions. The crest of the range of Gandhamardan hills is a fine plateau, some ten miles long, with an average height of 3000 feet. The soil in this area is light and sandy. The main forest area stretches along the western boundary bordering Nuapada district. Bolangir lies on the north-west bank of river Tel (the biggest river flowing through the district), which forms the boundary between Bolangir and the districts of Kalahandi, Boudh and Kandhamal. From the northern peak of the Gandhamardan hills a famous stream descends to the foot of the hill and finally flows to the Nrusinghanath, a famous pilgrimage destination in Bargarh, the neighbouring district. In the opposite crest of the southern side, a similar stream flows through the famous Temple Harisankar.

Forest covers about 23 percent of the district, and of the total about 70 percent is Reserve Forest. The forest suffers from depletion, and the proximate causes have been suggested to include: poor distribution of rainfall; geological formation which is very resistance to weathering (the soil being shallow, sandy and dry); intensive shifting cultivation in the past; and recurring forest fires. Species of commercial importance to the poorest people are mahua, char, kendu leaf, neem and tamarind; the number of sal has declined (District Gazetteer, 1986). Rainfall is erratic across the monsoon months between June and October, and are often scanty in October when the standing crops require it the most.

A great variety of minerals (including graphite, lead ore, manganese ore and bauxite) occur in the district. According to the Orissa Directorate of Mining and Geology, in 1996 there were mines quarrying for graphite (30), limestone and quartz. Only 1,114 workers were employed in 1996-97 (in 1995-96 it was 2,370.) bringing an output value of Rs26 million (up from about Rs23 million in 1995-96).

Over 98 percent of the population are regarded as Hindu. According to the 1991 census the proportion of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in the total population was around 15 percent and 22 percent respectively. There are about 50 schedule castes in the district, of which seven are frequently found in the villages. Besides these schedule castes there are other categories included in other backward classes (OBCs). The district has 31 scheduled tribes, of which eight are prominent.

The district has three sub-divisions (Bolangir, Patnagarh and Titlagarh), 6 Tahasils, 14 Community Development blocks (CDB), 285 Gram Panchayats, 1792 villages and 6

Assembly constituencies. There are four towns: Bolangir, Kantabanji, Patnagarh and Titilagarh, of which only Bolangir has municipal town status. Like many other districts of Orissa, Bolangir is named after the headquarter town. The general administration of the district is vested with the collector, who also functions as the magistrate. He is responsible for collection of land revenue and different cess, as well as for revenue records. Other district officers such as Additional District Magistrate, Sub-Collectors (Sub-divisional Officers), Tahasildars assist him. The Additional District Magistrate is also empowered under several laws to function as the district head. For convenience of revenue administration the district is divided into 6 Tahasils, each under a Gazetted officer designated as Tahasildar. Each of the 14 CDB is under a block development officer (BDO), who is responsible for the community development works.

The panchayatiraj system of decentralised local governance

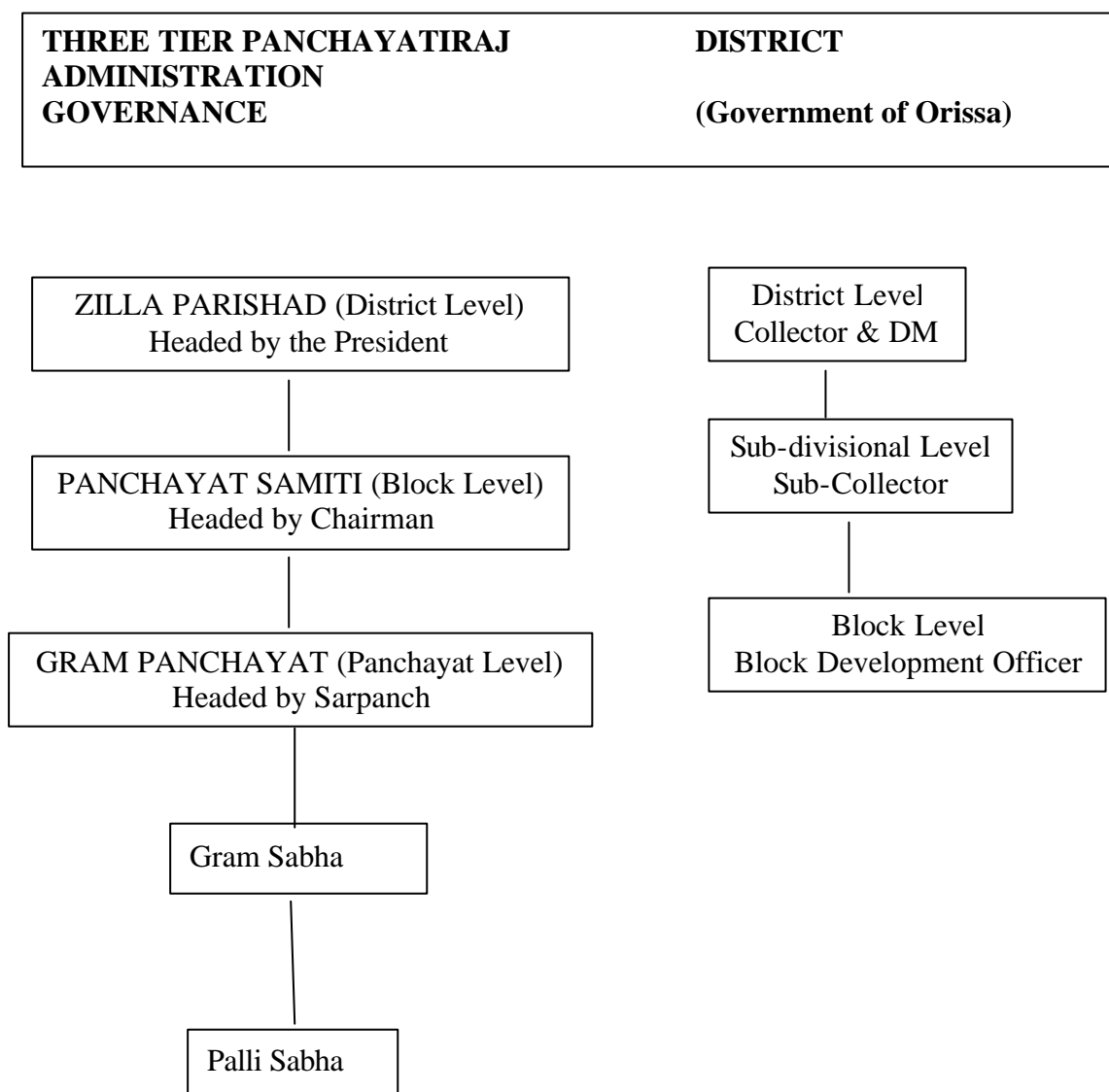
In 1993 the Indian constitution was amended to decentralise government and give authority to people's elected representatives in the form of the three-tier panchayati raj institutions (PRIs). The lowest unit of governance is now the gram panchayat. Above it there is panchayat samiti in the secondary level, and then the Zilla Parishad at the district level. A gram panchayat consists of a number of revenue villages with a minimum population of 5000. These revenue villages are called 'wards'. One revenue village might be one ward or more than one ward. But one gram panchayat will have at least 11 wards but no more than 25 wards. Each ward is represented by a ward member in the gram panchayat and the panchayat is headed by a Sarpanch, who is elected directly by the people of all the villages coming under a panchayat. They are responsible for different development works that are carried out by the government and non-government agencies within the panchayat jurisdiction.

The panchayat is governed by the decisions taken in a gram sabha held at the panchayat level, and palli sabha held at the village or ward level. Ward members from respective wards in the village preside over the sittings of palli sabha, whereas the Sarpanch presides over the gram sabha. Sarpanch is assisted by a secretary (a government appointed salaried person) to manage the day-to-day administration of the panchayat. All the adult voters aged above 18 years are members of a palli sabha and gram sabha. Palli sabhas can be held as many times as the villagers like to take decisions related to village development. A gram sabha should be held four times in a year, and compulsorily twice in a year, once before March to prepare plans for the next financial year, and the second time in May-June to evaluate the previous year's works.

Panchayat Samiti is the middle tier of the system. There is a block development officer (BDO) as the executive head of the block. There are block chairman and samiti members, elected directly by the people, to ensure good governance. Gram panchayat is a unit of the panchayat samiti. In addition to the sarpanch, one samiti member (Sabhya), elected from one or more than one gram panchayats directly by the people, are members in the panchayat samiti. Chairman and vice chairman are elected from among the members to lead the block. The final ratification authority for any programme- implementing decision at block level lies within the block chairman.

While panchayats and panchayat samitis existed from 1959, zilla parishad came into limelight after the constitutional amendment of 1993. Zilla Parishad at the district level is divided into 34 zones. Members are elected directly by the people from each zone to represent in the zilla parishad. A president is elected from among the zonal members to administer the zilla parishad. While the collector is the executive head of the district, the zilla parishad is an integral part of the decision making process and has the powers to question implementation of

various development schemes in the district. However, the three-tier system as also the district administration is only to honour and carry out the decisions taken by the gram sabha, which, in turn, is to respect the decisions taken in the palli sabha. No decision of the palli sabha can be changed in gram sabha and similarly, no decision of gram sabha can be changed at any higher level without prior consent of the respective people's assemblies.



Structure of Local Government under Panchayat Raj System

DISTRICT ASSETS RELEVANT TO LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure

The district is about 300 km west of the state capital, Bhubaneswar, and is well connected by road to its neighbouring districts and the state capital. Although there is rail communication to Bhubaneswar, it is much lengthier. The railway connects Bolangir to the south, north and east of India, but the train frequency is very poor, with only a couple of trains running every day. All the block headquarters are connected to the district headquarter by public or private bus. The district has 83 km of national highway, 198 km of state highway, major district roads of 126 km, all of which are pucca tar surface. There are also untarred roads that come under the village and panchayats.

The district has a total of 280 post offices, and 231 branch post offices to facilitate the service for rural people. In recent times many villages have got telephone facility through the establishment of wireless telephone centre in village sub post offices. The district has 1447 electrified villages, which is 81 percent of the total. Continuous efforts are being undertaken to provide electricity to all the villages.

There are village level weekly markets in almost all the panchayat headquarters and in some of the villages. In addition there are major market locations in the Bolangir municipal area and other towns. There are 14 main markets located at a maximum distance of 99 km (Bangamunda) and minimum of 19 km (Loisingha) from Bolangir. The markets located in the north-western and south depends on the Raipur market (situated in the neighbouring state around 300 km from Bolangir) to get the raw materials and other business items. Northern side markets have indirect dependency on Raipur market through its neighbouring district market. Markets on the east generally do not have direct access to the markets located outside the state so goods are channelled through other major market locations situated in northern and southern areas such as Patnagarh, Titilagarh and Kantabanji towns.

Education and training

There are 631,000 literates (407,000 males and 224,000 females) in the district, which therefore has 55 percent literacy (70 percent of males and 39 percent of females) (2001 census provisional results). This is an increase of 58 percent of literates in the district, as in the 1991 census only 39 percent were classed as literate (56 percent males and 21 percent females).

There are just over two thousand primary schools in the district having a total 5362 teachers (4963 trained, 399 untrained). The number of middle schools is 398, high schools is 201 and colleges of general education is 38. The following table shows the figures on school / college students in the district.

Table: Status of students in different levels of education in 1995-96

EDUCATION LEVEL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	SC	ST	OTHERS
Primary	86,002	65,232	151,234	29,170	43,273	78,791
Middle	27,203	16,549	43,752	5,338	3,411	35,003
Secondary	22,447	11,845	34,292	5,952	4,514	23,826
College	8,945	3,339	12,284	1,390	886	10,008
All	144,597	96,965	241,562	41,850	52,084	147,628

Source: District Statistical Office, Bolangir

It is noticeable how the participation of girls falls in each higher level of education, but also more significantly that a very large percentage of the children who do not progress from primary school are from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe groups. While these two categories make up about 37 percent of the total population, the dropout rate from them represents about 70 percent. At college level, the ST participation rate is around 7 percent, although their share of the total population is 22 percent.

Finance

In March 2001, the district has 69 banking offices, with total deposits of Rs2298.4 million and loans of Rs950.5 million. There are also 160 agricultural credit co-operative societies in all

blocks, with 182,878 members, and a total of Rs37.76 million advanced for loans. In addition there are 56 non-agricultural credit co-operative societies, with 2035 members and Rs6.4 million advanced as loan. These exist in only nine blocks, and well over half (37) are in Bolangir block alone. It is clear that there is a large number of banking and financial institutions in the district, but this facility is less accessible to the poor rural people. The various socio-economic and political constraints involved in this are discussed in the village sections below.

Health services

There is one general hospital at district level, 5 sub-divisional hospitals, 5 community health centres, 10 primary health centres, 38 new primary health centres and one mobile health unit. In addition there are 30 ayurvedic hospitals and dispensaries, and 23 homeopathic hospitals and dispensaries. The dominance of allopathic ('Western') treatment systems has made access to health services by the poorest sections very expensive.

LIVELIHOODS

Economic sectors and activities

Agriculture is the predominant source of livelihood for the people of the district, whether they are cultivators of their own land or provide wage labour for others. Out of total population of 1.23 million (1991 census), the working population constituted 41 percent (362,966 males and 138,550 females). Of these, 85 percent were counted as 'main workers' (having work for more than 183 days the previous year). Four out of five of these main workers were either own cultivators or agricultural labourers. The remaining 76 thousand are marginal workers (less than 183 days work per year) whose main activities are not recorded, but may of course also include farm labouring. The remaining categories for main workers include construction work, trade and commerce, livestock, forestry, fishing and allied activities, mining and quarrying, manufacturing and processing, servicing and repairing in the household and non household industry, construction, and transport, storage and communication. The numbers involvement in these various sectors are given in the following table.

Table: Bolangir – Distribution of occupations of main workers in 1991 Census

Occupation		
Cultivation		208,673
Agricultural labour		131,447
Livestock, forestry & others		4,111
Mining and quarrying		1,441
Manufacturing, processing, servicing, repairing	Household	15,150
	Other than household	8,513
Construction		2,338
Trade & commerce		17,156
Transport & storage		6,126
Other services		30,552
Total Main workers		425,507

Migration

In spite of the resources and infrastructure described above, a large number of poor people migrate out from the district in search of wage employment. One of the main factors involved is drought, which is now a part of the life in Bolangir. The landless agricultural workers and the marginal farmers are the most affected by drought. The latter resort to distress mortgaging or selling of their precious land plots (and also household articles) to the big farmers. They

also migrate in search of wage employment to distant places like Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, and Bhadoi in Uttar Pradesh. They are induced to do so by labour contractors, who take them illegally and exploit them at every stage of their migration period (which ranges between 6 and 8 months a year). When they return home, many are left with no savings, making them depend for survival on credit from the local moneylenders who charge high rate of interest. In order to repay the loan and for survival, they migrate again and again. Strict observance of untouchability means that many of the poor landless people from scheduled castes are unable to survive on petty business such as vegetable vending, so that they are forced to migrate. This way, migration in Bolangir has almost been institutionalised because of the lure of so called 'big money', which instead of helping the poor is in fact aggravating their poverty situation.

Droughts have therefore resulted in displacement – both temporary and permanent – of large number of people from their traditional work-base. Although out-migration started in Bolangir after the severe drought of 1965, it reached dangerous proportions after the 1996 drought known as the *drought of the century*. It was reported in various quarters that about 40,000 people migrated out in 1996/97. A recent study reveals that about 60,000 people migrated out in 2001. The backbreaking drought in 2002 has possibly sent about 100,000 people out of the district to work for survival in miserable, unhygienic conditions.

Dadan Sramik

Dadan Sramiks are that section of the village community that migrates out to brick kilns for wage employment. The duration of migration may vary from six to eight months. A majority of such migrants are from the socially marginalised community – the untouchable Harijans. These people moved out when opportunities in agriculture dwindled due to drought and they were denied alternative livelihood opportunities by the higher castes.

They are taken to the work-sites by *sardars* (labour contractor) operating from within the district. They are given Rs.200/300 per *pathuria* (pathuria is a unit consisting of three persons) as 'gift' (it actually is a sum to tie the person with the contractor) by the contractor at the time of *Nuakhai* festival in September. One week from the full moon in November, they receive another big advance that ranges between Rs.4000 and Rs.6000. With this money, they repay their outstanding debts and buy some ration for the members (generally old) who stay back home to look after their belongings including cattle. Within three to four days of receiving the advance, the contractor in a jeep takes them to the nearest railway stations in pitch dark to avoid the police. Older children accompany their parents to help them in brick making and also in taking care of the kids. The contractor comes back after accompanying the *pathurias* to the work-sites (brick kilns). Expenses for the entire trip is borne by the contractor. When they start from home, the *pathurias* carry some ration and money with them, because the money provided to them for food by the contractor is insufficient. Besides their ticket, each *pathuria* is provided with only about Rs.50 for their food expenses during a journey lasting well over 36 hours.

The first raw bricks that the *pathurias* make are used in the construction of low-roofed and thatched houses where they stay. One unit of *pathuria* stays in one house where it becomes difficult to move freely. The kiln owner provides them with fuel-wood. The kiln owner also provides ingredients such as water, sand etc. required in brick making at the work-site. Before moving out of the village, some villagers agree with the contractor on wage that varies from Rs.70 to Rs.80 per 1000 bricks made. But in many instances, their wage is not known to them until they reach the work-site. At the work-site, the *pathurias* receive Rs.250 to Rs.350 per week depending on the number of bricks they make. Counting of the bricks is done at the

weekend and payment for the week is made accordingly. Final counting is done at the end of the season when deductions of all previous advances are made. After the deductions the *pathurias* are left with an amount of Rs.1000 to Rs.3000 of saving. In some seasons because of poor health and other unforeseen expenditures, the *pathurias* return home without any saving at all.

At the kiln, work is compulsory for 12 to 14 hours everyday, and the hard work results in frequent fever and poor health. Inclement weather reduces production but increases expenditure, leading to lower income and lower level of consumption. This results in poor health again. Working under the sun results in fatigue. The overall impact of migration is to generate frequent health problems. The family members who remain back home are sometimes hungry and are highly vulnerable. Migrant children receive no education. The migrants are fatigued and often ill after returning to the village; and so unable to work for about two months. Children and pregnant women suffer the most. What is more, there is gross violation of a number of basic rights at the work-site. Acts such as Inter-State migration Workmen's Act, Bonded Labour Act, Minimum Wages Act and Child Labour Act are not adhered to by the contractors and the employers.

The question then arises as to why people still migrate? Since there are not enough livelihood options after the *pathurias* return home and the government also fails to provide them with any alternate options, they are forced to migrate in spite of all their pains and difficulties that have become a part of the migrants' lives. Schemes such as EAS, BPL-PDS, OAP (see below), and emergency feeding do not provide sufficient entitlements and so the poor are still forced to migrate. There are other forms of migration as has been mentioned at the beginning of this section, which also witness exploitation of similar nature. It is the brick kiln sufferings, however, which are acute and which have attracted the attention of all and sundry.

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This report is of an exploratory study that aimed at documenting various livelihood options with the poor people in Bolangir, and how existing and new non-farm activities can contribute alternative livelihoods. The objective is to identify what are the enabling and constraining factors for the non-farm economy to grow as an effective supplementary (or alternative) livelihoods to the farm sector.

ActionAid suggested covering four villages from four blocks in this exploratory phase, as it would be interesting to know a diverse non-farm picture from four different places which have local-specific issues. The four blocks chosen had one distinguishing criterion – distance from the district headquarters in Bolangir town. The criteria for four villages and four blocks selected were as follows :

Kurebhana in Puintala block :

Kurebhana village comes under Cchatapipal gram panchayat and is about 15 km from Bolangir town. District level government offices such as the collectorate, markets etc are easily accessible as far as communication is concerned. It is least affected by drought and out-migration is almost non-existent from this village.

Kursud in Titlagarh block :

This village is itself a panchayat headquarters. It is located on a highway connecting two townships in two different districts – Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi (about 40 km south) and

Khariar in Nuapada district (about 30 km north). The village is, however, very poorly connected to important places within the district of Bolangir. It is about 110 km to the southwest of Bolangir town. Although it is only about 25 km from Titlagarh subdivision headquarters, there is not even a fair weather road. One has to cross Unnder river to reach the tar road that goes to Titlagarh. People cross the river by boat during monsoon.

Kharkhara in Belpada block :

This village is highly migration-prone. In spite of good mineral resources, poor people from the village migrate out in search of wage employment. Agriculture is very risky and prone to drought due to erratic rains. It has also poor road communication to the block headquarters, Belpada at a distance of about 6 km. From the district headquarters, it is about 73 km.

Chandanjuri in Patnagarh block :

21 km from the block headquarters, Patnagarh and 61 km from the district headquarters, Bolangir lies this village. The village is rich in forest resources, especially non-timber forest products, but has very poor road communication to the outside world.

Methodology

The research study was participatory in nature. For information at the village level, participatory Micro Level Plans (Lok Yojanas) facilitated earlier by ActionAid through its CADMB (Collective Action for Drought Mitigation in Bolangir) network were the basis on which the research progressed. Additional PRA exercises were taken up to fill the gaps, as needed by the research. In addition to key-informant interviews, focused group discussions and individual case studies were conducted to lend credence to the village case. PRA exercises such as social mapping, resource mapping, timeline, Venn diagram, seasonality and matrices were carried out to cover different aspects of the research. While Kursud and Kurebhana were covered in one go, Kharkhara and Chandanjuri were covered in two phases with a gap of two days in between. Since micro level plans had been initiated in all these villages, a couple of days was devoted in each of these villages exclusively to focus on non-farm options, focused group discussions and key-informant interviews on non-farm activities. Key-informant interviews were also taken from the various government and non-government service providers such as banking institutions and government officials. Empirical data from the field were supported by various qualitative and quantitative data about the district from government records and other sources.

Constraints of the study

Timing of the study coincided with the local panchayat elections, which affected qualitative and intensive interaction with the villagers, due to the prevailing political atmosphere in the villages. Also since the government officials were very busy with the elections, the initial district level consultative workshop could not be conducted.

PRA require the participants to be involved through understanding what the exercise is about. At times, it became difficult to keep people engaged in an exercise for more than two hours, after which the number participating went down. Elections to the local panchayat bodies were going on, and people tended to assume we were electioneering people (political parties) and did not participate in large numbers when they came to know about our identity. Frequent visits by political parties to the villages also affected continuance of exercises and discussions. The fieldwork, therefore took more time than it should have.

COMPOSITE PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE BLOCKS

There are 14 Community Development Blocks in Bolangir, and of these villages in four (Titlagarh, Belpada, Patnagarh, Puintala) have been selected for the present study. This section gives a brief picture of various features (presented in tabular form) derived mainly from District Census Book 1991, District Statistical Handbook 1997, and Information Sheet (January 2002) DRDA, Bolangir. While Patnagarh block is the largest in area in the district, Titlagarh has more land under cultivation.

Table: Area

Block	Total area (in acres)	Percent of cultivable land	Percent irrigated	District ranking by area
Patnagarh	59,132.89	64.12	5.69	1 st
Belpara	49,737.20	73.76	5.53	2 nd
Titlagarh	34,931.93	91.12	12.70	8 th
Puintala	33,934.56	75.03	2.05	9 th

Source : District Census Book 1991

Table: Location

Block	Distance from Bolangir town (District Headquarters) (km)	Direction	Distance from State Capital (km)
Patnagarh	40	West	360
Belpara	67	West	427
Titlagarh	90	South West	420
Puintala	8	East	322

Table: Number of villages

Block	Number of villages	Inhabited villages	Number of households
Patnagarh	164	164	20240
Puintala	136	134	16618
Belpara	120	119	16689
Titlagarh	131	130	18370

Source : District Census Book 1991

Table: Population

Block	ALL			SC		ST		OBC	
	TOTAL	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Patnagarh	99538	50135	49403	6241	6050	16119	16172	27775	27181
Puintala	86571	44015	42556	9413	9002	2915	2818	31687	30736
Belpara	40806	40520	81326	4130	3924	14320	24674	22070	52728
Titlagarh	85802	42942	42860	8247	7878	9093	9284	25602	25698

Source: District Census Book 1991

Table: Sex ratio and literacy rate

BLOCK	Females per 1000 males	Literacy Rate		
		ALL	M	F
Patnagarh	985	37.68	55.49	19.55
Puintala	967	42.39	60.96	23.21
Belpara	993	31.74	47.88	15.45
Titlagarh	998	27.51	45.56	9.49

Source: District Census Book 1991

According to table 6, Puintala, which is closest to the district headquarters, has the highest literacy rate but the lowest sex ratio. On the other hand, Titlagarh the most distant block has a very poor literacy rate, but has the highest sex ration. Literacy among the women is abysmally low at 9.49 percent.

Village Reports

VILLAGE ONE: CHANDANJURI

Village profile

Chandanjuri is located at 61km north-west of Bolangir town and at 21 km north of Patnagarh, the block headquarters. There is a tar road nearby linking it to both the district and block headquarters but it is in very bad shape due to lack of repair. Leading to the tar road is an unpaved *kaccha* road of about 6km. The village is situated in the border area of Bolangir district, on the boundary with Bargarh District. The village is surrounded with natural forests, which is dense to the east, west and north.

The village has a population of 418, with 205 (49 percent) males and 213 (51 percent) females. Ethnic composition of the village shows that 127 (30 percent) are from schedule tribes, 121 (29 percent) are schedule caste and remaining 138 (41 percent) are other caste groups. Average household is approximately four members.

Table: Population growth and land area of the village

Year	Number of Households	Population	Total area (in acres)	Forest area (in acres)	Cultivated area (in acres)
1981	55	216	351.67	64.75	233.91
1991	75	340	351.67	70.82	216.50
2001	106	418	-	-	-

Source : District census 1981,1991 and primary survey during field work

The primary occupation of 72 families is agriculture, wage labour, and business (including trading in non-timber forest produces) and the remaining 34 families have diversified occupations. Thus agriculture constitutes a major part of the village livelihood, although collection of forest produce also plays an important role for many of the villagers. Of the total 642 acres of land a high proportion of 523 acres constitute upland and the remaining 121 acre constitute medium and low land. In the past, crops like *Gurji*, *Ragi*, *Kudo*, *Rasi*, and *Koltha*

were cultivated in the uplands but now few households grow these crops. With increased pressure on land due to fragmented landholding (a result of an increase in family size), High Yielding Variety (HYV) of paddy has become an attraction. But due to poor water management (lack of maintenance, and the conversion of traditional water bodies into agricultural land) and lack of access and control over water bodies by poor people, HYVs cultivation has become highly vulnerable to crop loss in an erratic monsoon regime. Another reason why people are going away from consuming coarse cereals is a growing 'inferiority complex' created by better-off people who have dubbed such crops as very low quality only worth using as animal feed.

Local Governance

The village belongs to Larambha panchayat, which consists of 10 villages. The Sarpanch is responsible for the development of all the villages under the panchayat. Chandanjuri consists of one ward and hence is represented by one ward member in the panchayat. The *Pallisabha* and *Gramsabha* are assemblies organised to ensure people's participation in decision-making for development of the village, especially to involve the poorest and most vulnerable sections. This especially means selection of beneficiaries under various social welfare schemes, recommendations for various infrastructure requirements for the village etc. *Pallisabha* is organised in the village, while the *gramsabha* is held in the office of the Panchayat. Resolutions made in *pallisabha* are verified, scrutinised and passed in the *gramsabha* which is presided over by the Sarpanch. But representation of lower caste groups in these two grassroots assemblies is very poor. Schedule caste people do not go and take part in the Panchayat meeting due to the prevalence of untouchability in the village. Representatives from scheduled castes get elected due to reservation provisions, but since the higher caste (including tribal people) people in the village and panchayat do not socially accept them, their participation is still marginal. Again, people's participation from lower economic class is negligible due to their preoccupation with their livelihood sustenance. Thus, the higher socio-economic groups dominate the decision-making processes.

Local governance in the past revolved around the village *Gountia* (richest family in the village). Appointment of a Gountia rested with the provincial government during the British times. The main responsibility of the Gountia was to collect revenue from all the villagers for the government. For this role, he was given a large portion of total land available in the village. This statutory ruling led to the rest of the village becoming dependent on the Gountia, which acted as a moneylender and landlord of the village. Now, of the total 123 acres of land owned by the Gountia family, 120 acres has been taken by the government for implementation of ceiling enactment in the year 1980. The land was redistributed among 60 landless families of which 4 are from Chandanjuri and the other 54 from neighbouring villages. Control of land was a big factor in people's respect for the Gountia, and although today people still look to him in decision-making processes, the degree has declined.

A female Sarpanch who hails from Chandanjuri and who has been elected under the reservation category leads the Panchayat. But in general the participation of women (in the form of attendance in Gram Sabha, Palli Sabha, awareness on Panchayat Rules) is very low. Illiteracy, ignorance, lack of knowledge on the responsibilities of panchayat and preoccupation in household activities prevent them from participating in Panchayat affairs.

The organisations (*see table*) are entrusted to accelerate the development process by taking care of education, forest, health, women development etc. For example, the forest committee of the village is able to protect bamboo trees which are feared to become extinct from the forest, Jana mangal SHG has raised voice to avoid late payment by the government for the

kendu leaf pluckers, village education committee has become successful in demanding appointment of additional teacher in the school. Again, it is found that the representation and participation of poor and marginalised section of the community is negligible. Various problems are discussed in village committee, Forest protection committee and village education committee and if there is any need of help if panchayat then it is put before Pallisabha to institutionalise the decisions but due to interference of higher level political representatives in the Gram Sabha and Pallisabha, the village level committees have lost their importance in comparison to the traditional village organisational pattern.

Table: Village organisations

Name of the organisation	Start year	Members								Main activity
		SC		ST		Other		Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Village committee	1993	4	-	7	-	14	-	25	-	decide the village level conflicts
Forest protection committee	1993	2	-	2	-	3	-	7	-	protect forest from outsiders and forest fires
Village education committee	1985	1	1	1	1	3	-	5	2	execute education activities and take care the school building
Kirtan committee	1972	-	-	9	-	16		25		organise cultural programmes on festive occasions
Cultural committee	1989	5						5		organise cultural programmes on individual ceremonial occasions
Jatiya sama committee	1999	7						7		Assist in the distribution of goods by an NGO (Nabajagaran sramik sangha)
Isa committee	2000	2		2		3		7		Take care the education programme undertaken by Isa (An NGO)
Anganwadi committee	1985				2		5		7	supervise the activities on women and child care undertaken by the Anganwadi centre
Village drought action committee	1993	2	1	2	2	3	2	7	5	plan for long term drought mitigation in the village
Jana mangal SHG	2001				6		14		20	strengthen the women group of the village
Arset committee	1998						18		18	Strengthen the male group of the village

LIVELIHOOD ASSETS

Natural Resources:

Natural Resources include land, water and forest resources available in the periphery of the village for common use. Of the 876 acres of total land area, 697 acre constitutes the cultivable land and the lands have been classified into four categories depending on their slope. The area of common land and grazing land is encroached by the rich and powerful. The village has seven traditional water harvesting structures (TWHS) occupying a total area of 14 acres. Better-off people use these TWHSs for irrigation purpose.

The village has substantial areas under forest. Besides collection of fuel-wood, a number of Non Timber Forest Produces (NTFP) are collected for consumption and commercial purposes to supplement livelihood. These include Mahul, Char, Anla, Harida, Bahada, bamboo; Kendu leaves are also plentiful. Mahula is available in the month of March and April. Every poor household of the village collects this. Mainly women and children groups of the village go early morning for collection of this item spending 6-8 hours to collect 50-60 kg per person. It is then dried when its weight comes down to 20-30 kg. This can be used for preparation of liquor, cake by mixing with rice and fodder for livestock. But villagers of Chandanjuri collect only for marketing purpose. The selling price of mahula varies from Rs.5 to Rs.5.50 for dried Mahula flower. This is exchanged for salt, that being a common requirement of the poor people. The fresh and raw mahua flower is marketed through private petty traders (located at Ghasien 9 km from the village). Those petty traders are appointed by the bigger traders (commonly Marwari community) based in the towns of Kantabanji (78 Km) and Bolangir (61km). No government agency is involved in marketing this produce.

Char fruit is available in the months of May and June. The availability of this item is less than that of Mahua flower. It is used for both consumption and marketing purpose. Char seed is extracted from the dried char fruit and it is sold to the petty traders. It is much costlier than mahula and is sold at Rs.25 per kg at the primarily collector's level. Char seed is exchanged for salt, a necessary item for consumption since poor people can eat rice with salt when there is no alternative. The char seed is bartered for salt (at 1 kg char seed for 30 kg salt) rather than for money so as to restrict the risk of money being used for other unnecessary expenditures. Again there is no government involvement in the marketing.

Bamboo is available in plenty in the forest throughout the year and collected for household use such as construction of house and fencing of land. The scheduled caste families traditionally make baskets out of bamboo and upper caste people purchase it for their domestic use. Males collect this item and females are involved in processing work. Recently petty traders have been coming to the village to buy bamboo baskets from primary collectors for Rs.10-15 per piece.

Kendu leaf is collected only for marketing purpose in the month of April for 15 to 20 days. Since it is a nationalised item, the Department of Forest, Government of Orissa has sole authority to collect the item and then auction it to private traders. Every household of the village is involved in this activity. After collection of kendu leaves these are made into bundles consisting of 20 pieces and deposit in the Godown (warehouse, locally called *Phadi*) which is located in the Brahmanipal village (3 km). The price of the bundle is 20 paise giving daily an income of Rs.30-40 per household.

Education Facilities

There is a government Upper Primary school in the village. For middle and high schooling, students have to go to Larambha (Panchayat headquarters) 6 km away, and for college education they have to go 9 km to Ghasien. There is no technical and vocational training centre in the nearby areas.

Services

Two nearby towns provide main services: Padmapur (18 km from the village in the neighbouring district of Bargarh) and Patnagarh (22 km). But villagers have to walk for 20 km on hilly forest roads to reach them. Patnagarh has good bus connections.

A weekly trading centre is located in Larambha Panchayat headquarters (6km from the village) and can be reached by a hilly forest road. People from as far as 40 km gather in the market that takes place on Sunday. Items like vegetables, clothes, cooking utensils and stationery are available on this day. Traders from Ghasien, Padmapur, Patnagarh also come here to procure NTFPs from primary collectors. The market has 5 grocery shops, 4 betel shops and 3 stationery shops that open throughout the week.

The villagers also access another market on Mondays at Ghasien (9km), which is 3 km from Larambha. Here there are 12 grocery shops, 3 hotels, 4 cloth shops and 1 grinding mill. Items like vegetables, clothes, stationery and bamboo baskets are marketed on this day. Villagers of Chandanjuri access the market by cycle or on foot. Villagers from the neighbouring blocks such as Khaprakhhol (40km), Padmpur (20km), Belpara (54km) also come to this market.

Other facilities like bus communication, co-operative society, forest office, Revenue Inspector office, Post office, Police Outpost are also available in the Panchayat head quarter. A Primary Health Centre is located at Ghasien (9 km from the village) which is difficult to access due to lack of bus communication. So for immediate health problems, people depend on Anganwadi Centre (Early Childhood Care Centre) located in the village; and for serious health problems they go to the Primary Health Centre (PHC) which is situated in Danga Bahal village (6 km). Patnagarh, the block headquarters, is 22 km from the village. Here, the Tahasil office, Block Office, other important offices, banks and business houses are located.

To access credit benefits, the villagers have to depend on Larambha (6 km) where the service co-operative society is located. Bolangir Anchalik Gramya Bank (BAGB), a branch of regional rural bank is located in Ghasien (9 km) and in Patnagarh (22 km) the co-operative bank (branch of the district co-operative bank), State Bank of India and Bolangir Anchalik Gramya Bank (BAGB) are located.

During the discussion with the villagers it was found that credit facilities are not available for the poor people of the village. Only 30 percent of the total households have accessed bank loan facility from Bolangir Anchalik Gramya Bank (Ghasien) and Service Co-operative Society (Larambha). As we have seen in the other villages, poor people are unable to fulfil the required official criteria to avail the loan facilities and there is an information gap regarding the various loan schemes, and awkward procedures discourage them. To meet immediate requirements poor people have to go to moneylenders and borrow at interest rate of 10 percent per month, without mortgage; credit from private sources is higher than that from banks. Though the interest rate in the Co-operative Society (Locally called Golla) is much less (18 percent per annum) as compared to the village moneylenders, it is not available at the time of need.

The village was electrified in the year 1988 but the village has been dark for the past seven years. Wireless (solar) telephone (local service) was connected in one household in the year 2001 for the use of all villagers by paying Rs.2 per unit of call.

Vulnerability context

Timeline analysis with the villagers shows that in 1930 and 1960, the village caught fire and many families became homeless. The village experienced drought for the first time in 1952, but the effect of drought in 1997 was severe. The most terrifying impact was in the year 2000 when 106 households completely lost their crops. This led to mortgage of land and distress sale of assets such as livestock. Many families also maintained their sustenance by selling of fuel-wood from the forest. Besides these shocks, many accomplishments were also recalled, including the first ring well was constructed in 1945, first school building in 1957, first electrification in 1988 and in 1993 the Vana Sanrakshyana Samiti (forest protection committee).

Credit from the moneylenders and sale of livestock assets are the means to tide over distress conditions. But the biggest problem lies in the alarming decrease in land holding due to increase in population. This has also led to increased exploitation of forest resources by the village. Social relations for people in most castes require the father to divide his assets among his sons. Land gets fragmented generation after generation in this process. Small landholding leads to increased dependence on other sources of livelihood such as forest, which are exploited without good management practice so leading to their decline.

The villagers observe a number of festivals (Puja) for Durga (goddess of power), Laxmi (deity of wealth), Saraswati (deity of knowledge), and Nuakhai (first eating of new paddy), and Janmastami (birthday of lord Krishna). Among these, the Nuakhai festival is the most important ritual for the villagers, as in the entire Western Orissa region.

Income Generating Activities in Chandanjuri

During PRA exercise with the villagers, eight Income Generating Activities (IGAs) were identified. Those can be divided into 5 categories in order of people's prioritisation but not necessarily involvement. Some people would prefer doing an activity, therefore have prioritised it, but are constrained in taking up that activity.

1. Collection and selling of forest produce.
2. Selling of processed /unprocessed agricultural produce.
3. Business
4. Selling of processed forest produce.
5. Farm and Non Farm labour work.

Collection and selling of forest produce is identified as an important IGA by the villagers. This includes collection and selling of Timber and Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). This is mostly prioritised by women from schedule tribes (ST), and the preference level of Scheduled Caste (SC) male and female, ST male lies next to those. Other caste groups give this activity lower priority.

The second category identified by the villagers is selling of processed /unprocessed agricultural produce (including selling rice and puffed rice). The other backward caste groups having equal level of preference (irrespective of gender) for selling of rice. This is least preferred by the SC Community because of prevalence of untouchability in the village. All other caste groups treat Scheduled Castes as the untouchables. Food is an area in which there

is high degree of untouchability still prevailing. They are barred from social interaction with other caste groups including general caste groups. While ST groups are barred from interacting with other caste groups, the intensity is less. Preparation and selling of puffed rice is the preference of women from all caste category. They can prepare to sell within the community; it is highly prioritised by the ST females. Males think that this is a task to be performed only by the females.

The third preferred activity by the villagers is business, in particular vending and opening a shop. Though opening a permanent shop would be the ideal, the requirement for capital means that vending is the only option for most people. Women, especially among the other caste groups, prefer selling vegetables, cooking items such as mustard oil, mustard, dry chilli, Bidi (local cigarettes) and Gudakhu (stimulant paste containing tobacco applied to gums) etc at the buyers' doorstep. Only men, especially from the other backward caste groups, prefer opening a permanent grocery shop.

Another activity prioritised by the SC community, is processing of forest produce. It includes collection of bamboo from the forest, processing into baskets (called *Dala*, *pachhia* and which are used for domestic and agricultural purposes) and selling in the market. This activity is not at all preferred by the people from ST & OBC categories, who think it as the activity of lower caste people, an activity that has traditionally been for the scheduled caste people.

The last activity, which in fact was not prioritised but taken up out of economic compulsion, is farm and non-farm labouring. All the caste groups preferred this activity except the other caste groups. There is no variation in prioritisation across the gender groups of SC & ST community (Please see the table on non-farm activity for details).

NON-FARM ACTIVITIES

The non-farm activities were identified out of five categories of IGAs. The activities like collection and selling of forest produce, selling of processed agricultural produce, business (vending and grocery shops, livestock), selling of processed forest produce (Bamboo) and non farm labour were included in the Non-farm income generation activity category.

Forest produce collection and selling

Villagers identified 88 plant species available in the forest. Some of the trees have been identified as having high cultural importance helping strengthen their traditional social relation. In addition to fuel-wood, various parts of these trees (fruits, leaves, flowers, pith and barks) are collected for household consumption for food, fodder, decorative, medicinal and marketing purpose. Eleven trees are found in the forest with flowers having decorative and ornamental use in the festive and other auspicious occasion. Again, 74 types of creepers exist in the forest.

Out of the total number of available forest produce, seven items (especially Mahua, Char, Harida, Bahada, fuel-wood, Kendu leaves) are frequently collected by the people because of demand and a market mechanism for these products. Other forest produce has a high value in social and cultural life, even though they have little economic value and narrow market.

Every household of the village (irrespective of caste/economic class) collects Mahula flower, work that is generally done by females and children in February and March. Mahua flower is sold at the rate of Rs6 to Rs8 per kilogram. Maximum primary collectors exchange this with salt at the rate of 1:2 (1 kg of Mahula for 2 kg of salt). When poor people have no vegetables, salt is used as a supplement to eat with rice. It is estimated that a total amount Rs.77,750 of

mahua flower was collected by all households in 2002, but according to villagers this is much less than could be realised if they could be linked with proper marketing network. Existing marketing network of NTFPs is led by middlemen who channel the produce to dealers located at Kantabanji (56km) and Bolangir (61km).

MARKETING NETWORK OF NTFP IN CHANDANJURI

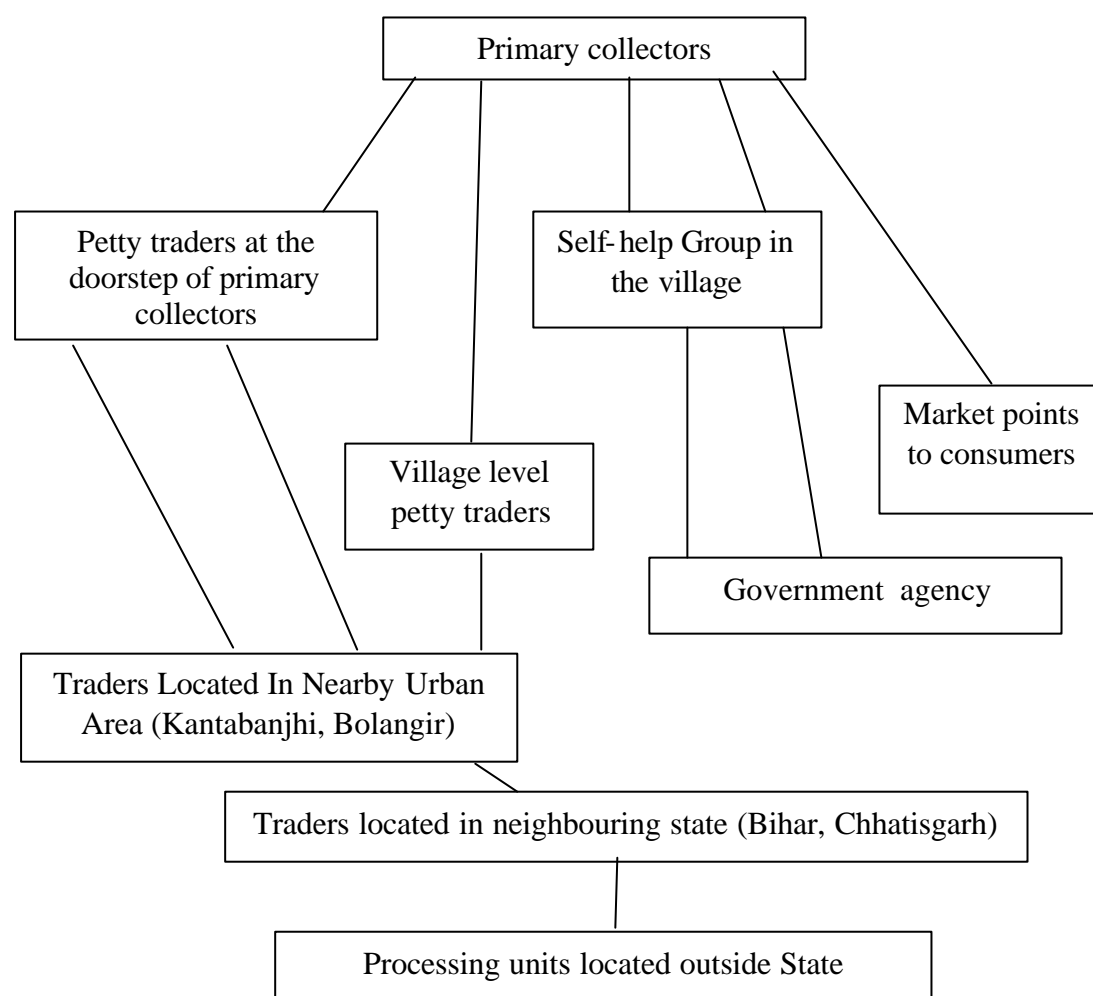


Table: Point-to-point disposal price variation (Rupees)

Items	Primary collectors	Petty-traders	Traders	dealers
Mahua	5	6	8	-
Harida	2	3	4	-
Bahada	2	3	4	-
Char	25	40	50	-
Bamboo (Value added)	12	16	-	-
Kendu leaves	Rp.1 per 100 pieces.	-	-	-

Harida is collected (February and March) in the village only for marketing purpose though it has high medicinal value. In 2001 an agent was collecting it for a trader in Patnagarh, but in

2002 a women's self help group (SHG) intervened in the marketing sector and prevented the middleman from engaging in what is regarded as exploitation.

The villagers also collect char fruit (available only for about 15 days a year) and the villagers estimate that a total of Rs.9500 was earned in 2002. This is collected by men but processed (extracting seeds from char fruits) by the women. The char seed has high market value and it is exchanged for salt at a ratio of 1:30. Kendu leaf collection is also another forest-based activity identified by the villagers. Both men and women collect this, available only for 15 days giving an income of Rs.50 per person-day. Villagers calculated that a total income of Rs.65240 was earned the previous season. The government directly handles marketing of this product, which the villagers take to a godown nearby.

Fuel-wood is collected by 15 households from ST category. Small twigs are used for their household consumption and larger pieces are sold in the Padmapur market (20 km distant in Bargarh District.), giving an income of Rs.40-50 per person-day. This activity is done when there is no agricultural work (between February and April) and so is seasonal. Many more forest products are available which supports livelihoods of villagers, and to which they give a high priority because this is the only alternative and supplement for the poor.

CASE STUDY 1

Jana Mangal Swayan Sahayak Dal (Self help Group) was started with 20 women (mostly belong to lower well-being category) in July 2001. Their main aim was to increase saving habits among women and to meet unforeseen needs through group effort. Rs.10 is collected monthly and deposited in Bolangir Anchalik Gramya Bank (BAGB), Ghasien. The group plans to access loans from that bank to trade in a wider range of NTFP items. Maithili Mahakur, President of the group initiated the women members to start Income Generation Activity. The group received advice from local organisations and encouragement from their husbands, but no financial support.

They have experienced the exploitative marketing mechanism of a petty trader in their village who was dealing with NTFPs. So to prevent villagers from the exploitation of middleman they started to collect harida from the primary collectors in their own and nearby villages. They have also linked up with the Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation (TDCC), a government marketing agency for NTFPs. As a result the primary collectors have been saved from being exploited by the middlemen. In 2002 they collected 18 quintals of harida to be sold to the TDCC. They are collecting harida at Rs.2.50 per kg and will sell with a profit of Rs.0.50 per kg. It is in their plan to deal with more forest items and the incomes from this will be used for assistance of poorest of the poor in the village through emergency medical help and financial support at the time of distress to any member.

Selling of processed agricultural produce

This activity includes selling of puffed-rice by women from four households. One is from poor (lower in well-being ranking; see table below) and the rest are in a better-off group (lower middle-class). They sell it in the village and nearby, but the markets are too far away. This activity is more significant in November and December, and after that it diminishes until in the rainy season it stops. The variation of preparation and selling of puffed rice depends on the availability of paddy. At the harvest, women collect paddy or rice from the village and process it into puffed-rice by frying. In the peak period the income varies from Rs.60 to 70

per day; in March, April and May it varies from Rs.20 to 30 per day. During rest of the year, when puffed rice is not marketed, these women engage themselves in farm and non-farm (e.g. government works) wage labour and household tasks.

Businesses

The villagers identified vending and grocery shops as village business activities: Women from two (very poor) households are engaged in selling items like vegetables, low-cost ornaments, stationery, cooking items such as mustard oil, mustard, dry chilli, Bidi, Gudakhu etc. The income from vending is higher in March, April and May. They do not have sufficient financial capital to increase their business, so with the minimum financial status they meet small needs of rural consumers. They sell their items in the village and nearby villages within a distance of 3 to 4 km and earn an income of Rs.30 per person day. They buy their stock from shops in Larambha, the nearest market. There are two grocery shops in the middle of the village which open regularly, although trade depends on the seasonal variations in purchasing capacity. Income per day varies from Rs.50 to 70. There are also two Scheduled Caste households (lower middle economic standard) that have a livestock business (see case study 2).

CASE STUDY 2

Mayahari Tandi of Chandanjuri village has been selling cattle for the last three years. Before this, he was collecting bamboo and making baskets. He was getting sufficient income to manage a family of three members. After formation of forest protection committee in 1993 villagers disallowed him to cut bamboo trees from the forest. As it was a village decision, he left this activity and shifted his source of livelihood to that of a cattle seller. He owns 2 acres of land but the income from agriculture is less than the cattle selling. The work is physically heavy as it involves buying the cattle from Patnagarh (20 km), Padmapur (20 km) and Jogimunda (30 km), and selling in the market of other districts like Bargarh (80 km) and Sundergarh (250 km). Every day he attends the market either to buy or to sell the livestock. He gets Rs.2800 a month from this activity. He has suffered thefts on the way, and lost three or four cattle last year. He is able to maintain his family, and is educating his daughter in 4th class.

Selling of processed forest produce

This activity includes processing and selling of products made from bamboo, which is in plentiful supply in the forest. There are 36 households from the Scheduled Castes who are engaged in this activity (case study 3). Higher caste people do not do it because they feel it is a lower caste occupation.

CASE STUDY 3

“I do not remember in which year this activity was started. In fact, we had learnt it from our ancestors” said Syamaghan Tandi of this village. He has cultivable land of less than one acre, which is insufficient to feed his family. Bamboo is collected all year round, including mature bamboo from another village forest (by paying Rs.1 per piece of bamboo). His wife helps him in processing work. It takes one day to collect a bundle of 20 pieces. Then it is processed into a number of small and thin pieces. From 20 pieces of bamboo 6 large containers are made in one day, selling for a total of Rs.45. These bamboo products are sold in the markets at Larambha. Middlemen from Patnagarh also come to his doorstep to purchase his products but

it fetches Rs.2 less than the market price. This activity provides an income of about Rs.1000 per month, which is low compared to employment in other work. According to him, if the fellow villagers (village forest committee) allow him access to raw materials from the village forest with statutory payment to the committee, it would be easy for him to earn more from this business.

Before 1993, there was no community involvement in the protection and management of the village's forest. At that time people from SC group were cutting bamboo trees freely. Though the government officials had the responsibility to watch the forest, they were not able to prevent forest from fires and thieves in their absence. In 1993 officials of forest department proposed to involve the community in forest management and a village level organisation called Vana Sanrakshyana Samittee (forest protection committee) was formed. It includes seven villagers (two of them are SC bamboo artisans) along with a forester, anganwadi worker and forest guards. The committee sits once in a month and discusses various aspects related to forest protection and management.

But SC artisans kept cutting bamboo trees from the Bhudaraja forest, since it was a major source of livelihood for them. This has led to conflict between the VSS and the SC artisans, and the SC members on the committee were removed as a punishment to their community. Social relations between the SCs and others were set back, and the SCs have been marginalised. "No one came to my daughter's marriage ceremony." This was the sorrowful expression of Pitamber Tandi, one of the SC bamboo artisans of Chandanjuri. But the bamboo artisans say they cannot give up this occupation unless they find a sustainable alternative livelihood. According to them they do not cut immature bamboo. Use of their own village forest is denied to them by the committee, but they have got permission from the traditional committees of neighbouring villages.

Non-Farm labour work

The villagers prefer this activity least of all. 45 families in the village depend entirely on wage work, while a further 21 households use wages to supplement agricultural income. In the agricultural season 57 households get employment as farm wage labour, and it appears that non-farm work is done only when agricultural work is not available. Other work for wages is done in brick making, earthworks, road and other construction works. Earthwork digging may be done in other villages (10 km distance) where watershed projects have been implemented. They get 7 kg rice as their wage for digging 100ft.

There are also 12 households migrating (with all family members) outside the district to work in brick-making, often to places like Cuttack (on the coast). Two of these are from the lower economic class, and the other ten households belong to the lowest category. They work there for 5 to 6 months in a year, during the season when there is no agricultural activity. They get paid Rs.100 for moulding 1000 bricks and thus a family of three members can earn Rs.3000 per month. But the brick kiln owners often mistreat them, and they are forced to work even when are sick. The children help in work like drying bricks. No medical or educational facility is provided by the brick kiln owners. No one in the village has a regular, permanent job in a nearby town. A schoolteacher lives in the village but works in the school of Larambha, a neighbouring village about 4km away.

CONSTRAINTS

Discussion with villagers exposed constraints that they consider affect the development of non-farm activities in the village.

Lack of education

Education is identified as the most important factor for the improvement and involvement in the non-farm sector activities. There is no middle or high school in the village, and although there are some 5 km away, the road is not good to reach there in the rainy season.

Indebtedness

Poor people cannot access a bank loan, which has low interest rate in comparison to the exorbitant interest of private loans. They cannot start any new income generating activity due to their poor saving capacity.

Stringent government rules

The bamboo artisans identify this as hampering their livelihood opportunities. They want to collect bamboo from the village forest, but are prevented by members of the village forest protection committee initiated by forest officials.

Lack of marketing knowledge

Lack of formal education and basic literacy coupled with poor marketing knowledge also restricts growth in non-farm activities.

ENABLING FACTORS**Existence of forest and NTFPs**

This is identified as the most important factor, which provides opportunity to all the villagers to sell NTFPs when there are no farm sector activities in the months of January to May. Both male and female groups of the village are involved in this activity.

Co-operation among the villagers

Though there is conflict between the SC and people in other caste groups, there is good co-operation within caste groups. Again, existence of village organisations will enable the villages to undertake group IGAs, anticipated by the villagers.

Table: The well-being groups in Chandanjuri

UPPER	Year-long food security; Brick house; No requirement of credit; 25 livestock (goat, chicken); 10-12 acres of land; 3-4 pairs of bullock; At least one bullock cart; Employ 24-hour house servant (halia).
MIDDLE	8 month food security; Brick house; 3 to 4 months dependence on wage labour; Less debt; About 20 livestock; About 8 acres of land; 2 pairs of bullock.
LOWER MIDDLE	6 month food security; Thatched house; 7 month dependence on wage labour; 10-15 livestock (mainly chicken); 5 acres land; 1 pair of bullock.
LOWER	3 months food security; Thatched house; 9 month dependence on wage labour; Regular dependence on credit from moneylender; 2 acres of land; Might have a pair of bullock.
LOWEST	Year-long dependence on wage labour; No homestead; Work as halia (24-hour servant) in house of a rich family; 4-5 chicken; No land; No other assets.

Table: Number of households by well-being group and social group in Chandanjuri

Category	Upper	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower	Lowest	Total
SC	-	-	2	15	22	39
ST	1	1	3	11	19	35
OBC	3	3	9	16	1	32
All	4	4	14	42	42	106

Table: Number of household in Chandanjuri involved in various IGAs :

ACTIVITY	UPPER	MIDDLE	LOWER MIDDLE	LOWER	LOWEST
NTFP collection	4	4	14	42	42
Bamboo Artisans	-	-	1	30	5
Puffed rice	-	-	-	3	1
Grocery Shop	1	1	-	-	-
Livestock selling	-	-	2	-	-
Vending	-	-	-	-	2
Earth work (labouring)	-	-	12	23	31
Service	1	-	-	-	-
Migrant labour bricks making	-	-	-	2	10
Agricultural labour work	-	-	11	24	22

Table: Number of persons involved in various IGAs by social category: Chandanjuri

ACTIVITY	SC		ST		OBC		ALL		TOTAL
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
NTFP collection	39	42	42	56	69	52	150	168	318
Bamboo Artisans	38	43	-	-	-	-	38	43	71
Puffed rice	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	4	4
Grocery Shop	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2
Livestock selling	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Vending	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Earth work (Labour)	8	2	25	11	4	1	37	14	51
Service	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Migrant labour in bricks factory	12	9	9	7	-	-	21	16	37
Rice selling	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	3	3
Agricultural labour work	10	5	8	5	6	-	23	11	34

VILLAGE TWO: KUREBHANA

Village profile

Kurebhana is located in Puintala Block, 15 km east Bolangir town, and is approachable by pucca road up to Bubel (10 km) and kuccha road (5 km). It is 7 km from Puintala block office. It has an area of 775 acres, of which 605 are cultivable land, and the rest includes grazing land, road and other public properties.

The population total found in the village micro-level plan is 695 (up from 514 in the 1991 census), with 342 (49 percent) men and 353 (51 percent) women. In terms of social groups, 19 people (3 percent) are from scheduled tribe (ST), 183 (26 percent) from scheduled caste (SC) and 493 (71 percent) from other backward castes (OBC) category. There are 149 households: 5 (3 percent) from ST, 38 (26 percent) from SC, and 106 (71 percent) households from OBC category. The village is divided into four hamlets: Kampasahi and Karmisahi (only inhabited by OBCs), and Harijan Pada and Basti (which are mixed, with people from SC, ST and OBC).

The population distribution according to age group shows that there are 128 children below 5 years, 111 in the 6-12 year age group, 72 persons 13 to 18 years, and 384 people are above the age of 19 years.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers. Besides this, people are engaged in labour in farm and non-farm activities. The landless have no alternative but to engage in agricultural labour in the village, or go outside for non-agricultural work. Analysing the land utilisation pattern in the village it was found that 30 acres of grazing land is used for grazing purpose. Some of the landless Scheduled Caste people encroached on this land. 40 acres is occupied by a stone quarry which is now operated by outside contractors who earn income by stone crushing. 15 acres of land remains unutilised, 10 acres is used for the cremation ground, and the remaining 5 acres is presently used for grazing of livestock. Land having no water facility has single cropping pattern by using groundwater and preserved rainwater. The villagers cultivate crops like paddy, peas, harada, mung (pulse), sugarcane, and vegetables.

Table: Kurebhana Village details

	No. of HH	Pop.	Total area (acres)	Forest area	Irrigated by source	Unirrigated	Gocher	Area not available for cultivation
1981	98	482	198.30	4.86	89.03	82.15	11.33	10.93
1991	116	514	198.30	5.10	(153.94)	15.46	11.41	12.39
2001*	149	695	--	--	--	--	--	--

* Source: Village Micro-Level Plan

Local governance

The village Kurebhana belongs to Chhatapapal Panchayat, which has headquarters 3 km from the village. Sarpanch, who is directly elected by the people, heads the Panchayat and is responsible to undertake and execute all the development programmes implemented by the government. The village is divided into 2 wards and a ward member elected directly by the people of those wards represents each ward. People's participation in the development planning process is governed through Palli Sabha at the village level and Gram Sabha at panchayat level. As in Kursud (see below), the planning decisions are dominated by the higher caste/income groups of the village.

Self-help groups

The village has 11 people's organisations including 5 female and 6 male groups. Of the female organisations 4 are self help groups (SHGs) and other one is Anganwadi Committee. The self-help groups were formed in 2000 as part of the watershed project implemented by a Bolangir-based NGO called Zilla Swechhasebi Sangathan (ZSS). The village committee, village education committee, kirtan committee, nata committee, food committee (subsidiary of village education committee) and Village Drought Action Committee (VDAC) are committed to carry on socio-cultural activities and ensure quality execution of village development works: these are all male groups.

Table: Committees and their background

Committee Name	Start year	Members								Main activities
		SC M F		ST M F		OBC M F		All M F		
Village committee	1972	-	-	1	-	6	-	7	-	The oldest committee that took all decisions in the past.
Village Education Committee	1994	1	1	1	1	3	2	5	4	Supervising activities of teachers, and motivating parents to send their children to school.
Kirtan committee	1975	-	-	3	-	42	-	45	-	Organising cultural programme on festive occasions
Nata committee	1975	-	-	4	-	31	-	35	-	To organise cultural programme in the village
Food committee	1994	-	-	1	-	2	2	3	2	To supervise the MDM programme in the school
Village Drought Action Committee	2001	9	-	-	-	2	13	11	13	To organise villagers to combat drought by ensuring proper implementation of government programme
Anganwadi committee	1992	-	1	-	2	-	4	-	7	To supervise the activities of Anganwadi in the village
Karunamayee Mahila Mandal	1995	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	18	Self-help group empowering women through economic self-sufficiency
Parbati Swayan Sahayak Dal	2000	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	20	Empowering women through economic self-sufficiency (SHG)
Basanti Mahila Mandal	2000	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	18	Empowering women through economic self-sufficiency (SHG)
Anna Purna Mahila Mandal	2000	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	18	Empowering women through economic self-sufficiency

It is observed that there are few interactions between male and female organisations. So due to lack of co-ordination among the organisations, women do not actively participate in village affairs. Self-help groups (SHGs) are committed to make empowerment of women by providing alternatives in Income Generation Activities, increase saving habits, increasing group interaction in all the women development programmes. The Anganwadi committee is formed to execute the women and child development programme (Integrated Child Development Scheme) of the government, and to suggest appropriate strategies for smooth functioning of the scheme. So apart from these aspects, they do not play any other significant role (such as participation in Grama Sabha Pallasabha and other parts of the local governance system). It is also found that women are pre-occupied with homework and some of them struggle for livelihood sustenance.

LIVELIHOOD ASSETS

Natural resources

The natural resources as understood by the villagers comprise of land (cultivable), water, forest and livestock available in the village. Most of the villagers depend on cultivable land for their livelihood. Out of the total 775 acres of land area in the village, 605 acres (78 percent) is cultivable. The remaining 170 acres is grazing, road, funeral ground and wasteland. The villagers identify four types of land according to its slope and location: Antt (upland), Mal (upper middle), Berna (lower middle) and Bahal (lowland). 25 percent of the land is Antt (150 acres), Mal is 179 acres (30 percent), Berna is 113 acres (19 percent) and Bahal is 163 acres (26 percent). Bahal and Berna are the best for agriculture. Mal and Antt are used for cultivating coarse grains such as millets like gurji, kudo etc. In recent times, growing food crops on such land has drastically decreased due to reduced productivity and instead people are now leaving these land fallow and allowing cattle to graze on it.

The village has 18 traditional water-harvesting structures. Of these, eight belong to the gram panchayat, which auctions their use to individuals and institutions on a yearly basis for purposes such as fishing. Ten belong to individuals from the better-off section in the village. These structures are used for drinking water, bathing and irrigation. The biggest tank identified by the villagers is Rathia kata. All the villagers depend on this in the summer season when all other water bodies go dry. Village Committee also gets some money by leasing this tank for pisciculture. Safe drinking water is not easily accessible by the villagers.

The village is completely devoid of forest. History shows that the area was covered with dense forest. In recent years due to population pressure and increase in needs of the people, the forest has been wiped out. Scattered trees of neem and phalsa and other trees are seen here and there in the village.

A trend analysis (PRA) by the villagers shows that the livestock population (includes cow, bullock, buffalo, goat, sheep and poultry) has been decreasing since 1960. In 1960, the population of the livestock was 105 and in 2000 it has come down to 33. The main causes for fall of livestock population are frequent diseases and selling to fulfil various consumption needs.

Education facilities

Analysing the status of education in the village up to the year 2000, it is found that 69 (10 percent) people have studied up to primary level, 22 (3 percent) people have the education up to middle school, 19 (2 percent) people have high school level education and only 7 (1 percent) have gone to college. 180 people (26 percent) know only to write their signatures and 116 (17 percent) people know only a little bit of reading and writing without having gone to formal school. The remaining 285 people (41 percent) are illiterate. The village has a primary school, but middle and high schools are 3 km distant (in the panchayat headquartered village, Chhatapapal), and the nearest college is in Bolangir town.

Presently, 97 students in the village are studying at primary level (53 males and 44 females), 29 are in middle education (16 males and 13 females), 4 students are in high school (3 males and 1 female) and 4 are in college (3 males and 1 female).

Infrastructure

An ANM (Auxiliary Nursing Mother) health centre and Ayurvedic medical centre is located in Mehermunda which is 2km away. All the villagers depend on these, but access is not easy in the rainy season. Government health workers hardly visit the village to assess the health

standard of the villagers. A veterinary centre is located at Chhatapapal, which is 3 km from the village. Continuous absence of veterinary doctors and the lack of a permanent veterinary building makes the people to go to Babel Veterinary Centre, which is 5 km away.

A weekly market is located at Babel. But there are pan (betel), grocery and vegetable shops that open everyday. On market day, people from other villages come to sell consumable goods mainly vegetables, stationery (for ladies) and dress materials. Villagers also go to Bolangir market to get purchase goods, which are not available in the village market. They rarely use the block headquarters market because this is very close to the district headquarters market (3km) and goods are cheaper there.

Credit facilities are available through a branch of the regional rural bank (Bangalir Anchalik Gramya Bank) in Bhalir (8 km) and UCO Bank in Bolangir (15 km).

Table: Households having loans

Bank loan	Very rich	Rich	Middle	Poor	Very poor
Agricultural	24	17	14	28	13
Non-agricultural	1	1	4	3	1
All	25	18	18	31	14
Private loan from money lenders	2	1	2	3	4

The above table shows that 82 percent of the very poor households, 74 percent from poor households, 62 percent of middle category households, 69 percent of the rich households and 71 percent of very rich households have borrowed money. But for the last five years the bank has stopped providing loans to the villagers because the households have not repaid the outstanding amount. Villagers have to depend on the borrowings from the local moneylenders. One moneylender in Kankria (8km from the village) provides loans at an interest rate of 15 percent per month. Nobody has taken a private loan for non-farm activity: according to the villagers it is not feasible to start any IGA by borrowing at such a high rate of interest. Credit is mainly taken to meet expenditures in agriculture, marriage and emergency health needs.

Vulnerability context

Many external factors are responsible for changes in people's abilities to gain a living. The time line analysis by the villagers shows that the village has experienced a number of natural calamities in the past. The villagers recalled 1940, when there was pest attack on paddy crops, and drought was experienced for the first time. In 1942, the village was affected by cholera. In 1965 there was again severe drought and the government provided relief wage work to the villagers. After a gap of 17 years, in 1982 there was a flood in the village. Modern fertilisers started to be used from the same year. In 1992 the village caught fire, making a number of families homeless. A series of droughts, in 1995, 1998, and 2000 have weakened the village economy. Water was supplied to the village through a canal in 1984.

The villagers observe a number of *puja* festivals to overcome disasters. Though the village is multi-ethnic, people of every caste observe Laxmi puja, Durga puja, Kalasi and Nua khai (please see Chandanjuri village section for elaboration). Nuakhai is an important festival in the village.

Unlike the other three villages, migration is not significant in Kurebhana, and is limited to employment opportunities (such as private construction works) in Bolangir town. Sometimes a few people who specialise in stone-cutting go outside to Sambalpur (165km) and Sonapur (35km) activity), and they work there for 1-2 months in a year. But in 2001 nobody had gone outside the district.

Farm and Non-Farm Economy and Income Generating Activities

Agriculture is the main occupation of the villages. The villagers considered that the farm sector was especially important for the poorer people. It provides some linkages to processing (and selling things like vegetables, puffed rice, milk) all of which provide cash and can increase their purchasing power. During the village meeting with the villagers, they identified 11 types of IGAs currently operating in Kurebhana. These are classified into four categories:

- 1 Small scale processing activities (puffed rice, stone cutting)
2. Small business (Pan, grocery, Milk)
3. Farm and non-farm labour work
4. Services (carpentry, mason worker, rickshaw puller and car driver)

It seems very clear that when giving priority rankings to different activities, the preferences are significantly different according to the social status (mainly caste-based) of the different groups in the village. The preferences therefore do not represent desired options, but those that are seen as feasible within the strict social constraints on different caste (and tribal) groups.

Preparation and selling of puffed rice was given a higher priority by the women from OBC category than the women of ST category: they are able to sell to all categories of people such as SCs and STs. Though STs can transact with SC people, the latter are socially ostracised and reside a kilometre from the village in a separate hamlet. Stone crushing activity was a low preference by women because it is strenuous. It is given a higher priority by men from SC and ST than OBC men.

The villagers identified three types of small business: betel selling, grocery and milk selling. OBC men preferred betel shop more than ST males. Females from these two categories have equal level of prioritisation for this activity. SC people do not prefer grocery shop activity because no one will buy from them apart from people of their own community. The social constraint of caste-based social discrimination prevails in the village. It is prioritised by OBC men, while ST men give it a lower preference. OBC housewives are involved in grocery shops as a helping hand. They do not prefer to do this type of activity due to social convention.

Male people from OBC category have prioritised milk selling, which is a traditional activity of their milkman community. ST people gave it lower priority because this activity because OBC people will not buy milk from ST people. No women from any category prioritised this type of activity because females cannot collect milk from every door of the village.

Another important activity identified by the villagers is wage labour in the farm and non-farm sector. Farm labouring includes agricultural work for big farmers in the village. The villagers identified two types of agricultural work: regular and casual. Regular farm labour is prioritised only by men, and those from SC and ST have high involvement in this work because they are regarded as lower caste which even those from OBC can engage as regular wage workers. Casual agricultural work is prioritised by ST men, and the preference level of

SCs (male and female), ST (female) OBC (male) are equal. In the case of non-farm labour, ST males have high rank for this and the ranking of SC males and ST women is same. OBC people feel it is demeaning to do labouring work, so their preference is lower compared to SCs and STs.

The service category includes carpentry, masonry, rickshaw pulling and car driving. Carpentry is a special type of activity done only by OBC men. Construction works outside the village (in Bolangir town) is organised by private contractors, and involves ST people. The level of involvement in rickshaw pulling is same for the males of OBC and ST class people, whereas car driving has involvement of only the male of OBC category.

Small-scale processing activities

This activity includes preparation and selling of puffed rice, and stone cutting. Preparation and selling of puffed rice was identified and prioritised by the women group from OBC category. Two women are involved in this activity; both of them belong to very poor and OBC category households. The seasonal variation of income is governed by the factor of people's consumption need. In winter season (November to January) and rainy (June to August). People from cultivators group consume more puffed rice so the income in these months is more in comparison to other. ST women have less preference than that of OBC females. This activity is illustrated in the following case study.

Case study of a puffed rice seller

The preparation and selling of puffed rice is not a very hard work for Bukei Karmi, a 55 years old OBC woman. She collects paddy from farmers of her own village at Rs.4 a kg and processes it into rice in a rice mill which is located in a village called Madumunda, 6km away. Then it is fried into puffed rice. 1 *ada* (local standard of measurement equal to 850 gm) of rice is processed into 8 *ada* of puffed rice. "This is the only suitable work for me" said Bukei. She is too old to do labouring work. She lives with her son and daughter-in-law, who provide the main income of the family from wage labour in agricultural work and non-farm labour in Bolangir. Income from puffed rice (sold in this and neighbouring villages) is the second major source of income.

Puffed rice is exchanged with rice at the rate of 3:2 (3 *ada* of puffed rice is exchanged for 2 *ada* of paddy). Sales are highest in winter (November to January), negligible in summer, and lower in the rainy season (June to August). In winter she gets a monthly income of Rs.1800 to 2400. In the rainy season she sells the puffed rice at her house, as taking it outside will dampen the crispy character of puffed rice. So in the rainy season she earns monthly Rs.600 to 900.

Stone cutting is another type of processing activity practised by 14 households from SC (6) and OBCs (8). Of these, 10 households are from very poor category and the remaining 4 are identified as poor. Crushing big stones into small pieces is a very hard job, and only male people perform it. These people also go outside the village for the same work when they find lack of demand for the crushed stone in their locality. They spend 1 to 2 months away and return with about Rs.2000 (for two month). The wage rate is Rs.70 per day, and the costs of food and transport are borne by the stone cutters.

Case study of a stone cutter

When Dhiraj Mahar, who is an other backward caste (OBC) person, was 16 years old he learned the art of stone cutting from a madrasi worker. At that time he was not able to do this type of hard work. Now he is 35 years old and has a 7-member family. Before this he was doing liquor business but he left that in the fear of police because he was doing this without having the required petty trader license.

Stone cutting is a very risky type of work. “At any time I may die” remarked Dhiraj when he was describing his work. It takes a week to provide one truckload of chips (small stone pieces). At first, he blasts the rock to crack a large area of stone. The area where the blasting and stone crushing is performed is leased by a contractor from the government of Orissa (at the rate of Rs.700 for 1200 sq.ft. But the contractor also extracts stone from outside the area included in the lease. The stone is sold to customers who need it for construction. The contractor pays Rs.400 per truckload to the stone cutters. Dhiraj’s sorrowful expression lies in the fact that the contractor (middle man) collects Rs.100 as ‘royalty’ per trip, but pays only Rs.10 to the government, so keeping Rs.90 as profit. It takes 5 days for Dhiraj to prepare a truckload of stone, so earning Rs.400 in 5 days. He suggested that if this could be a group-based activity then government could lease out the area directly to them so that intervention of middleman can be checked.

Small Businesses

There is one pan shop in the village, whose owner is a poor young man from the OBC category, aged about 35 years. He has half an acre of land, but the output from agriculture is not sufficient to support his family the whole year. He has been doing this pan business for the last 15 years, and maintains an eight-member family with earning from the shop. He buys materials from Bolangir twice a week. Income is higher in summer than winter, when villagers are busy harvesting paddy and so not found idle in the village. In rainy season he engages in the farm labour. During this period, his wife runs the shop even though she does not like to do this. Earning is less in this season. Income is Rs.1500 per month (February to June) if the shop runs well, and in the off-peak decreases to Rs.500 per month (November to January).

There are two grocery shops in the village, owned by OBC men who are from ‘Poor’ and ‘Rich’ category families. “The income from these shops depends on the purchasing power of the villagers” said the owner of the shop. Villagers some times forgo or reduce their consumption when they have less income in part of the summer season (March to May). Merchandise is procured from the market of Bolangir (20 km from the village). The profit rate varies from 20 to 25 percent of the gross income, and total income for the ‘rich’ person’s shop is around Rs.20,000. Along with the grocery items he also deals with stationery items for which people from nearby villages come to this shop. No labour is employed in this shop other than members of his household. The other shop that belongs to the ‘poor’ household deals with small quantities of grocery items.

Milk selling is a livelihood option for four households belonging to OBC category. Out of these four, two are from the ‘poor’ category, one is very poor and the last is in the middle category. The milk is collected from the village and taken to Bolangir everyday, with an average income of Rs.1500 per month. It is highest (Rs.2000) in the winter season because there is no wastage of milk and he can spend more time in collection and selling. 20 litres of

milk is collected every day from the village and nearby areas at the rate of Rs.7 per litre, and it is sold at a profit of Rs.2 to 3 per litre. This job is regarded as very hard, and so only men do it.

Non-farm labour work

This is another important source of livelihood identified by the villagers. Twenty-four households (10 from male group of OBC category, both male and female groups from 4 households of SC, and 10 households of ST) are engaged in this activity. 13 of them are from 'Very poor' and 11 are from 'poor' class households. Though both women and men prefer this type of work, it is found that their preference is out of economic compulsion. It was difficult for the people to estimate the annual income earned because of casual engagement. A major difficulty is the uncertainty in getting the work.

Men go to Bolangir town, while women work in construction activities locally and in neighbouring villages (within 2 to 3 km). Out of the total 24 households only 5 households (3 ST and 2 SC) go to neighbouring districts such as Bargarh (160km) and Sonepur (40km) in search of wage employment. They spend 2 to 3 months there for earthwork (digging of village ponds, construction of houses in town). They go there when the employers call them, generally in the months of March to May when such works will be going on. They go to the neighbouring district because wages are higher (Rs50 in the home district and Rs70 outside). The difference in rates is explained by the interference of middlemen. Employers in neighbouring districts prefer to have direct interaction with the labourers from outside on the impression that they can do better than their people.

Services

Activities like carpentry, masonry and rickshaw pulling are included in the service category. Only one household from OBC category (Poor household) of the village is engaged in the carpentry work, though this is not his main occupation. He is attached to the mason to get assured engagement. He is the only person locally with hand and skill in this work. Beside carpentry, he also cultivates his 1.5 acres of land, so in the agricultural season (June to November) he is out of carpentry. His jobs include repairing and making of wooden plough, furniture and making other wooden materials. Work is available for about 15 to 20 days in a month, with an income of about Rs.500 per month at the rate of Rs.25 income per day.

Masonry is identified as a high-income work in the village. Four households are engaged in this type of activity, 3 from poor and 1 household from the middle category (all belong to OBC). These four masons are working under two senior masons of Bolangir. Their income is lower in the agricultural season because they engage in agriculture.

Case study of a mason

From childhood Mangalu Sahoo was working as a helper under a mason, getting Rs.7 per day. Now at the age of 30, he is working independently. He has 2 acres of land to feed 6 family members but lack of irrigation keeps yields low, so there is high dependence on earnings from masonry. Even if he is engaged for about 6 to 7 months with an income of about Rs.10,000 and supplementary support from agriculture, Mangalu still feels insecure. Now Mangalu is an expert mason but he has to depend on the leader to get work orders regularly. To get regular wages, masons like him have to work under a leader whose duty is to find contracts and supply workers, but who keeps 30 percent of the fees.

Two households in the village are wage-employed in rickshaw pulling. The rickshaw puller does not own the rickshaw, and has to hire it for Rs.10 per day. With a lot of physical pain, he earns about Rs.70 per day after paying for the rickshaw and food expenses. About 150 person-days are invested in this activity, giving an income of about Rs.5,400 per annum. They employ themselves in this activity seasonally, along with their agricultural work (June-December).

One person from OBC category is working as a car driver in Bolangir town. He did not have formal training from any technical institution, and learnt the trade while working as a helper in a mini truck. Now he is earning Rs.1,500 per month. Most villagers take it as an activity of very low class people.

Enabling factors

Through informal group discussions, the villagers identified some of the encouraging factors responsible for the development of the non-farm activities in the village Kurebhana.

- Closeness to the urban market
- Telephone facility in the village
- Availability of private loans
- Availability of resources

Closeness to the urban market: The village is about 15 km from Bolangir town. Many of the products are available in the market there and villagers also find a wider marketing network to sell the village level goods. Thus village people have the opportunity to get good exposure and enlarge their marketing and entrepreneurship knowledge through interaction with the other traders and urban consumers. Secondly, due to wider marketing network the intervention of middleman is avoided.

Telephone facility: There is a wireless telephone point installed in the middle of the village which anyone can use. This is conducive to encourage undertaking of income generating activities when villagers have to go outside to earn their livelihood. The telephone also helps them keep in touch with their family members.

Availability of credit from informal sources: Though a bank location is convenient, villagers cannot access loans because of institutional constraints and defaults in repayment of past loans. It is known that the UCO bank, Bolangir and regional rural bank (Bolangir Anchalik Gramya Bank, Bhalir) have stopped providing loans for the last 5 years. Some of the villagers who can afford private loans prefer to access credit from moneylenders, as this is readily available without having to go through the lengthy official procedure.

Availability of resources: This factor is helpful for the stone cutters, who have an area of 40 acres of rock available in the village. So some get their livelihood through stone crushing, and this is regarded as an asset of the poor people by the villagers.

Constraints

Villagers identified some key constraints that hinder development of non-farm activities. Lack of organised working pattern, absence of institutional credit facility, uncertainty in income and involvement in risky works are the main ones highlighted by the villagers.

Lack of organised working pattern: This problem is faced in the activities like masonry and carpentry. But the problem is also chronic in stone crushing work. Due to lack of organisation

among the stone crushers, contractors from urban area take the opportunity to cheat them. It is calculated that an amount of Rs.4,800 is lost in a month by the stone crushers due to the intervention of contractors in the process.

Lack of institutional credit facility: Better-off people who are able to afford high interest rates can access credit from informal sources, but poor people need institutional credit to grow. However with rigid procedural requirements, institutional sources of credit are still a far cry for the poorest sections.

Uncertainty in income: Poor people have less shock-absorbing capacity in business, as their saving is very low or non-existent. Due to this sense of uncertainty, poor people are not readily willing to take risks to strengthen their economic status.

Risky works: In some jobs like rickshaw pulling and stone crushing, life is risky without any insurance. The employers do not ensure them under any life insurance schemes nor are they granted any entitlement under laws governing contract labour or the Factories Act. Injuries are common in stone crushing. But poor people have to do this out of sheer economic compulsion.

Suggestions

After having detailed discussion with the villagers on the prevailing IGAs in the village and the constraints and enabling factors, shocks and trends, villagers have given important suggestions for smooth take-off of non-farm activities.

One suggestion was to set up a vocational training centre. Facility of credit with low-interest rates was another suggestion. Besides these another two important factors were suggested by the villagers

Vocational education at the school level: Students should be given training on vocational education and various income generation activities so that they can explore new methods in future and apply methodologies for strategic interventions in this sector. Training on tailoring to the female groups and handicraft training on stone works are identified by the villagers. Along with this training on entrepreneurship development is required by the villagers so as to enable them to compete with their more privileged urban counterparts.

Development in agriculture sector: All the villagers agreed that agriculture is the base of the rural economy. So development and sustainability of non-farm sector is directly related to the farm economy. The villagers believe that trading of agricultural produce would be boosted if there was a regular market close to their village. Steps should be taken for provision of assured irrigation to the agricultural fields to optimise the output from cultivation so that people will be able to take risk and will have spare time to be encouraged to take any income generating activity in non-farm.

Table: Criteria for well-being ranking in Kurebhana

UPPER	Have 5-10 acres of cultivable land; food secure for 12 months; have access to government schemes; Employ agricultural labour for cultivation;
MIDDLE	Possess 5-10 acres of cultivable land; food secure for 8 months; Have cultivation as only occupation; Possess livestock.
LOWER MIDDLE	Possess 1-3 acres of cultivable land; Food secure for 5 months; Do labour work in the village and in Bolangir; Possess livestock.
LOW	Possess 0.5-1 acres of cultivable land; Food secure for 1 to 2 months; Do labour work in the village, Bolangir and outside; Do not have livestock.
LOWEST	Landless; Food insecure for whole year; Do labour work in the village, Bolangir and outside; Do not have livestock; Cannot get treatment for disease; Cannot access government facilities.

Table: Kurebhana: number of households in each well-being and social category

Category	Very rich	Rich	Middle	Poor	Very poor	Total
SC	5	15	3	4	11	38
ST	-	1	1	1	2	5
Other Backward Castes	30	10	25	37	4	106
Total	35	26	29	42	17	149

Table: Kurebhana: number of households in different IGAs

Activity	Very rich	Rich	Middle	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Puffed rice preparation and selling	-	-	-	-	2	2
Stone cutting	-	-	-	4	10	14
Pan shop	-	-	-	1	-	1
Grocery shop	-	1	-	1	-	2
Milk business	-	-	1	2	1	4
Carpentry	-	-	-	1	-	1
Mason worker	-	-	1	3	-	4
Rickshaw Puller	-	-	-	-	2	2
Car driver	-	1	-	-	-	1
Farm labour	-	-	-	5	10	15
Non-Farm labour	-	-	-	11	13	24

Table: KUREBHANA number of people involved in various IGAs

Activities	SC		ST		OBC		All		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Puffed rice preparation and selling				-	-	2	-	2	2
Stone cutting	6	-	-	-	-	8	6	8	14
Pan shop					1	-	1	-	1
Grocery shop					2	-	2	-	2
Milk business	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	4
Carpentry	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Mason worker	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	4
Rickshaw Puller	2						2		2
Car driver					1		1		1
Farm labour	17	5	2	1	8	2	27	8	35
Non-Farm labour	21	8	5	3	14	8	40	19	59

VILLAGE THREE: KHARKHARA

The village is 73 km west of Bolangir, and can be reached from the district headquarters through a pucca or pitch (tar) road of 67 km up to Belpada (block headquarters), from where a kuccha road of 6 km leads to the village. The area of the village is 1195.85 acres, of which 861 constitutes cultivable land, 42 acres for homestead and the remaining 28 acres for public use such as grazing land, funeral land.

Population

The total number of households in the village is 218, with a population of 1093 (548 females and 545 males). The largest proportion of households is from Scheduled Tribes (ST), followed by Scheduled Caste (SC) and OBC. Average household size is five people. The village is divided into 7 hamlets: Colonympada, Mutalipada, Gantiapada, Samarathpada, Harijanpada, Panikapada and Dunguripada. People from various castes and tribes such as Gond, Majhi, Dharua, Goud (milkman), and Gantia live in the village. Of the total population, 716 are ST, 177 are SC, and 200 are OBC. In the village 118 families fall below the poverty line, with earnings less than Rs.15, 000 per annum (as per the BPL survey conducted by the state government in 1997).

Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the village. Besides this they also have subsidiary occupations like labour work in the local graphite factory and other farm and non-farm sector activities. Agriculture labour is done mainly by men, though women help them in addition to their housework assignments.

From the social mapping, it emerged that there are nine landless families who earn their livelihood through share-cropping and cultivating small acres of government land (illegally encroached). Well-being analysis of the village shows that 30 families are in the rich category possessing 10-20 acres of land, 41 families are in the middle class having 5-8 acres of land, 59 families are of lower middle standard having 5 acres of land, 79 families having 2 acres of land belong to poor category and 9 landless families are in the very poor category. So it is clear that the proportion of poor families in the village is higher than any other class.

Table: Population of the village in three years

Year	Number of households	Population	Total area (in acres)	Forest area (in acres)	Cultivated area (in acres)
1981	126	678	478.34	28.73	348.44
1991	133	691	478.34	29.14	365.44
2001	218	1093	-	-	-

Source: District census 1981,1991 and primary survey during field work

The land categorisation and cropping in the village is the same as that for Chandanjuri. Paddy is the main crop in the village, with Gurji, Mandia, Koltha, mung, biri and mustard also cultivated. It is estimated that approximately 2000 packets of paddy amounting Rs.600,000 was produced in 2001. This is calculated at the time of micro level planning in 2001 with the villagers. Taking all the crops into the calculation it is found that Rs.641,700 is the total earning from agriculture. In addition to this forest produce like Mahua flower and seed, kendu leaves, char seed are also collected by the people, amounting to about Rs.147,000 in value.

Local Governance

This village belongs to Sarmuhan panchayat (3 km away) under Belpara block. The same administrative system prevails in the village as for other villages. Though poor people have better scope to access the panchayat administration, they cannot access the benefits due to the dominance of the richer and more powerful groups.

Women do not attend gramsabha and pallisabha meetings as the men think they alone are capable to take decisions on panchayat affairs. There are four village-level organisations: forest protection committee, watershed committee, school committee, and kirtan committee (cultural committee). Every day, two households from the village are responsible for forest protection. Those who need to collect fuel-wood, leaves and other forest produces can do so only after permission of the village committee. The watershed committee executes the soil and water conservation activities under a soil conservation officer.

The school committee was formed in 1991, and is officially called village education committee (VEC). It monitors the education programmes in the village, and is expected to ensure attendance of children and teachers, and formulate appropriate strategies to check the drop out cases in the village, and oversee the midday meal programme in the school. The school has 3 teachers who are attending regularly, but committee members are concerned that the quality of education is very poor. A focussed group discussion with the committee members has revealed that they are not aware of the roles and responsibilities of the village education committee.

Mahila Samitis (Women's organisation) exist in form of two self-help groups (SHGs) in the village. These two SHGs have now limited their objective to increase saving in the bank and to take steps that will ensure rights of poor and vulnerable women in the village. They lack awareness of panchayat rules so they think they have no role in the panchayat affairs. Due to their illiteracy and ignorance they fail to suggest many of the development programmes which are aimed at women.

Table 2: Self-help groups in the village

Name of the SHG	Year established	MEMBERSHIP BY SOCIAL GROUP			
		SC	ST	OBC	Total
Gopika	2001	4	4	2	10
Adimata	2001	8	10	2	20

Though people have supposedly got some power to deal with various development issues of the village, ultimate executive decision for implementation lies with the administrators. The villagers of Kharkhara prefer to strengthen their social relations through the various village level committees and by accelerating development works.

Livelihood assets

The village resources include land (discussed in the village profile), water, forest and livestock. Out of the total cultivable land of 700 acre, the antt land (upland) constitutes 400 acre, which is more than 50 percent of the total land. The proportion of bahal (lowland) and berna (middle land) land is 200 and 100 acres, respectively. The village has a forest area of 43 acres. Items like Mahua flower, Mahua seeds, Kendu leaves, char seed are available in the forest, along with fuel wood, sal leaves and forest fruits, which are collected for consumption and domestic use.

There are seven water reservoirs, five of them used for both agriculture and bathing. Water is availed only in the rainy season and in the other seasons they are dry. A rivulet (*jora*) flows to the west of the village providing irrigation for 200 acres of cultivable land. Besides these, there are nine dug wells for drinking water.

There is a primary school with 111 students in the village. The number of ST students is more than the other caste students (OBC), and reflects the higher number ST households in the village. There are 22 students in middle school, 34 are in high school and only 4 are studying at college level. Students have to walk 4 km distance to get middle and secondary education, but for the higher secondary education they have to go to the college located at block headquarters in Belpara. However, migration of parents prevents their children from having regular education and it increases the dropout cases in the village. People of the village migrate to other states in search of livelihood options, leaving their old parents in the village.

There is no bus service to the village. A kuchha road of 6 km connecting to the main road from Belpara to Kantabanji is accessed by the people. Villages have to depend on the Block headquarters, Belpara to avail facilities such as the police station, Revenue Inspector, College and market. For other market requirements they go to Patnagarh which is 33 km from the village. But for local marketing needs, small rural markets are available in the panchayat headquarters Nunhand and Ghagurli, 5 km away. The village was electrified in 1975, but most of the villagers cannot afford to use it.

The market of Ghagurli is located at 3km from the village. Villagers regularly access the market to get daily necessities such as groceries, dress materials, vegetables and house hold articles. This market can be reached by walking 2.5 km of kuccha road and by crossing a river (Lanth). People from about 40 villages up to 30km away come to this market. As well as the market (on Tuesdays), there are 22 permanent shops (1 medicine, 6 cloth shops, 8 stationery and 7 grocery shops) open regularly to cater to the needs of the local people. In the rainy season (July, August), the villagers of Kharkhara cannot cross the river to reach the market.

Belpada has a market and more than 120 shops (grocery, cloth, jewellery, electrical etc). and is accessed mainly on days when people go there for other government-related work at the block office.

Villagers borrow from the bank located in the Block headquarters, but poor people depend on private loans because of their inability to access government loan facilities.

Table: Distribution of households accessing bank and private loans across the well-being category

	Very rich	Rich	Middle	Poor	Very poor	All
Bank loan						
Agricultural	15	6	1	2	-	24
Non-agricultural	-	-	-	-	-	-
All	15	6	1	2	-	24
Private loan from money lenders	-	-	-	4	2	6

The table shows that only 11 percent of households have taken loans from the bank (none from very poor category) and a negligible portion of the household in the poor category. The number of very rich households who have taken bank loans is the largest of all groups. Loans from moneylenders are only taken by a few poor and very poor households. Four people in the village provide loans to villagers, at a rate of interest of 10 percent per month (compared with 12 percent for Banks. Due to the inaccessibility of Bank credit facility, poor people are exploited by the moneylenders.

Vulnerability context

The village was affected by drought for the first time in 1965, and reduced agricultural output the next year compelled people to leave. There has been significant reduction in the forest cover, and cultivation of nutritious upland crops like Mandia, Gurji and Kudo has also declined. Paddy (especially high yielding varieties) and modern fertilisers have slowly become popular. There has been a loss of many valuable plant species and wildlife. The villagers lack initiatives to revive the traditional system of agriculture, but poor people lack the finance to spend on modern fertilisers, pesticides and building other infrastructure.

Migration has also been made necessary because of the growing need for cash income and the lack of sufficient local employment opportunities. Increasing population has also resulted in depletion of forest coverage and problems with regards to the livelihood sustenance of the poor people. This is because the poor suffer from unequal distribution of common property resources among the villagers. Villagers identified 62 families with 266 people who goes outside for wage work. The first to migrate were from Scheduled Castes, but now people in every caste are doing it.

Income Generation Activities

Besides agriculture as the predominant occupation in the village, the villagers undertake many other IGAs: our discussion in the village meeting identified 18 which can be divided in to 5 categories:

1. Selling of processed and unprocessed agricultural produce
2. Business
3. NTFPs collection and selling

4. Services
5. Farm and non-farm wage labour

Selling of agricultural produce includes selling of rice and puffed rice by the households. This is prioritised by the OBCs group because they are not constrained by social taboos. The ST community also has less opportunity to market in this way. Collecting and selling NTFPs is practised by all categories of people irrespective of gender and caste difference. But the role of women in some of the forest produce such as Mahua (hill broom) is greater whereas collection of fuel-wood, Harida, Amla, Charseed are more a male role.

Activities like tailoring, masonry, carpentry and blacksmithing are included in the service category. Men preferred all these activities and OBC category people have high preference for these activities, except for tailoring (to start in this activity requires an investment of Rs.4,000, which is not the case in other type of works. Carpentry work is 'hereditary', so other people feel they are unable to express a preference for this activity. STs are involved in masonry and blacksmith work.

Lastly, wage labour in the farm and non-farm sector is least preferred by all categories of people. Poor people are forced to take up labour of any nature even though it is an activity not preferred. Non-farm labour implies migrating outside for wage work, in construction and factory (see the table at the end of the text for participation data).

Non-farm IGAs

Of the total income generating activities the following are included in the non-farm category.

1. Selling of processed agricultural produce (puffed rice)
2. Selling consumables (grocery, vegetable vending)
3. Collection and selling forest produce (fuel-wood, mahul, char, harida)
4. Services (Tailoring, mason work, carpentry, blacksmithing)
5. Non-farm labour

Selling of processed agricultural produce: Women from six households have this activity, of which four are ST and two from OBC. Of these six, one is 'very rich' one is 'rich', two are in the middle category and two in the poor class (see tables). Though women from rich and very rich households do this activity, they do it for consumption purpose and devote only part of their time to it. It is not very strenuous work to prepare puffed rice, and the raw material is available in the village: many women could carry out this activity. The price for this product is same as in Kurebhana village. Rich and very rich people sell the item at their doorstep, whereas middle and poor people go out to sell to consumers in the neighbouring village. This activity provides higher income (Rs.600 per month) in May, June, July and August when paddy is in short supply. In October, November, and December income is nil, and is only Rs.200-300 in January, February, March and April.

Selling consumables: this includes grocery shops and other vending activities. There are four grocery shops in the village, run by women and using solely family labour. Two shops are owned by the ST people; SC and OBC families have one shop each. Only the OBC shop belongs to the rich category, and remaining owners are in the poor group. The income from this activity depends on the intensity of migration from the village: from February to May it is low because many people have left the village to migrate (in 2001 30 percent of families have migrated out). Average monthly net income from this activity varies between Rs.1000 and

1500 in the lean period. The rest of the time income is Rs.2,800 to 3,500 per month. The goods to be sold are procured from the Belpara market, which is 6km from the village.

Other vending activities involve items like vegetables, low-cost ornaments and some kitchen items. These are sold at doorsteps in the village and also in the neighbouring villages within the distance of 4 km, which is included in the vending business. The items are procured from the markets of Ghagurli and Belpara. While low-cost ornaments and kitchen items are sold by women, vegetables are sold by men. Seven households consisting of 3 SC, 3 ST and 1 OBC in the village are engaged in this activity. Out of them, one SC male and one OBC male have vegetable business. They collect vegetables from the villages and sell in the local hat (weekly market) and nearby villages. Approximate income earned from this activity varies between Rs.500 and 600. Wellbeing analysis shows that four households belong to very poor and three households are in the poor category.

Collection and selling of forest produce: Villagers, especially the poorest, benefit by collecting and selling mahua flower, mahua seed, kendu leaf and fuel-wood. 124 households including 34 SC, 75 ST and 5 OBC families depend on selling forest produce for livelihood. It is estimated that this year 200 bags of mahua flower worth Rs.60,000 and 20 bags of mahua seed worth Rs.12,000 and kendu leaves of Rs.50,000 were collected. Mahua seed is used for preparation of edible oil, but villagers collect this only to sell as there is no oil extraction unit nearby. Thus in addition to other sources of income, the forest resources (excluding char seed) provide revenue of Rs.147, 000 giving an average annual income of only Rs.674 per household.

These items are collected and disposed of in Belpada market or to a private agent located in Belpara. Involvement of government in procurement of mahua depends on the Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation (TDCC). Due to illiteracy and ignorance among the primary collectors, petty traders frequently exploit them. But as there is no alternative for the poor primary collectors, they have to depend on the petty traders.

Two ST households in the village sell fuel-wood. They go to the forest every day and bring two bundles of fuel wood (approximately 30 pieces each), and sell it the next day in the local market, making about Rs.35 per person-day. They are often threatened by the forest officials and the village forest committee, but they do not give up because there are no suitable alternatives. The village committee started to protect the forest in 1978, when they employed a watchman. In 1998, the post of watchman was abolished and all the households of the village took the responsibility to guard the forest on a rota. No government officials are involved in the community management of the forest. Of the total forest area, the villages are protecting 24.60 acre. Cutting of large trees is severely restricted, and because of the community involvement in the forest management the massive deforestation for fuel-wood by the village has been checked.

Hill broom is another forest product which is taken for household consumption as well as selling. Twelve households consisting of 10 ST and 2 OBC households collect this.

CASE STUDY

Rukmini Gual, aged 36, sells hill broom regularly along with her household work. This product is available in October, November and December. With 3 or 4 other women they go to the forest in early morning and return by noon. Daily she prepares 6-7 pieces of hill broom bundles and sells for Rs.3 - 4 per piece, earning a daily income of about Rs.25. Rukmini says

“brooms used to be available in the forest close to the village, but now we have to cover a distance of about 5 km to fetch the raw material”. This is her part-time activity. The hill brooms are sold in Ghagurli market directly to the consumers.

Services: Activities like tailoring, masonry, carpentry and blacksmithing are included in this category. During our discussions, the villagers identified two tailoring shops, both owned by OBC people who have no formal training. They were earlier working as helpers in tailoring shops at Belpara, Kantabanji. They have invested Rs.3000 to 4000 for the machines and the accessories and have a net monthly income of Rs.4000 – 5000. during festival seasons (July-August and October-November), but it drops to Rs.800-900 the rest of the year.

CASE STUDY

Krushna Gua, aged 28, failed matriculation in 1997 AND went to work in the local graphite factory. At that time he was getting Rs.28 a day. Fear of tuberculosis (he observed that 8 people in his village are affected with the disease) and the suggestion of a friend led him to practice in a tailoring shop at Nunhad (3 km from the village). Then he worked in a tailoring shop at Kantabanji (25 km) and acquired the skill. He was working there without any wage. Finally, he got employment in a tailoring shop of Belpara on commission basis, earning a monthly income of Rs.1500. From his savings, he started a tailoring shop in 2001 with the initial investment of Rs.3500. He works alone and hard in his shop to support his seven-member family, some of whom migrate seasonally (January-April) to earn additional income.

There are other traditional occupations like masonry in four households, carpentry (four households) and blacksmithing (four households). The work of blacksmith and mason is part-time, while those engaged in carpentry are full-timers. The earning of a mason depends on the availability of construction work in the village and nearby. It is most intense in the winter (November-January), bringing an income of Rs.1000 per month (about Rs.50 per day), and less in the summer (March-May). In the rainy season this type work is not available. Blacksmithing provides only around Rs.600-800 per month, mainly from repair of villagers' agricultural implements.

Case-study of a carpenter

Udhar Gual, aged 30 years, learnt carpentry from his grandfather and is assisted by four family members. He owns only half an acre of land, which is the secondary source of livelihood for him, ensuring food for about two months. His main income is from carpentry work in the village and nearby. His income from this activity is higher in the months when marriages are performed (February to May), when he earns Rs.3000 per month. The customer is asked to arrange the raw material, while he charges for his services. According to him if he could get financial assistance (not tried yet) then he could start an independent furniture unit of his own.

Non-farm wage labour

This activity involves wage labour in the village, work in the graphite factory at Chacher (a village in the locality), and also migration for wage work and contract labour. The first two activities normally supplement their earnings from agriculture. It is found that seventy

families are doing labour work in the village and in the graphite factory. 62 households pursue migration work especially to brick kilns. But there is not enough non-agricultural work in the village, so poor people have the option either to work in the factory or migrate outside the village, district and even the state.

It is found that 164 (105 male and 59 female) people from seventy families are in wage labour in agriculture. Of them 77 people (50 males and 27 females) also work in the graphite factory. They get agricultural employment of average 10 to 15 days per month in the months from June to December. The wage rate is Rs.30 for ploughing day (Rs.20 extra for bullocks) which is done only by men. Sowing and tending crops is equal for male and females, and earns Rs.20 or 5 kg paddy. During the harvesting period the wage rate is higher at Rs.25 (or 7 kg paddy) for both male and female. Thus, an income of about Rs.3250 (150 person days in all type of works) is earned per person in a year.

CASE STUDY

Kartik Parabhue has just got back after being in Hyderabad for the last year with his wife Kamala and three sons. His mud house is partly destroyed due to lack of maintenance. His elderly mother stayed behind, and Kartik sent her Rs.250 - 300 per month. At first he had gone through a middleman who paid him Rs.6000 in advance, but now he goes independently. Together they mould 1000 to 1200 bricks daily earning Rs.120 per 1000 bricks. After deducting the advance amount (Rs.6000), food expenses (Rs.1500), and medical and other expenses (Rs.4000), he returned with Rs.6000 as surplus. He rests in the village for one or two months and again goes for about 10 months. According to Kartik, migration is normally for six months, but he migrates for longer as he is landless. Very few are as lucky as Kartik in terms of earning and saving. It is more common that due to exploitative practices prevailing at the brick kilns, poor people come back from migration without any saving at all.

Major Constraints

Financial capital: This is the prominent constraint prioritised by the villagers. Poor people are not able to start any IGA because they lack ability to save what they need as initial investment. They also lack the opportunity to access institutional credit and interest for private loans is too high. The banks have an unwritten policy that the poor are not bankable. The existing SHGs have only recently started saving in the Bank.

Communication: Villagers have to walk 6 km to get a main road connecting Belpara with Kantabanji. This reduces peoples' access to rural, urban and sub-urban markets. Many middlemen of Belpara exploit the ignorance of the villagers.

Social Stigma: as in other villages of Kursud, Kurebhana and Chandanjuri, the schedule caste people feel discouraged due to prevalence of social barrier (untouchability) in the village. Trades like puffed-rice making and selling and vegetable vending cannot be taken up because other caste groups would not buy from them. The picture is, however, slowly changing. With regular sensitisation of the villagers by the local organisation, FARR, things are improving, and it is now found that SC families have started grocery shops and vending business.

Enabling Factors

Existence of factory: This factor has got prioritisation by the SC people followed by ST and other caste people. The graphite factory has supplemented poor people's income. At the same

time, it also becomes a constraint, as a number of working condition violations take place by the factory. In the lean season when there is no other wage work available, people opt to work in that factory.

Availability of forest products: In the earlier section, the value of forest products supplementing to the total income of the village was discussed. Villagers identified it as an important natural resource, which only provides sustainable livelihood alternative in this drought prone region. The depleting forest resources are, however, a concern for the poor people.

Watershed project: There is a watershed project in the area, an integrated approach of rural development through soil and water conservation in the target area. It started in 2000, and is planned to operate for 5 years. In the first year the watershed committee was formed by taking 12 members from the village of which 11 are schedule Tribe (2 female and 9 Male) and 1 OBC male. Entry point activities such as organising village meetings to enable the people to know about the project, strengthening of Self Help Groups (SHGs) by training and orientation and revolving fund support (which is not given) and construction of village pond of Rs.50000, were being taken up in 2001.

In the second year the action plan was formulated and Rs.320,000 was spent for renovation of village ponds, land treatment, cattle treatment etc. A total of 43 people benefited from this programme so far. All the villagers have the opinion that strengthening agriculture will encourage and support poor people to have other non-farm income generation activity. Implementation of watershed project in the area is aimed at enhancing agricultural income which itself will be an enabling factor to undertake non-farm activities.

Table: Criteria for well-being ranking in Kharkhara

UPPER	Whole year dependence on own earnings; No debt; Have brick house; Posses one Bullock cart; Have a <i>Halia</i> ; Possess 25 livestock (cow, bullock, goat, buffalo); Possess 10 to 12 acres of land; Bullock 3 to 4 pairs for ploughing.
MIDDLE	Food security for 8 months; Not much debt; Bricks house; 3 to 4 month wage work; 20 livestock; 8 Acres of land; Bullock 2 pairs.
LOWER MIDDLE	Earning for 6 months; Thatched house; 7 months in wage work; 10 to 15 livestock; 5 acres of land; Bullock 1 pair
LOWER	Earning for 3 months; 9 month on wage work; Thatched house; In debt; 1 pair or no bullocks; 8 of livestock; 2 acres of land.
LOWEST	Dependence on wage labour work the whole year; Work as <i>Halia</i> ; No land; Do not have own homestead or have house on others land; 4 livestock; No Bullocks for ploughing.

Table: Number of households according to well-being and social category in Kharkhara

Category	Upper	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower	Lowest	Total
SC	0	2	14	22	1	39
ST	27	38	32	44	3	144
Others	3	1	13	13	5	35
Total	30	41	59	79	9	218

Table: Number of households involved in different Income Generation Activities in Kharkhara

Activity	Upper	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower	Lowest	All
Rice selling	-	-	2	-	-	2
Puffed rice selling	1	1	2	2	-	6
Grocery shop	1	1	1	1	-	4
NTFP collection and selling	3	29	31	52	9	124
Vending business	-	-	-	3	4	7
Tailoring	-	1	1	-	-	2
Mason	-	2	-	1	1	4
Carpentry	1	1	-	1	1	4
Blacksmith	-	-	1	2	-	3
Migrant labour work	-	-	-	55	7	62
Agricultural labour and factory work	-	-	17	51	2	70
Fuel wood selling	-	-	-	2	-	2

Table: Number of persons involved in various IGAs – Kharkhara

Activities	SC		ST		Others		All		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Puffed rice selling	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	6	6
Grocery shop	1	-	2	-	1	-	4	-	4
NTFP collection and selling	26	47	62	85	7	5	95	137	232
Vending business	1	2	-	3	1	-	2	5	7
Tailoring	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2
Mason	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	4
Carpentry	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	4
Black smith	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	4
Migrant labour work	72	18	107	62	4	3	183	83	266
Agricultural labour (and factory work)	16 (12)	14 (5)	76 (35)	45 (22)	13 (3)	-	105 (50)	59 (27)	164 (77)
Fuel wood selling	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	2

VILLAGE FOUR: KURSUD

Village profile

Kursud is 25km from block headquarters in Titilagarh, and 109 km southwest of Bolangir (district headquarters). A bus runs from Titilagarh to within 3 km of the village, and covering this kucha road (including crossing a river named Unnder) takes more time than the remaining 22 km. The village touches the border of neighbouring Kalahandi district and is close to Nuapada district as well. Kursud is more accessible to towns in neighbouring districts such as Khariar (30km), Bhawanipatna (40km) and Kesinga (75km via Bhawanipatna) than to Bolangir. Communication to the rest of Bolangir district becomes all the more difficult during rains when the river is in its spate. The area of the village is 1209 acres of which 943 acres is cultivable and the other 266 acres are forest, homestead and other lands.

The village has a population of 2531 with 1255 (49 percent) males and 1276 (51 percent) females. Of the 638 households, 154 (24 percent) are schedule caste, 140 (22 percent) schedule tribe and 344 (54 percent) other caste groups. Average family size is about four members. The village is divided into six hamlets: two are inhabited by scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people and the remaining 4 hamlets are inhabited by other caste groups. The people of the area depend primarily on agriculture, but have many subsidiary occupations as supplement.

Table: Population of the village in last three decades

Year	Number of households	Population	Total area (acres)	Forest area (acres)	Cultivated area (acres)
1981	410	1741	498.98	0.40	381.62
1991	407	1944	498.98	-	-
2001	638	2531	-	-	-

457 of the 638 households are in the below poverty line (BPL) according to the government of India BPL survey in 1997. Of those who have agriculture as the primary occupation, 34 families belong to small farmers, 154 are marginal farmers and only 7 families are in the large farmers' category.

Paddy and *chana* (a pulse) are grown in the low and medium lands and *kandula*, *mung*, *biri*, *koltha* (pulses) are cultivated in the higher lands. Beside these crops like chinabadam is cultivated in lowlands and onion in medium and lowlands. Vegetables like brinjal, tomato, chilies are cultivated in homestead lands. Paddy is the main crop and the staple food.

Cultivation starts in June when the farmers manure and plough their land. In July-August the farmers sow and look after the seedlings. In October and November paddy is harvested.

Instead of the local varieties (which were drought resistant and appropriate to local landforms), people have switched to cultivating hybrid crops such as paddy and cotton without assured irrigation facility, but with a hope of an increase in their income. While a traditional paddy variety yields on an average between 12-15 bags per acre, HYVs can yield 25-30 bags. But they require lot of care, assured irrigation and investment. Poor people, however, fail to take the required care, and this puts their crop at risk, as rainfall is so erratic.

But agricultural alone is not sufficient for them to ensure food for the whole year. So in addition, people have subsidiary occupations such as small business, processing activities, etc. One important non-farm activity is migration in search of wage employment to the towns such as Raipur, Durg (in Chhatishgarh state), Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and Bhilai (Madhya Pradesh) and the neighbouring districts such as Bargarh, Sundergarh, Sambalpur. In the non-agriculture season (January-May) when there is no scope of earning, people migrate to other areas in search of income. They spend about six months and return with little or no money saved during that period.

Local governance aspects

The village belongs to Kursud Panchayat (lowest tier of the Panchayatiraj system), which consists of 5 villages. The people directly elect Sarpanch (Political head of the Panchayat) who is responsible for the overall development works of the Panchayat.. The village is divided into 5 wards from which ward members (directly elected by the people) represent in the Panchayat and are responsible for development of their respective Wards. Ward member presides over the village level meeting (*Palli Sabha*) whereas Sarpanch presides over the

panchayat meetings (*Gramsabha*). In 1997, the first female Sarpanch was elected in the Panchayat.

Besides this democratic set up, there are four community-based organisations (CBOs) to promote socio-cultural development of the village.

Table: Village organisations

Name of the organisation	Start Year	Members								Main activity
		SC		ST		Other		Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Yubak yoti Yubak Sangh	1974	4	1	5	2	46	9	55	12	organise youth for development activities
Village education committee	1975	1	1	1	1	5	2	7	2	To supervise education institution in the village
BapujiYubak Sangh	1978	64	-	-	-	-	-	64	-	To organise the youth from SC community for community development works
SriJagannath Cultural organisation	1989	1	-	2	-	66	9	69	9	To organise cultural programme in the village
Adibasi Kalyan Parishad	1995	2	-	4	4	4	-	48	4	To take up welfare programmes for schedule tribes

Other groups like Durgapuja Committee, Drama Committee, Kirtan Committee also exist in the village to lead the cultural activities in the village. Durgapuja is a big festival in the village, being observed in October. Participation of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe groups in these Hindu festivals is negligible, though they are not prevented to participate in the meetings. Gram Sabha is held in the panchayat office. Here decisions on construction works, beneficiary selection and all the development aspects of the village are finalised for action and recommendation to higher authority. But people's participation especially that of the poorer sections, in the Palli Sabha as well as in the Gram Sabha is minimal. Many people from lower caste groups are ignorant about the planning process of Panchayat although they participate in the elections.

Women's organisations such as Mahila Samiti and Self Help Groups (SHGs) are not found active in the village, though the village has two female ward members.

LIVELIHOOD ASSETS

Natural Resources

These include a substantial area of agricultural land and a river 1km from the village. Locally the lands have been classified into five categories such as *antt* (upland), *bahal* (lowland), *mal* (middle land), *gochar* (grazing land), and *kachhar* (riverbed). People use the ant, bahal, mal and kachhar lands for cultivation purpose. There is no diversion or canalisation of river water due to which the village is debarred to get the benefit from the river. The village has thirteen traditional water harvesting structures (TWHS) that are used for agriculture and bathing purposes. While munda is the smallest structure, mainly located close to the catchment of a

water channel, katta is the biggest water storing body that stores water draining out from different mundas (also from independent channels). Surplus water from a katta gets filtered before entering a bandha. Water of a bandha is used for cooking purpose, apart from being used for bathing. For drinking purpose people depend more on ring/dug wells and tube wells. In the summer season (April to early June) all the water harvesting structures go dry and the ground water level falls, and the people face severe scarcity. In this period they manage from the existing tube wells.

History of the village shows that it was covered with dense forests about 50 years back. People from Kurmi caste (OBC) were the first to settle in the village. Their main activity was trading of salt from Parvatipur in the district of Kalahandi. Bullock was the main means of communication at that time. Now, there are only few trees found in the village due to massive deforestation, lack of initiative to protect forest and many modern sector interventions such as roads. A mango orchard of 33 acres exists in the village and is owned by the panchayat, bringing an annual income of about Rs.20,000.

Educational Facilities

The primary school has 124 boys and 101 girls. In 1981, a High school was constructed which is just opposite to the connective road passing through.

Table: Education

Item	Illiterate		Just literate		Primary		Middle		Secondary		Higher secondary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Students in schools	-	-	-	-	126	94	71	32	92	35	12	1
Villagers education	501	567	395	384	206	197	96	88	25	21	32	19

But looking into the economic status of the poor parents, it is seen that they are taking little interest in sending their children to schools. They prefer the girls to be engaged in work at home such as cooking and washing, and the boys to help in livelihood activities such as cultivating, cattle rearing etc. Thus, economic constraints compel the parents to stop study of their children.

Infrastructures

There is a small weekly trading centre in Kursud, at the entrance of the village. It has betel shops, hair cutting and small hotels which open everyday. The Panchayat office, cultural centre and the office of the Youth Club are close to the trading centre. But the market opens once in a week on Saturday, with vegetables, stationary shop and other consumable goods. Villagers from a distance of 10 km, come for marketing of goods. Connective pucca road from Bhawanipatna to Raipur is the main means of communication for the village people. Apart from this the village has a veterinary centre, dispensary, Post Office and co-operative society facilities to meet the immediate needs of local people. A branch of State Bank of India opened in 1987 4 km away on the main road. A railway station, the Block and Tahasil Office, College of formal education, and Sub-Divisional office are located 25 km away in Titilagarh approachable only by crossing the river by boat. Use of the makeshift road through the river is auctioned to a person in the village, and in the rainy season when the river is full he charges Rs.3 per trip for each person from other villages. He is also paid in paddy by each household of the village.

Though institutional credit facilities are available nearby at the bank (4 km) and co-operative Society in the village, villagers are not able to access the benefits. Lack of saving habits, non-fulfilment of criteria such as to keep minimum deposit and mortgage to avail the loan facility, and the lengthy documentation procedure discourage the people. Fear of non-payment of loans and prevalence of large number of dead loans creates non co-operative attitude among the officials of bank and financial institutions to make loan facilities available to the poor people. From the discussion with the villagers it is known that the rich have easy access to institutional credit facility because bank officials think there is less risk of deferred payment or default of loans. It is found that the bank has disbursed loan of Rs.20,000 to 5 persons under SGSY scheme to purchase diesel pumps for agriculture, two persons under PMRY scheme (Rs.70,000) to run shop business, and two persons have been assisted under cash credit loan in the year 2001.

Poor people are forced to go to moneylenders of the village. These are shopkeepers and traders who have settled in the village over the past 50 years, and who originate in Gujarat. They lend at interest rates up to 10 percent per month without security or 7 percent per month with security (such as utensils, ornaments or land). They, however, lend to their community without interest. They pay to the cotton cultivators at the time of cultivation and get the repayment in kind.

A primary health centre is located 1km from the village where there is a doctor, two nurses, a pharmacist and one attendant. The doctor lives at Sindhekela (5km from the village) which is a problem for emergency treatment. Villagers also depend on the primary health centre located in Borda, 4 km away. The village got a telephone in 2001 and so far 13 people have been using this facility.

Vulnerability context

In 1965 the village was affected by its first drought. In 1985 and 2000 drought was severe, and the economic life of the village was disturbed. The long effect of drought led to starvation in the area, with scarcity of food and water, distress selling of assets and livestock. Starvation in Bolangir is the result of chronic hunger and not necessarily limited to the drought period, although it becomes acute. At the same time people were affected with severe diseases. As a result, poor people migrate out to towns (Raipur, Durg, and even Mumbai/Bombay) and other neighbouring districts in search of wage employment in private industries, construction works and rickshaw pulling. Many natural factors affect production, such as erratic rainfall, sloping agricultural land and high temperature. These combine with human factors such as deforestation, silting and encroachment on traditional water harvesting structures by the rich and powerful to exacerbate drought in the village. It is evident that there is food scarcity for most of the year. Migration to non-farm work is a response to the lack of wage labour in non-agricultural season. But even in the agricultural season there is migration in search of wage employment in the agricultural sector in other places.

Farm and Non-Farm Sector

It was difficult for the villagers to differentiate the farm from the non-farm sector. The villagers identified pull factors and push factors in a 'force field' analysis which attempted to show factors that push people into non-farm activities, or enable them to choose them. The development of the non-farm sector as a supplement to the agricultural sector is a suitable strategy for the development of the rural economy. The farm sector has two impacts for non-farm activities: providing raw materials for processing and sale (puffed rice, a rice mill, vegetable business, bread-making unit), and the capital for small business and processing

activities. It can also provide increased purchasing power to enlarge the market for processed outputs.

Income Generating Activities in Kursud

During the PRA exercise (matrix scoring) in the village meeting villagers identified 7 types of Income Generating Activities (IGA) currently operating in Kursud:

1. Agricultural production (cultivation)
2. Trading of processed agricultural produce and forest produce (puffed rice, fuel wood)
3. Trading of processed items (Liquor, Earthen tiles)
4. Small business (Vegetable, fish, livestock, betel shop and other consumable items)
5. Processing units (bread making, rice mill)
6. Services (tailoring, cycle repairing, carpentry)
7. Wage labour (agricultural wage work , non-agricultural work)

Analysing the degree of preference across the caste and gender in each type of activity, it is found that all the caste groups prefer agriculture. Even those who do not own land are cultivating government land and/or share-cropping. Those who are engaged in other high return activities also prefer agriculture, but as their secondary occupation. But males of every caste group are ahead of females in preferring involvement in non-agricultural activities. SC community has given less priority to agriculture in comparison to the others because they have less agricultural land and are engaged more as wage labour than self-employed agricultural workers. As in other villages, the preferences given to different non-farm activities depend a great deal on the capability of different caste groups to conduct that type of work. There are social prohibitions or restrictions on availability of capital.

Specialisation

During PRA with villagers, two aspects such as specialisation in economic activity and degree of involvement of women in economic activities were identified in each well-being category. Very poor and poor people have no specialised activity, and are involved in IGAs of secondary importance like farm and non-farm labour. Middle class people have identified business activities, rich people have business and service and very rich people identified business selling higher-cost consumer durables and establishment of processing unit in which the poor people work. Thus the activities of very poor and poor people are diverse. The middle, rich and very rich categories own land and hence concentrate in agriculture.

Regarding the degree of women's involvement in economic activities, it was found that women's participation is equal to that of males in very poor and poor class. Women and men both involve themselves in farm and non-farm labour work and small business activities such as vegetable selling and bangle selling. In the middle category, the participation of women is much less than males, and in the rich and very rich group, women play no role in IGAs.

Non-farm activities

The non-farm IGAs include preparation and selling of puffed rice, fuel wood collection, selling of liquor, preparation and selling of earthen tiles, selling of vegetables, fish, livestock etc., setting up processing units (bread making and rice mills)

These non-farm activities can be categorised as follows:

- Trading of processed agricultural and forest produce
- Trading of other processed items

Small business
Services
Non-farm wage labour

Trading of processed agricultural and forest produce: this includes selling of puffed rice, and fuel-wood collection and selling. Selling of puffed rice was prioritised by women from schedule tribe, three of whom from different households are engaged in this trade. Men do not do this activity because they think this work should be done only by women. It is used as food at tea-time. For poor people puffed rice at times acts as substitute staple food. The paddy is processed into rice in the village rice mills. No money is charged for milling because the mill owner keeps the residual husk that gets separated through the processing. Other household members assist women with transportation and milling of paddy. The selling of puffed rice prevails all the year. As it is handled by women, it is marketed within walking distance.

Selling of fuel wood is another IGA practised by the villagers, even though the village has no forest area. They have to depend on the forest of other villages to collect fuel wood. Villagers mainly depend on purchases from fuel-wood collecting and trading households. Both men and women from SC and ST community do this work. Generally, the men collect the fuel-wood and make bundles, and women sell those bundles.

Trading of other processed items: this includes selling of country liquor and earthen tiles. All caste groups except the general or forward caste groups practice selling of country liquor. In the village 11 households have liquor selling as regular activity. The country liquor is produced in Bhati, 10 km from the village. Men bring the liquor with a container of 10-15 kg by cycle three or four times in a week. They have to do it secretly in the fear of being informed to the police. The seller of country liquor is locally called *kuchia*. Liquor-selling requires a license from the government, but they ignore this, and even those who have taken a license deal with more than the permitted quantity. The largest amount is sold at the weekly market. Women need not go outside to sell as they do it at the doorstep. Earning from this source is Rs.2500 per month. But they have to pay a bribe to influential people in the village and the police for continuance of the business. Yearly income reaches up to Rs.12000 to 15,000 from this source. Analysis of this activity across the well-being status shows that households doing this activity come under the very poor and poor category.

Only two households are engaged in making and selling of earthen tiles, and it involves males and females from the household only. Income from this activity is highest between January and March, and is governed by consumer demand in the village. The tiles are sold at seller's doorsteps.

Small business: this activity includes the selling of various durable and perishable consumer goods like vegetable, fish, livestock, milk, grocery, cloth, utensils, bangles, cooked food (hotel) and betel. Villagers said that the selling of vegetables and fish is dependent on rainfall. But erratic rainfall has been a major cause of drought in the district, and the people cannot afford to water their lands for vegetable cultivation. Twelve households from SC are active in vegetable selling. They collect from the growers of the village, and attend two markets (in the village and another 5 km distant) to sell their vegetables. They sell a total of 8 market days in a month and only two households are found to be selling in other days by supplying at the doorstep of the customers. Income from vegetable selling is highest (up to Rs.1000 per month) in the winter season.

Three households from the fisher community (OBC) sell fish. They collect every day from the ponds located near the village and sell at a profit of Rs.5 per kg. They sell door to door (up to 10 km away) and also attend the village market and neighbouring village markets. In the summer (April-June), when the water level decreases and fishing starts they get an income of Rs.1500 per month but in the rainy season, they either sit idle or engaged in daily wage labour work in ploughing and harvesting of agricultural lands.

Only one household from OBC category is in milk selling. Besides milking his own cow, he also collects from other households. About 20 litres of milk per day is sold, with a net income of Rs.70 per day. There is no such significant monthly variance in income but approximately 150 person days is utilised for collection and selling of milk bringing an annual gross income of Rs.10,500.

A total of nine grocery shops exist in the village, out of which 8 belong to OBC and only one is of an individual from ST category. Rice, dal and other cooking items are sold in these shops. This business is an expensive one so it is seen from the wellbeing categories that five shops belong to very rich family, three are from rich category and only one poor household performs this business. But the transaction in the shops of rich and very rich people is more than that of poor person's shop. This is because the rich and very rich people have the capacity to invest more money to cater to the needs of rural people.

There are four betel shops located in the village. OBC households have set up all those shops, and these have high selling on market days.

Another activity identified by the villagers is running of small 'hotels' (which means selling of cooked foods). There are three, but villagers rarely use them: they are close to the highway by the bus stop and so they are for passengers and travellers. This is also an expensive business to operate.

Case study of a hotel owner

Sugrib Sahoo started a hotel in 1999, and before this he had a fancy shop in the village. Seeing the potential of the location he started the hotel by the bus stop, where there was already one existing there. He studied up to intermediate level, and has a wife and daughter of 5. The shop provided only about Rs.4000 annual income, insufficient to maintain his family. Now his income has gone up. He opens only in the daytime because he deals only in breakfast and snacks. He calculated that around 10-12 regular buses daily ply in the route and from each bus he gets 10-15 customers who eat on an average Rs.3 of snacks; giving a profit of Rs.100 per day. Other passers-by also stop by the hotel for refreshment, giving in all a profit of Rs.250. On market day (Saturday), the profit level reaches Rs.350 to Rs.450. But in the rainy season the passengers and travellers prefer not to stop, so the profit in these month comes down to Rs.2000. Thus approximately Rs.60,000 is earned as his net income per year. After paying to one boy employee (Rs.3000 with food per annum) and water supplier (Rs.200 p.m.) and other contingency expenses he gets Rs.50,000 profit per year. He has not accessed any credit facility from any financial institution. He is planning to start lunch for the customers (as there is a demand) but does not have a good house for that. He fears investing in infrastructure as the place where he runs the hotel belongs to the government and that at any time it might expel him.

The villagers also have trading activity and deal in items such as livestock, bangle, cloth, and utensil. Trading of livestock is done at Titlagarh market (25 km distance). A total of 36 families from SC category were identified having livestock business. Only men do this as

women are considered unable to take the physical strain. Livestock are bought from individuals who assemble in market at Digsira village (5km from the village). Buying also takes place in other nearby villages. The cattle or livestock trader faces many problems during the transition period (2 to 3 days in a week) i.e. the days of difference between buying and selling of livestock. This is because firstly, he has to bear the maintenance expenditures and other unforeseen mishap to the livestock. Secondly, a seller has to cover a long distance and there is risk of non-disposal of livestock, which again increases the transition expenses.

Four cloth shops and one utensil shop are found in the village. Owners of these shops are from rich and very rich class. They procure materials from Khariar (30 km from village) market. Buyers are from the village and nearby area.

Case study of a bangle seller

Nath Bag of Kursud village learnt bangle selling when he was 14 years old. He has studied up to 7th class. At that time he was going with his mother who was selling bangles in nearby villages. He is now 35 years old and has studied up to 7th standard. His 13-member family include his wife, four sons, four daughters, one brother and two sisters. His wife and sisters sell bangle at home. Brothers help him in agriculture work and do farm labour in the village. Though this is a 'women's business', he is doing it because he knows the art of bangle selling. Besides this he also does agriculture works in his two acres of land but the earning from agriculture is very low (10 bags of paddy, worth Rs.2750). So he manages his family from bangle selling supplemented by income of other family members. Females of his family assist him in selling of bangles but cannot go outside leaving their children in home.

Daily he has to cover 4 to 5 villages to sell the targeted quantity, with a profit aim of Rs.60-65. He buys the bangles from Khariar market, 30 km away. Selling of bangles is governed by the occurrence of festivals i.e. greatest in October, January, February, March and June. According to him the quality is not so good in this market and price is also high. But he has to make do because he cannot go to markets 200 km away from the village. In the rainy season and when he has no money he sits idle in the home or engaged in his own land and does wage work in agricultural sector.

Processing units

Rice mill: there are three rice mills, which are 15 years old, and owned by people from the very rich category. They are in-migrants from a trading community from Gujarat State. They process paddy into rice and for that take the by-product (husks) as service charge. Although people in all wellbeing categories preferred this activity, most cannot do it because of financial constraints. The income distribution over the month is highly irregular, and is directly related to the quantity of agriculture production in the locality (3 to 4 villages). In the paddy cultivation period (from the last part of March to October) income from these mills is minimal, and is very high in the post- harvesting months. But in drought years the mills run for only 5-10 days in the post-harvesting period.

About The Rice Mill Owner

The rice mill that Rattan Jain now runs was started by his father 15 years ago, with an initial investment for the machinery of Rs.20,000. Now Rattan Jain is separated from his father and runs the unit independently. He has studied up to 7th standard. For his family of six, he is the sole bread earner. In the initial period of this mill there was income of Rs.6000 per month but when new mills were established in the village the income stagnated. He has one employee, and his wife manages rest of the activities. He rarely takes milling charges in terms of money from the customers, and normally takes only husks, which are the by-product of paddy. In the peak season (November-January) of non-drought years, the mill runs every day giving an income of more than Rs.6,000 per month. The rest of the year it runs 10 to 15 days in a month. Thus his annual income comes is approximately Rs.50,000. After paying electricity bill of Rs.3000 and payment to regular and casual workers, his net income reaches Rs.35,000. He faces difficulty due to frequent electricity failures. Rattan is mooting an idea to start an oil-pressing unit.

Bread Manufacturing: the villagers identified this as a further processing activity, but there is only one in the village. The following case study of only one Bread manufacturer shows the details on the activity.

Case study of a bread manufacturer

Drona Sahu (30) was struggling for sustenance in 1985 when he was entering in to this type of work. His educational qualification is standard three. He was working as a regular agricultural labour (locally called halia) for 10 years and his father was doing the same. After his marriage it was difficult for him to survive. He decided to shift his occupation to non-agricultural sector and worked in a bread-manufacturing unit in Khariar. He became expert in preparing bread, mixture, pipe, and sweet cake in 3 years. At that time he was getting only food of 5 pieces of bread daily. Then he was paid Rs.150 p.m. It was very difficult for him to maintain his family members. His brother was working as a regular agricultural labour and was getting Rs.1500 per annum. He collected a small amount of money from his brother, utensils and accessories from his neighbours. In 1988 he started a manufacturing unit. within three months of starting he earned Rs.15,000. No workers were employed in the unit as his wife was helping him in preparation and selling of bread (in counter). From his income he bought all the accessories. Subsequently his brother also joined him. All his family members helped him in domestic part of the work.

Now he has constructed a pucca house at a cost of Rs.70,000 and maintains a family of 8 members. His average income is Rs.62,000 per annum from local selling in the village and nearby villages. Major part of the income is used for consumption purpose. So constraint in financial capital compels him to buy the raw materials such as sugar, flour, oil, chana from local market at 20 percent excess rate of actual cost because the raw materials are purchased on credit. If the products are not sold in a specified time period then he repays the credit by borrowing from moneylenders at high rate of interest.

Now this unit is attached to his residence, which is inside the village creating problems to sell through a counter. So he has a plan to shift this unit to a roadside place where he will be able to get better marketing exposure. He has approached the State Bank of India, to get financial assistance for up-grading his unit.

Services: This type is identified comprising the activities like tailoring, cycle repairing, carpentry and engagement in government and non-government services. Through the PRA exercise, the villagers identified four tailoring shops, all owned by OBC people. Two persons are having permanent tailoring shops and other two provide tailoring services in the weekly markets. All people who want cannot undertake this type of activity, as it needs training. The persons who were working as helpers in a nearby urban shop in Khariar (30 km) got trained on tailoring. It needs an investment of Rs.20, 000 to start a tailoring shop out of which the cost of machine is Rs.2,500 and the rest includes the cost of accessories and construction of shop. They are earning Rs.10,500 per annum, which they think is sufficient according to their investment level. Another activity, which is of vocational type and marked by the villagers, is carpentry. Three households are in to this activity. All the three households belong to the category of other backward caste. The income from this activity is higher (Rs.1200 p.m.) in the non-agricultural season (or early part of the agricultural season) between January and May, because they find spare time do this activity. Unlike tailoring, carpentry skills are handed down from one generation to the next.

Employment in government and non-government employment was found in 33 households, but it is not considered an IGA because the perception of the villagers is that no investment is required. Of the 33, 21 are from the rich and very rich category, and the remaining 12 of very poor and poor category. From the very rich households, there are 11 schoolteachers (2 are in the village school), 3 co-operative secretaries (1 is in the Kursud co-operative society) and the remaining 7 are in railway service, clerk in the schools, panchayat secretary and peon in the government offices. These households also involve themselves in agricultural work by employment of farm labourers. Of the 12 from the very poor and poor category, two are employed as watchman (chaukidar), two at Anganwadi (Integrated Child Development Services centre) as helper and cook, employees in mills (4), water supplier and waiters (2) in the small village hotels. These households are either landless or marginal farmers.

Non-farm wage labour: This is found in 305 households, which is 48 percent of the total of the village. In the lean season when there is no source of local employment in agriculture, many people migrate to other places in search of work, and people also get engaged in various non-farm activities. Of the 305 households, 274 belong to very poor and poor families whose major income is from non-farm wage labour. The remaining 14 households are considered middle category families, and have insignificant portion of income from non-farm wage labour. The difference in the activities of poor and middle households is that the formers do labour work whereas the latter are engaged in supervising and group leading.

Constraints affecting various IGAs

During discussion with the village members, a number of key constraints for the development of non-farm activities were identified. Communication gap with the government, lack of financial capital, credit, market information, exposure, social stigma and distant market places are the major constraints highlighted by the villages.

Communication gap with Government: This problem is marked and given priority by all the groups from every category. A river isolates the area, and as there is no bridge people are not able to communicate with the district and block administration. Thus it hinders access to government services like training on entrepreneurship development and linkage with schemes to get financial support. People are also unaware of the present self-employment schemes such as PMRY and SGSY. SGSY (Swarnajayanti Gramin Swarajgar Yojana), is an important subsidy-based credit scheme aimed especially at developing non-farm activities among the poorest people – officially called below-poverty line (BPL) people. However, nepotism and

favouritism has resulted in wrong identification of true BPL families. A larger share of benefits meant for BPL families is going to better-off people in the community.

Financial capital: This is the second major problem faced by the villagers. With existing market conditions and potential of specific raw materials, entrepreneurs cannot initiate their self-employment activity due to lack of financial capital. To diversify the economic activities, surplus money needs to be invested in the other IGAs, but the majority are in lower income groups whose earnings are spent for consumption purposes. Those people who have already started their activity also face the scarcity of capital for expansion.

Financial institutions like Bank and Co-operative Societies are accessible from the village. But poor villagers have not gained access to loans to start IGAs due to stringent rules and regulations. People go instead to moneylenders who lend at high rate of interest.

The Co-operative Society in Kursud

Membership is 1328 (with membership fees of Rs.25 per person), of which only 20 are women. Out of the total there are 251 SC, 374 ST and 703 from other caste groups. The society covers all nine villages of Kursud panchayat, and two villages of Goudtula Panchayat (5 km from the society office). At state level there is the Orissa State Co-operative Bank. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is the nodal financial institution for all the co-operative societies. The local co-operative is not entitled to receive deposit from the public. Whereas the block level and district level co-operatives can function in both collection of deposit and loan disbursement to the members. It has the function only to disburse loans to and take repayments from its members whereas the State Bank of India can make loans and collect deposits from the public.

During the year 2001-2002 the society has disbursed agricultural loans to 22 members. Out of a total 193 loanees (borrowing a total of Rs.1,391,000), 106 have overdue repayments, and the rest are paying instalments regularly. A total of Rs.633,000 has been recovered by the society. Though the bank is interested to support non-farm activities, it seems no-one has ever applied. The State Bank of India, after recommendation from the block office, does finance individuals for government schemes like SGSY. People have more interest to get that loan because they can benefit from the subsidy amount which is not available in credit from the society.

Market information and exposure: Villagers and those involved in IGAs have little information on pricing and product status in the market. This prevents them competing with their counterparts. In many cases this problem reduces their bargaining power with rural entrepreneurs. Besides, they lack entrepreneurship qualities for proper management of the units. So all the above problems result in selling goods at very low price: existing people get harassed, and others are discouraged from starting new economic activity.

Social stigma: caste-based social discrimination (untouchability) is strictly prevailing in the village. Schedule Caste people are not allowed to take up non-farm activities like hotel, betel shop, and paddy processing: the restriction applies especially to food and drinks. They are permitted to trade in specific goods. On their part, the SCs think that doing any such activity would offend the higher castes, and so they do not easily take up such activities. Although caste-based discrimination has gone down considerably, the perception still prevails.

In our activities analysis across the well-being categories there is no gender discrimination among the poorest and poor sections (SCs, STs) in allowing participation in economic activities, but such restrictions are there among rich people.

Distant markets: vegetables and other consumable items are sold in the weekly village market, but livestock sellers have to go 20 km because livestock are not traded there. Others have to go to distant market places to collect the raw materials for the units like bread making. While villagers identified this as a hardship and as discouraging newcomers, it is also probably the factor that keeps the numbers involved in such activities relatively small, so reducing competition and keeping earnings high for those already engaged. It is not clear how many more such enterprises could be supported by the village economy.

Enabling Factors

There are many positive factors found by the village members for the potential development of non-farm sector activities:

1. Road communication
2. External influence
3. Availability of private loan
4. Increase in peoples demand
5. market location in the village

Road communication: some non-farm activities (especially the hotels, betel and grocery shops) benefit from the road and are situated to benefit from the bus stop and passing traffic. So they are open every day, not just market day. Again due to road communication the village people can access the urban markets to get raw materials and accessories for enterprise.

External influence: the village did not have such diversified occupations as now until 'Marwaris' from Gujerat began to inhabit in the area about fifty years ago. They started the grocery shops and rice mills and this helped villagers to learn business ideas from them. Their interaction with the other urban markets could help to extend the social networking.

Availability of private loans: While lack of access to institutional credit discourages non-farm activities, availability of private loans is a positive factor, especially for those who are already rich. Poor people are not able to fulfil the requirements of banks and other existing financial institutions in the village and they easily get private loans to fulfil their immediate needs.

Increase in peoples demand: Due to modern sector intervention in the village economy, people have diversified their activities and needs, so their demand is increasing day-by-day. This is a positive factor to undertake non-farm activities. In the past, the demand of the people was limited to particular needs which were fulfilled by the farm sector. But in recent times, non-farm activities are necessary to fulfil growing needs of the people.

Existence of village market: This is another important enabling factor for the villagers to undertake non-farm activities in the village. The village market facilitates other people to interact and exchange their ideas to strengthen social networking. Many products and services are also marketed in the centre. This encourages others to start new activities.

Policy suggestions

During the PRA with the villagers a number of non-farm activities were identified and prioritised according to their importance. Also the encouraging and discouraging factors which have positive and negative impact on starting non-farm activities have been discussed. The villagers also provided suggestions to eradicate the problems.

Vocational Training: The villagers have observed that many of the young people, with potential to undertake new activity, cannot do so due to lack of knowledge and skill. Trades, which are meant especially for women should be demonstrated in training so that it can be supplemented with the total household income.

Loan facility: Lack of a simple mechanism to access institutional credit keeps the poor people away from trading in farm products and non-farm activities. Efforts should be made to ease the credit accessing process and disseminate information regarding the procedure and various government schemes.

Information dissemination and networking with government: The people need to get the information on the status of market for their product and raw materials. Again government level information should be disseminated strategically so that people can be able to access the government schemes and assistance.

Besides above, the villagers also suggested for establishment of livestock market in their village and establishment of marketing network through group based activities.

Table: Criteria for well-being ranking in Kursud

UPPER	food security for more than 12 months; Have deposit in the bank; posses water pump; Have 8 to 10 acres of land; Possess 25 livestock; Have brick house.
MIDDLE	Have food security for 12 months; less debt, less saving; Well structured thatched house; 5 to 8 acres of land.
LOWER MIDDLE	Food security for 5-8 months; Dependency on both agriculture and wage; Thatched house; Have a debt but no saving; 3 Acres of land.
LOWER	Food security for 4-5 months; Wage work 9 months; Thatched house; Have debt; one acre of land
LOWEST	Dependence all year on wage work; No certainty in earning; Likely to be widow, helpless, migrant labourer; No cultivable land; Do not have own homestead or have house on others land.

Table: Number of households by well-being and social category - Kursud

	Very rich	Rich	Middle	Poor	Very Poor	All
SC	-	-	34	45	75	154
ST	-	15	23	64	38	140
OTH	8	20	167	94	55	344
All	8	35	224	203	168	638

Table: Number of households involved in various IGAs – Kursud

ACTIVITY	UPPER	MIDDLE	LOWER MIDDLE	LOWER	LOWEST
Puffed rice					3
Selling Fuel- wood				5	6
Liquor				6	5
Earthen Tiles				2	
Vegetable				2	10
Fish				1	2
Grocery	5	2	1	1	
Milk				1	
Hotel			2	1	
Livestock				20	16
Bangle					3
Tailoring				3	1
Bread Manufacturing		1			
Rice Mill	3				
Cycle Repairing				2	
Carpentry				1	2
non-agricultural labouring			31	154	120
Agricultural Work				101	122
PAN Shop				4	
Regular service	2		19	9	3

Table: Number of persons involved in various IGAs in Kursud

ACTIVITIES	SC		ST		OBC		GEN	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Puffed rice	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
fuel wood	2	1	3	2	2	1	-	-
Liquor	-	1	-	3	-	7	-	-
Earthen tiles	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
Vegetable	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fish	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Grocery	-	-	-	1	-	6	-	2
Milk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hotel	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Livestock	-	36	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bangle	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tailoring	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1
Bread manufacturing	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Rice Mill	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
Cycle repairing	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Carpentry	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
non-agricultural wage work	28	103	72	105	20	97	-	-
Agricultural work	59	90	35	117	4	18	-	-
Pan (betel) shop	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
Regular service	-	1	-	1	2	26	-	3

End Remarks

This preliminary and exploratory phase was aimed at gaining an insight into the existing livelihood options with the various socio-economic sections of people in the district. More than anything else, this phase has thrown open a number of questions regarding various governance issues that act as constraints to poor people accessing, initiating and gaining control over livelihood options, especially non-farm activities. Added to that poor infrastructure, discriminatory social practices and haphazard policies play against improvement in livelihood of the poorest and most vulnerable sections in Bolangir. Unless serious attention is paid towards the above factors, Bolangir would only keep witnessing situations in which more and more people become vulnerable and further impoverished, especially when there are recurrences of drought after drought.



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