

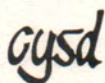
THE INVISIBLE WORKFORCE

Empowering women in Orissa through economic participation



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Centre for Youth and Social Development

Published by the CYSD-Centre for Policy
Research and Advocacy (CEPRA)

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Acknowledgement

The Invisible Workforce: Empowering Women In Orissa Through Economic Participation is the third in a series of public education studies conducted by CYSD-CEPRA, Bhubaneswar.

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Research studies provide us with deep insight into various problems. They therefore need to be conducted in a scientific and systematic manner, ensuring reliable and credible outcomes. We acknowledge the generous assistance of Supriya Pattnaik, state representative of DFID, in co-ordinating data-collection and preliminary analysis. And Amrita Patel from the Women's Study Centre who helped compile district-level secondary data.

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Finally, this acknowledgement would not be complete without mention of the InfoChange team that helped edit and publish the report.

Preface

Several factors — patriarchal family/social structure; poor education and skill levels; a marginalised status in decision-making processes in the domestic/public sphere; low bargaining capacity in the marketplace; lack of access to and control over resources, technology and other facilities — limit the scope for economic participation of rural women. Even if women enjoy access to resources such as land and savings, they are unable to exercise effective control over them. Women have to perform productive, reproductive and community management roles. These multiple roles further reduce the scope of their economic participation by limiting their ability to access work opportunities, upgrade their skills and raise their earning capacity. The work opportunities they get are often no more than an extension of their domestic/reproductive work.

Efforts are being made by the central and state governments to empower women and improve their status. However, while working towards their development and empowerment, the specificity of the state or the region is the first thing that needs to be considered. Development planners have failed to understand the realities women have to cope with, and have therefore failed to translate policies into practice. Policies and programmes have also not addressed women's needs in the actual context of their life situations.

This study attempts to comprehend women's realities in the light of their perceptions. It seeks to analyse the subordination of women and gender differentiation, and tries to identify some intervention strategies which will address their needs and ensure the success of programmes implemented for their benefit. It takes into account the dynamic gender patterns of the state of Orissa, where women are forced to assume multiple roles, including those of men, during crisis situations and frequent calamities like floods, drought and cyclones.

The study begins with an executive summary of the findings. This is followed by Chapter 1, which consists of an introduction and describes the conceptual framework and rationale for the study. This chapter also defines the key concepts, objectives and methodology of the study.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the development programmes and schemes for women in Orissa, highlighting the status of these

programmes in the five districts under study. This chapter is based on a review of secondary sources.

Chapter 3 undertakes a detailed analysis of data obtained through various methods, especially the interview schedule. It describes the demographic and occupational characteristics of the respondents, including their access to and control over the resources of production and the resultant income. It also discusses various development programmes and tries to indicate the gaps in the formulation and implementation of the well-designed programmes, so that possible solutions from the women's perspective can be visualised. It includes two case studies based on the dawn-to-dusk exercise carried out to document various productive and non-productive activities in which women are engaged every single day, from early morning to late night.

Chapter 4 presents a summary of the study, which highlights the findings, based on occupational indicators, indicators of access to and control over resources and income, the unpaid work of women and their participation in production for consumption, various development initiatives by the government, and the gaps identified by the beneficiaries and the officials interviewed at the block level. Chapter 5 lists the findings on the basis of the objectives defined in the study and makes some recommendations for raising the level of economic participation of women and empowerment of women through increased access to and control over the resources of production.

Introduction

The unheard voice: Women in the informal economy

By Renana Jhabvala

We are in the age of voices. Voices come at us through television, newspapers, magazines, books, movies, computers, telephones, mobiles, the Internet and, perhaps soon, new and as-yet-unheard-of methods of communication. Yet, very few of these voices belong to the poor, to informal workers, to rural women. That is why this book, *The Invisible Workforce: Empowering Women In Orissa Through Economic Participation*, is important. It brings in the 'other' voice, the voice of poor rural women, at a time when there is no other avenue for them.

India is experiencing rapid economic change fuelled by growth in global capital and the linking of local economies by trade and new methods of communication. These changes are supported by a range of policies facilitating trade and the growth of private industry. In a short period of time, within the last two decades, we have seen the rise of new industries and sectors such as the computer and software sectors, mobile telephones, television and various forms of media. In addition, new products are flooding our markets and companies are adapting their products to suit hitherto unexplored markets. The consumer industry is tapping the rural market, in particular.

The media, and often our political leaders, project a new India. An India with a modern population and a bright future. Surely this can only be so if everyone is brought into the bright future. Unfortunately, the people who are being left out live in rural areas or in urban slums. They do not have a voice and the media finds them uninteresting. It is the strong and the competitive that are able to take advantage of the emerging opportunities. The weak get left behind. This is an age of celebration of competitiveness and of strength.

There is nothing wrong with competition. It brings out the best in us; it makes us reach higher and it rewards creativity. However, not everyone can enter into economic competition. Many remain on the sidelines, as they do not have either the resources or the opportunities.

It has been acknowledged that in the past decades of liberalisation, inequalities have increased. Some states have pulled ahead, some have stayed where they were. Certain groups and communities have benefited, others have been unable to take advantage of the opportunities.

Orissa is one such state that has been left behind. Poor rural women, in particular, are unable to enter the competitive race.

One of the most disturbing aspects of today's economy is the extreme poverty and the large and growing inequalities that exist in society. Being poor in our society means meeting one's survival needs through work that is physically demanding, often debilitating and usually underpaid. Sometimes even this kind of work is not available, and both men and women spend their days in a humiliating search for work. They are often forced to migrate. The variety of work that people do to survive is well described in this book.

Every society likes to see itself as humane, as a society that takes care of its members and has laws that protect the weak against 'predators'. The first principle of a humane society, a good society, is to ensure that the basic needs of the poorest, the most vulnerable, are met.

Taking care of the most vulnerable has a strong moral basis, with justice as its key element. Inequalities are regarded as unjust. John Rawls¹ argues that society will always have inequalities but that inequalities can be permissible in a just society only if they "fulfil the condition of benefiting others as well as ourselves". This can be done only if, within a system of social and economic inequalities, social production is of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle). This is further extended by Guy Standing² as: "Policies and institutions are just if and only if they reduce the insecurity of the weakest groups in society." In other words, a just society requires that social production, social policies and social institutions reduce the inequality and insecurities facing the weakest groups.

In India, a coherent concept of a 'good' society was developed during the freedom struggle. It combined the idea of the nation's freedom from an alien ruler with a more complete idea of economic and social freedom. This concept was developed as 'swaraj' or self-governance, which was seen not merely as a political system managed by and for Indians, but as the basis of a better society. As Gandhiji³ says: "The word swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint." This concept would be the basis of a better society.

"If swaraj was not meant to civilise us and to purify and stabilise our civilisation it would be worth nothing. The very essence of civilisation is that we give paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public and private." The success of the freedom movement was the involvement of the masses, and this was possible because the message of swaraj was not only political freedom but, more important, economic freedom especially for the poorest. "The swaraj of my dreams is the poor man's swaraj. The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen — the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief."

The poor rural women of Orissa have many areas of vulnerability as described in this book. Their poverty stems from their vulnerability, their lack of resources and opportunities, especially employment opportunities. However, despite being poor they are contributing as producing members of society and the economy. They are part of the informal economy, which is the largest economy in India today.

The informal economy is where the bulk of the '*working poor*' — those who earn less than enough to generate a family income of US\$ 1 per day per capita — are concentrated. Although there is no simple relationship between working informally and being poor and working formally and escaping poverty, a much higher percentage of people working in the informal, relative to the formal, economy are poor.

The informal economy currently accounts for some 93% of India's total workforce. Incomes are low and irregular; the workers are weak, vulnerable and poor. The informal economy encompasses a wide range of activities from agricultural labour, collection and sale of forest produce, street vending and bidi rolling, to home-based manufacturing under sub-contracting arrangements as part of global commodity chains, to the establishment and running of micro and small enterprises. The workers in this sector are, to varying degrees, not registered or recorded under the legislation, regulations and statistics of national or local governments and are therefore largely '*invisible*' and '*unprotected*'. They do not enjoy fundamental workers' rights; their work conditions are poor; their work hours are irregular and often very long; their productivity is low and earnings poor; they are exposed to various forms of insecurity and occupational safety and health hazards; they have limited access to credit, markets, information and communication

technology; their entrepreneurship and creative potential is constrained; they lack social security and legal protection; and they lack organisation, representation and a voice either to bargain with employers or to lobby with politicians and bureaucrats.

This sector's contribution to the economy is grossly under-counted and under-rated. According to the National Accounts Statistics, the informal (or unorganised) sector contributes over 60.5% to the NDP⁴. According to one estimate, the sector also contributes over 60% of the total household savings⁵. A substantial 39.3% (Rs 46,000 crore) is the contribution of the informal sector to India's total exports⁶.

The importance of the informal economy in the national economy is certainly not reflected in the resources available to them. Although society takes a lot from informal workers, it does not repay them an equivalent amount. As this book reveals, the workers own meagre resources, their skills have low value in the market, and their earnings are around Rs 30 a day — well below poverty line earnings. The only return they get from society is by way of government development schemes.

Unfortunately, as this book reveals, government schemes have limited impact. In spite of substantial expenditure by the government on development schemes, the results have proved inadequate. The book offers some reasons for this — corruption and inefficiency by the bureaucratic machinery, schemes that do not meet the needs of the people, lack of organisation among the poor to communicate their needs and demands.

If the informal economy is vulnerable, the women in it are even more so. The book reveals their precarious position: 4% of land ownership; mainly subsistence production; lower wages than men; poor health; social constraints on going out and becoming independent; and, most important, the entire burden of looking after the children. Women control few assets, get lower incomes, have to observe all kinds of social restrictions and are forced to shoulder all the family responsibilities. Development programmes therefore need to be targeted at women and organisations specially geared to their needs.

However, women are not helpless victims. They are active, articulate and ready to seize the opportunities offered them. The main issue is: What actions are needed to reach them and provide them opportunities that would bring them closer to the development mainstream.

The present thinking on 'gender' tends to reduce the understanding of women's social and economic status. And it underplays the reality of the gaps women face in society. Gender as a construct for understanding society is deficient in that it leads to ineffective action. The analysis of 'gender' leads most development agencies to insist that all programmes should be for both men and women, that all organisations should have "integrated" male-female roles, and that separate action or organisations for women go against the principles of gender equality. This kind of thinking does not take into account the still deep-rooted inequalities in our society. Our experience has shown that where programmes and organisations combine men and women, it is the more active, more vocal, more visible men who take advantage of it, while the women get left behind. Fortunately, this 'gender' approach has not yet entered the Indian government's programmes. The focus must be on 'women' rather than on 'gender'.

Returning to the issue of development for poor women, our experience at SEWA shows that the key is developing the 'People's Sector', an economic sector that is different both from the private corporate sector and the public bureaucratic sector. Most workers here are in small enterprises, or they are small farmers or workers linked through a series of contractors and chains to large enterprises. Their method of work is through the sale of their labour, such as construction labour, agricultural labour, or self-employment as small producers, vendors or service-providers. Most worker families, especially in rural areas, use a combination of methods to earn their livelihood.

Often they organise into larger work systems, which may or may not be officially registered. These may be co-operatives, which predominate in India in the milk, handloom and agricultural sectors. Or they may be unregistered groups such as chit funds, farmers' irrigation groups, groups of producers supported by non-government organisations (NGOs). There are literally millions of such groups across the country, which, though they form the basis of production systems, remain undocumented and unrecognised. We call this vast system of small producers/vendors/service-providers, with its network of formal and informal organisations, the 'People's Sector'.

The basis for these people's organisations is mutual trust and co-operation. Unlike the private sector, it is not driven by pure self-interest, rather by a mixture of self-interest and co-operation. The People's Sector, which relies on and uses market forces, has also been called the 'Civil Economy'.

The future for unorganised or informal workers lies with the People's Sector. However, despite its vibrancy, things will not happen on their own. Our experience at SEWA has been that in order to build sustainable organisations, used, managed and owned by workers, a number of inputs and changes are required. First, there is a need for policies that recognise and promote the sector. People's economic organisations have to be recognised as a viable alternative. Serious thought has to be given to legal forms of people's economic organisations; existing legal forms tend to be outdated. For example, in the field of micro-finance the only forms of organisation available are private companies or charitable societies. There is no legal recognition of the People's Sector. We need flexible and simple legal structures which allow people to manage their economic organisations at the primary level and also at the state and national levels.

It is universally accepted that one of the major roles of government is the social development of its citizens. Government has an obligation to reach the poor and remove poverty. In India, this has been interpreted to mean that the government itself should run the programmes, leading to an inefficient, ineffective and corrupt system. It is time we rethought our poverty strategies. It is the obligation of government to fund development; government budgets need to provide larger amounts for development. The implementation of programmes should be with the People's Sector, through local organisations specially developed for the purpose. This will allow a needs-based approach, ensure flexibility and, most important, give poor women a forum of their own.

We hope the voice of this book will be heard by policymakers and those leading the globalisation process. We hope that they realise it is a valuable voice, a voice that can help correct emerging inequalities and injustices and lead us to a more humane society.

(Renana Jhabvala is National Co-ordinator, SEWA)

End Notes:

- 1 Rawls, John: *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2001
- 2 Standing, Guy: *Beyond the New Paternalism*, Verso, London, 2002
- 3 Gandhi M K: *Village Swaraj*; Compiled by H M Vyas; Printed and published by Jivanji Dhayabhai Desai, Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 14; 1962
- 4 National Accounts Statistics (NAS), 2000, Statement 76.1
- 5 Pradhan, Roy and Saluja: *The Unorganised Sector in India*, NCAER, 2000
- 6 Ghatate, Vinayak: *The Contribution of the Unorganised Sector in Exports*, National Institute of Foreign Trade (NIFT) 1999

Executive summary

Scope and objectives

Economic participation is often considered crucial to the empowerment of women. It is important to understand the problems of women's economic participation if we are to accelerate the process of women's empowerment. CYSD carried out a research study during 1998-2000 to examine the nature and extent of women's economic participation in rural Orissa. The study was conducted in the rural areas of five interior districts of Orissa with the following objectives:

- To examine the needs of rural and tribal women regarding economic participation.
- To identify conditions/factors that facilitate/inhibit women's economic participation.
- To analyse government policies/practices that facilitate or inhibit women's economic participation (WEP) in the light of the women's perceptions.

Limitations of the study

- The study focussed on WEP in five districts of Orissa (located mainly in the tribal belt) and did not cover the whole state.
- The study aimed to interview 300 women from each of three categories — workers, beneficiaries and non-workers. Due to unavailability of a sufficient number of respondents from each category, the study could not cover an equal number of women from each category.
- Inter-district variations in women's economic participation could not be studied.

Findings

Some vital features that typically characterise women's work are:

- 1 Women perform a variety of tasks in a single day.

- 2 They work for longer periods than their male counterparts, both at the workplace and at home.
- 3 Very little or no economic value is attached to their output at home as well as the workplace.
- 4 They are mostly employed in the unorganised sector, where they receive low wages for doing jobs with low status and requiring few skills.
- 5 There is a concentration of workers in similar types of occupations (wage labour, making leaf plates, bamboo craft, etc), because of factors such as availability of raw materials in the village area, knowledge of the required traditional skills, and fewer employment opportunities in the village, limiting access to occupations which could augment their income-generating capacity.
- 6 The high rate of illiteracy (65.09% in the study population) is one of the major reasons behind the low status accorded to women.
- 7 The main sources of livelihood are agriculture, wage labour and the collection and sale of forest produce.

Women are employed in the following occupations:

Agriculture

- Women exercise no control over the main resource of the agrarian economy: land. This limits their access to other resources like credit, seeds, fertilisers, training, etc.
- Items produced by women are meant mainly for household consumption. Even if they produce for sale, they have no control over the fixing of prices or marketing of products.
- Government aid in the form of training or equipment to women in agriculture is conspicuous by its absence.
- Women perform more tasks than are visible. Besides household chores, they perform a variety of agricultural tasks (for longer periods than men do) apart from ploughing, which is considered more difficult and is reserved for men.
- The main hurdles faced in agriculture are lack of irrigation facilities, physical ailments, limited capital, and failure to control pests and insects.

Cottage industry

- Leaf plates and bamboo craft are the main items produced in this sector.
- Seasonal availability of raw materials, long distances travelled (to the forest and the marketplace), physical ailments, harassment by forest officials, attacks by wild animals, lack of bargaining power, and lack of storage facilities are the main obstacles faced by women in this sector.
- The skills they possess are mainly traditional, ie learnt in the family.

Petty business

- This generally involves the collection and sale of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). Collection of NTFP is a major source of livelihood for tribal women. But their participation in such occupations is on the decline as a result of increasing deforestation and restrictions on the collection of forest produce.
- Lack of bargaining power, physical ailments and personal problems such as heavy workload, small children and no work opportunities within the village are the main constraints.

Wage labour

- About 60–70% of these women remain unemployed for more than 10–15 days a month.
- Since most women are employed as agricultural labourers, non-availability of work in the village during the non-agricultural seasons compels the female labour force to migrate in search of alternative employment.
- Women are paid less than men in all sectors of wage labour. They do not get more than Rs 20-25 per day, whereas men get Rs 30-35 per day.

Animal husbandry

- Though women do everything related to animal care from feeding animals and bathing them to cleaning the cowsheds, they do not play any role in the purchase or sale of animals or animal products.

- In spite of playing a major role in animal care, no government scheme addresses the need of these women for training in animal husbandry.

Factors that facilitate women's economic participation

- Women are forced to engage in income-generating activities for survival, in addition to their household chores, which places an extra workload upon them.
- In some of the areas where NGOs are working, savings societies have started playing an important role. They have increased women's access to capital, though in a limited way. Self-help groups offer alternatives to high-interest loans.

Factors that inhibit women's economic participation

- Women lack access to and control over the main sources of production such as land, capital and technology.
- Lack of irrigation facilities and non-availability of drinking water near their place of residence forces them to walk long distances for water, which consumes a lot of time and energy.
- Unhygienic practices, lack of medical facilities and the prohibitive cost of medication ensure that they are often ill. Further, having to walk long distances to the forest and the marketplace carrying heavy loads exposes them to heat, rain and cold. This aggravates their problems. They commonly suffer from malaria.
- Heavy workload at home, which involves childcare, cooking, cleaning, washing, animal care and extending a helping hand in all occupations, ranging from agriculture to forest produce collection, does not permit them to take up any full-time employment.
- Seasonal availability of raw materials from the forests, the seasonal nature of agriculture and a lack of work opportunities in the villages in the non-agricultural seasons means that they remain unemployed for more than six months in a year.
- Wage discrimination, which is still endemic, deprives them of their right to equal pay for equal work.
- Low investment capacity, lack of storage facilities and limited access to the market compels them to sell their products at low or no profit.

- Insufficient capital, along with lack of knowledge of the latest technologies, seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, etc, and lack of clear ideas about possibilities for expansion in any of the businesses they take up are also major problems.
- Lack of awareness of government schemes implemented for their benefit leads to non-utilisation or under-utilisation of funds.
- Most women do not have any access to savings. Though most of them do earn, a major part of their income is spent on day-to-day purchases, making their contribution to the household income invisible.
- Beneficiaries have to face corruption in government offices while receiving government aid.
- Lack of adherence to specific criteria in the selection of beneficiaries and ignorance of the beneficiaries about this results in the most needy being neglected.

The needs of rural women vis-à-vis their economic participation are:

- Mobilisation of resources and development of infrastructure — construction of canals, tubewells, storage facilities, linkages to markets etc — would make their business/trade profitable.
- Adequate support from their families in the form of shared responsibilities, and from the government in the form of childcare centres (like anganwadis) would enable women to go out and work and contribute to the family income.
- More work opportunities in the villages, like construction works by government in the non-agricultural season, would prevent migration.
- Training in new skills and in related areas of employment would also help them embark upon new and more profitable businesses.
- Equal pay for equal work needs to be ensured.
- Simplifying government procedures for procuring loans and taking steps against alleged corrupt practices on the part of government officials would help improve the economic condition of women.

Government policy interventions and programme approaches: Possibilities, potential and limitations from women's point of view

- While IRDP, DWCRA, IMY and ICDS are commonly known schemes in the area, most of the beneficiaries were not aware of the scheme under which they have benefited.
- Many beneficiaries did not know what benefits someone else received in their name. Most of them had taken aid in the form of capital. But few training programmes for skill upgradation have been organised for their benefit.
- The time and cost involved in making several trips to government offices and bribing officers to get their loans sanctioned constitutes a major cause of non-utilisation or under-utilisation of the funds released for these schemes.
- Most women feel that the assistance provided by government schemes is not need-based.
- People get little information about government programmes. Lack of clarity and non-adherence to fixed criteria in the selection of beneficiaries also cause difficulties.
- The views expressed by government officials of the various blocks under study with regard to government programmes revealed that:
 - The DWCRA manual is too large, and most of the officials are not aware of all its provisions.
 - The government still follows a target-oriented approach, in which only numbers, and not the needs of the people and the quality of the assistance provided, are important.
 - An absence of in-built mechanisms for recovery of loans is often one of the chief shortcomings of the programmes.
 - There is an acute shortage of manpower. The workload of anganwadi workers is very heavy. The sectors are too big, and it is difficult for the supervisors to manage each sector properly with the help of only a few staff members.
 - It is difficult to ensure efficiency in the absence of proper monitoring of the programmes.



1 An integrated approach to women's economic participation

All over the world, and especially in developing countries, women lag far behind men in terms of every set of socio-economic indicators. In India, women are accorded a lower status in comparison to men, despite constitutional provisions and equal legal rights in all spheres such as work, employment, earning, education, health and decision-making processes. Although poor women invariably engage in economic activities and contribute to the family income, their economic contribution remains invisible. A majority of the female workers belong to the unprotected, self-employed and unorganised sector, where earnings are extremely low, rendering their income supplementary to the total family income (Karkal 1996 and NCSEW 1988: 168).

It is being increasingly realised that women lack access to and control over resources of production such as land, capital/credit, technology and other infrastructure facilities. Even if women have property in their name, its control is in the hands of the men in the family. Women are marginalised in decision-making processes not only within the private/domestic sphere but also in the public/market sphere. As they have to play multiple roles in the family, their access to diversified work opportunities gets restricted and they find themselves unable to upgrade their skills and increase their earning capacity. When they do get opportunities it turns out that the tasks they perform are no more than extensions of domestic/reproductive work. Women are increasingly found segregated in low-paid work on marginal land and have to constantly deal with the multiple burdens of productive, reproductive and community management roles.

This, however, does not mean that no efforts have been made by the government and other development actors to improve the status of these women. Many development programmes at the national as well as state level have been launched in the past. However, in spite of such efforts, women's status has not changed substantially. The inability of development planners to comprehend women's needs and their adoption of a top-down approach have created a gap between the way policies and programmes are implemented and the realities women experience in different regions of the country. There are also conceptual and methodological problems regarding measurement of the economic contribution made by women. The National Income

Statistics do not provide information on income in terms of average compensation paid to men and women separately in different sectors (organised and unorganised) of the economy. Women's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also not acknowledged, quantitatively or qualitatively. According to Tapan, if such calculations were included, the GDP would increase by 25% (Tapan 2000).

The general situation of women in Orissa is in no way different from that in the rest of the country. In Orissa, rural women form a significant part of the workforce: almost one-third of the total workforce (27.3%) and 29% of rural workers. Ninety-two per cent of women workers live in rural areas (Census 1981). However, the vast majority of rural female workers are in the unorganised agricultural and home-based sectors, enjoying very little legal protection. The few laws that do provide some support to unorganised rural workers are not currently being implemented or enforced, leaving these women extremely vulnerable to exploitation.

Programmes and policies for the alleviation of the poverty of rural women usually lay emphasis on the need for increasing the work participation of women, rather than on their broader economic participation. For example, most programmes aim to increase women's access to work and employment opportunities through skill development or income-generation activities. This approach reduces the complex issue of the poverty of rural women to a lack of work and income, with the assumption that most rural women do not do any productive work. Though several studies have been conducted on the nature of women's economic participation, the resultant policies have been lopsided. Therefore, in order to fill the gap, an integrated approach to women's economic participation has been formulated. It is in this context that the Centre for Policy Research and Advocacy (CEPRA), a programme centre of CYSD, has carried out this study, which has been designed to develop a greater understanding of problems relating to women's participation.

1.1 Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine the relevance of government programmes, policy and legal support for remunerative economic activities of rural women from the perspective of women themselves. The study would suggest ways of developing a holistic policy perspective on women's economic participation in rural/tribal Orissa with an emphasis on women's needs as perceived by them. The specific objectives of the study are: • To identify problems relating to

women's economic participation and their needs in rural Orissa. • To explore the conditions and identify the factors that facilitate/inhibit economic participation, both in terms of structures and resources, and the role of women's agency in overcoming some of these. • To analyse government policy interventions and programme approaches that facilitate/inhibit women's economic participation from the standpoint of women themselves.

The study aims to provide a need-based policy perspective and an approach to productivity support for NGOs and other development actors to facilitate women's economic participation. Prior to this study, a situational analysis of economic participation of women in rural Orissa was conducted through secondary data review. On the basis of secondary data, the present study was designed focussing on five (Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Phulbani/Kandhamal and Sundergarh) of the 30 districts in Orissa. These five districts represent different regions of the state and have a predominantly tribal population. The districts also account for 31% of the total number of female workers in the whole state. The proportion of female non-workers in these districts is less than the state average, which means that the work participation rate of women is higher as compared to the state average.

While a perception of reality as experienced by women is the focus of the study, the views of government officials regarding the needs of women in this region are also of significance. Hence this study focuses on the views of women as well as government and development functionaries. The aim of the study is to provide a basis for policy advocacy and further research. The study recognises that all rural women work, in that they are engaged in some form of productive, reproductive or community-based labour (Moser 1993). In fact, all forms of women's work have monetary value, and contribute in some degree to the production process, by, for example, freeing up male household members to engage in wage-earning activities outside the household, and by reproducing the labour force through child-rearing.

1.2 Methodology

The study is mainly based on qualitative research supplemented by quantitative research, aimed at exploring social and economic relations within a given cultural context, situated in a particular time, and attempting to describe economic and work-related reality as experienced by women.

Sampling The study uses the multi-stage random sampling method to select the final sample unit. Also, in some cases, due to the non-availability of appropriate respondents, the sample has been selected purposively. In the first stage, based on secondary data analysis, five tribal-dominated districts — Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Kandhamal and Sundergarh — have been chosen from the state of Orissa. The reason for choosing these districts is that economic participation of women in these districts is higher than in the non-tribal districts of the state. In the second stage, two blocks from each of the five districts were chosen — one near the district headquarters and the other further off from it.

In the third stage, three villages from each block, and finally 30 women from each village — consisting of an equal number of workers, non-workers and beneficiaries — were chosen. The sample was thus representative of all three groups of women: those who were engaged in some income-generating activity, those who were beneficiaries of some government programme/scheme, and those who were subsistence workers engaged in carrying out both reproductive and community management tasks but not receiving any monetary returns. But as the required number of respondents from each category was not available in all the villages, respondents from the adjacent hamlets were approached. Despite this, the desired number of respondents in each category could not be interviewed. This was because of the non-availability of respondents who fitted in with the definitions of the three groups. This has been the case especially as far as the latter two groups — non-workers and beneficiaries — are concerned.

Methods The methods used in this study were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and participatory research methods such as social mapping and seasonality. The aim was to break with the discredited legacy of 'objectivity' and 'value neutrality' inherent in traditional methods, and to avoid alienating, dominating and oppressive methodologies. To obtain a variety of information on several issues, combinations of methods were utilised for the purposes of this study. Multiple methods were used to achieve a higher degree of reliability and to overcome the deficiencies inherent in single-method studies (Blaikie 1988; Burgess 1984). This also expressed a commitment to thoroughness, a desire to be open-ended and take risks as well as to 'increase the likelihood of obtaining scientific credibility and research utility' (Reinharz 1992: 197).

The social mapping exercise was carried out with the intention of establishing rapport and entering into a dialogue with members of the

community and thus coming to grips with the complexities of their social realities. It was not a mere data-gathering exercise. Some population characteristics were also derived and these formed the basis for the selection of respondents.

Seasonality provided information about the kinds of economic activities that the women were engaged in, the seasonal nature of their work participation, and the multiple tasks women perform. It also provided information on the distances women travelled to work and on illnesses related to the work/tasks that they performed. Seasonality was carried out to convince people that they possessed knowledge about their reality and experiences and were capable of analysing it. Finally, a dawn-to-dusk activity mapping exercise was carried out to highlight the importance of everyday activities in women's lives.

The semi-structured interview schedules were designed to collect information on various aspects of women's work, their problems and needs. The other method employed in this study was focus group discussions. The purpose was not only to clarify some of the findings obtained by employing other methods, but also to probe issues not addressed while using the other methods. It was also used to generate a rich body of information presented in the respondents' own words with remarkable spontaneity. The group setting generated abstract ideas and conceptual understanding and interpretations of complex everyday phenomena.

Data collection from the five districts took two months. Pre-selection of the study areas was done by the personnel of local organisations, in collaboration with local leaders, to ensure that the sample groups would be available in the chosen villages. The investigators lived in the field not just for the purposes of data gathering but also in order that they might acquire an understanding of the complexities of the everyday life of people. Insights provided by the investigators have proved to be of great value in the analysis of the data. Data collection by the investigators was followed by interviews of two government officials in each district by the research co-ordinator in order to record the 'official' version of perceived needs of women in the region. The interview also provided information on the government programmes/schemes being implemented, specifically for poor rural women and the fulfilment of the larger developmental goal of equality. Information on the problems faced in co-ordination between various departments of the government in the planning and implementation of various programmes was also analysed to see whether any gap existed between the perceptions of these officials and those of women at the grassroots level.

1.3 Women's economic participation: The concept

Understanding the meaning and purpose of the term participation is important in the context of this study. Different people have defined economic participation differently. There is a clear distinction between the perspectives of the development planner and the people, more specifically, women. From the perspective of the development planner, participation can be regarded as a process of incorporation of people or women into a programme through their involvement in its implementation, the aim being to bring down the cost of implementation. But from the point of view of women and the people, the purpose of participation in the context of economic development is to gain control over resources and decision-making processes.

In this study, however, economic participation has been viewed as a much broader and transformative concept and goal. It is based on the recognition of women's current workload, and has two key aspects: (i) women's control over, and ownership of, productive resources and benefits; and, (ii) women's role as decision-makers and development catalysts. The goals are to identify the means to ensure women's long-term economic security, to raise the socio-economic status of women, and to enable women to fully participate in the economic activities of society in multiple roles. Participation in economic activities in this sense refers to issues related to women's access, control and ownership of productive resources.

1.4 Terms used in the study

In this study, economic activities refer only to those activities that are directly and tangibly remunerative, either in cash or in kind, and not all activities that engage women's labour. This is because remunerative economic activities are most likely to achieve the goals of economic participation, such as raising women's socio-economic status, ensuring long-term economic security and giving them control and ownership of productive resources and the benefits of production.

Work participation refers to participation of women in the workforce, as defined by the Census of India. The Indian census has three broad categories of work participation (Rath 1996: 55), which are: • *Main worker* — a person who has worked for at least 183 days or more preceding the date of enumeration. • *Marginal worker* — a person who has worked for less than 183 days during the reference year. • *Non-worker* — a person who has not worked at any time at all during the year preceding the year of enumeration.

In view of the limitations of such a classification, *work participation* in the context of the present study refers broadly to two categories: workers (who include both main and marginal workers referred to by the Indian census) and non-workers.

As has been mentioned earlier, this study recognises the invisibility of much of women's work in India and Orissa. Throughout the study, the term *worker* is used to refer to rural women who are engaged in economic activities (as defined earlier). *Non-worker* refers to those women who are engaged only in household activities and in the subsistence economy and do not earn in monetary terms. The term *beneficiary* has been used throughout the study to refer to rural women who have availed of some benefit in their name under any development programme executed by the government.

When the study addresses sub-occupations of workers (for example, agricultural labourer or cultivator), and whenever secondary statistical data is used from other sources such as journals, articles, research reports, etc, only data on main workers has been available. This is because census data records sub-occupations only for main workers, not for marginal workers.

The concept *productivity support* refers to government policies and programme approaches and activities that encourage women's economic participation. This includes increasing women's access, control and ownership of the means of production, productive resources and the benefits of production as a result of the government policy or scheme. Currently, key areas of productivity support for rural women include access to credit and markets, vocational training for skill upgradation, and development of savings and thrift groups. These also include occupational health and employment support services such as childcare, and activities that increase women's awareness and knowledge of their life situations, needs and rights, and encourage collective organisation.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study has taken a lot of care in collecting information from different parts of the state. However, some of the limitations of the study are:

1 The study focussed on WEP in five districts of Orissa, mainly in the tribal belt, and did not cover the whole state. **2** The study aimed to interview 300 women from each of the three categories: workers, beneficiaries and non-workers. Due to non-availability of the required

number of respondents from each category as per our definitions, the study could not cover an equal number of women from each category. **3** Inter-district variations in women's economic participation have not been presented.



2 Economic situation of women in rural Orissa

Secondary statistical data was collected from sources such as journals, articles and research reports. These highlight the present occupational scenario of women in Orissa as described by various agencies. They also examine the performance of various government initiatives taken to improve women's lives.

2.1 An overview of the economic situation of women

In India, 28% of all workers are women, of whom 94% work in the unorganised sector. Ninety per cent of women workers (80.4 million) live in rural areas, depending on the unorganised agricultural sector for their livelihood. The unorganised sector is characterised by a high incidence of casual labour, long working hours for extremely low wages or largely unprofitable self-employment, a lack of legislative protection of workers' rights, non-existent labour organisations or social security benefits, a lack of job security, and an often unsafe and unhealthy working environment (Rastogi 1997; Sharma 1997; NCSEW 1988: 8). Women workers suffer extreme forms of discrimination and exploitation due to factors such as the sexual division of labour, low status, sexual and other forms of harassment, isolation and lower bargaining power. This situation is aggravated by the need to combine paid work with domestic work and childcare (Rastogi 1997:168).

Orissa, which lies on the eastern coast of India, has a population of 31.66 million persons and accounts for 3.74% of the country's total population. The state has a substantial scheduled tribe (22.21%) and scheduled caste (16.20%) population (Census 1991). The Orissa workforce is predominantly rural. Over 97% of all workers (and 92% of women workers) live in rural areas. Rural women form a significant part of the workforce, at almost a third of the total workforce (27.3%) and 29% of the rural workforce, up from 23.1% in 1981. This increase follows the national trend of rising work participation rates of rural women (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1995). Ninety per cent (1.3 million) of the 1.5 million rural marginal workers in Orissa are women, and these women marginal workers comprise almost half the rural female workforce (43.3%). An increase or shift in the female workforce may not, however, indicate an increase in women's status,

autonomy or income (Basobi 1997; Baviskar 1996), but only intensifying poverty in a district, as women are forced to go out to find paid work. Women tend to withdraw from agricultural work in times of prosperity, as manual work is a sign of low status (Alka 1997). Women's entry into and withdrawal from the labour market may not be a result of their own decisions. It is important, therefore, to assess the degree of poverty-induced work participation in the districts under study. Women's paid work may be perceived as secondary to their domestic work, and regarded as inferior. Their 'double-workday' may then become a test of endurance rather than an experience of autonomy. Women's perspectives must be included in programme planning so that an 'add-on' approach to women's economic development may be avoided. Women often cannot exercise control over their income. Programmes and policies that support women's economic participation must address not only women's access to work opportunities, but also their access to savings and their control over income earned and saved (Baviskar 1996).

Women workers in general are vulnerable to occupational health hazards, long working hours, sexual division of labour, low pay, and a lack of opportunities for training and upgradation of skills. Lack of access to formal credit through the banking system forces reliance on exploitative moneylenders (NCSEW 1988). As unorganised labour, they usually find themselves beyond the reach of labour laws designed to protect only the organised workforce. However, the different circumstances of each group give them a different set of needs, and agricultural labourers, who constitute more than 60% of the labour force, are perhaps the most vulnerable. Frequent calamities like cyclones, floods and droughts, leading to food insecurity and posing a threat to survival, make the situation even worse, especially for women who have to cope with adverse situations like these while shouldering their double responsibility at work and at home.

Both male and female agricultural labourers are generally landless, working other people's land while enjoying no right to the productive output. Their work is not guaranteed and is often seasonal, rendering them chronically unemployed or under-employed. A scarcity of work can force frequent migrations to wherever work can be found and acceptance of poor working conditions, which makes collective bargaining very difficult (Stephen 1996). While both men and women are paid less than the minimum wage, women are paid even less (Arunachalam 1997; Sundaram 1997). They also bear the added burdens of pregnancy and childcare. Their tasks are defined by a strict sexual division of labour that forces them to carry out all manual

agricultural tasks with the exception of ploughing, which is reserved for men (Alka 1997). A home-based producer may have the right to her produce, but she is more commonly part of an 'invisible assembly line' where she makes only a small part of the whole product (Alam 1997: 4). She is often linked to traders through agents or contractors, who supply raw materials, collect finished products and pay wages at piece-rate. Home-based producers may own assets, but they may also have no access to formal credit, forcing them to rely on exploitative moneylenders.

2.2 Occupational profile of rural women in Orissa

This section presents the occupational profile of rural women in Orissa, based on their work participation rates. When women's occupations are calculated taking into account the total number of rural female main workers only, and are not compared to those of men, a different picture of women's work emerges, which is given below:

2.2.1 Farm-based workers

In every district, the primary occupation of rural women main workers is agricultural labour. In 23 districts, over 50% of women main workers work as agricultural labourers. The highest proportion is found in Kalahandi (70.5%). In only seven districts is this proportion less than 50%, with the lowest being 40.8%. The second occupation engaging the largest number of workers in all districts is cultivation. The range is from 41.3% in Deogarh to just 4.9% in Cuttack. No districts have a majority of women engaged in cultivation, and only one records above two-fifths (Deogarh: 41.3%). Nineteen have between one-to two-fifths, while the rest record less than 20%.

2.2.2 Home-based production

This study uses this term to refer to women whose homes are the sites of their economic activities. When employed in statistical analysis of the study, the term is used interchangeably with the term 'household industry' or 'cottage industry', and refers strictly to workers recorded within the statistical category 'manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs in household industry', as used by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Orissa. For 23 districts, the third highest number of women main workers is engaged in home-based production.

2.2.3 Non-home-based production and construction

The occupations with the third highest number of women main workers in the remaining seven districts are trade and commerce, mining and quarrying, non-home-based production and construction.

2.3 Agricultural scenario in Orissa

Orissa is an agrarian economy and agriculture provides direct and indirect employment to about 64% of the total workforce of the state. A brief overview of the land utilisation patterns, production patterns, yield rates, farm-holding patterns and various infrastructure facilities available for trades in the five districts under study will facilitate a better understanding of the area.

2.3.1 Land utilisation pattern

Among the five districts under study, Phulbani has the largest proportion of its total geographical area (51%) and Keonjhar has the least (30%). The gross cropped area of the five districts varies from 33.97% (Phulbani) to 54.42% (Mayurbhanj), which is less than the state average of 64.56%. The net area sown varies from 24.18% (Phulbani) to 41.44% (Mayurbhanj), and Mayurbhanj records a higher percentage than the state average. It is noticed that Phulbani has the least gross cropped area percentage with the largest forest cover, while Mayurbhanj has the highest percentage of gross cropped area. Koraput has a high percentage (8.4%) of barren and uncultivable land amongst the five districts. All the other four districts have less than 5% of barren land (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, pp 58-59).

2.3.2 Production of cereals and pulses

Keonjhar accounts for 9% of the total amount of cereals (including rice) produced in the state. Mayurbhanj contributed about 5.5% of the total volume of pulse production in the state (Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, pp 46-47). The production of rice and pulses in the state, however, does not meet its food requirements. The area under HYV paddy cultivation in the five districts is a mere 8% of the total area under HYV paddy cultivation in the state.

2.3.3 Production of other items

While the total production of oilseeds in Orissa was 2,72,900 MT,

Keonjhar contributed 13,140 MT (4.8%), Kandhamal 17,950 MT (6.6%), Koraput 29,970 MT (11%), Mayurbhanj 15,540 MT (5.7%) and Sundergarh 6,870 MT (2.5%) (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, p 48). Mesta fibre is grown in Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Koraput. Cotton production in the state is negligible. About 4,000 bales of jute are grown in the five districts taken together. Sunkemp fibre production is also in the range of 13,000 bales (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, p 49). The total vegetable production in the five districts accounts for a mere 11% of the total vegetable production of the state. Kandhamal produces the largest amount of turmeric in the state and accounts for about 60% of the state's total turmeric production (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, p 51).

2.3.4 Pattern of farm holdings

About 50% or more holdings in the districts of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Kandhamal are in the marginal category. Koraput and Sundergarh have about 40% of holdings in the marginal segment. About 30% of holdings in Koraput and Sundergarh districts are in this category. The average size of holdings (calculated as area divided by the number of holdings) in the five districts is in the smallholdings sector (1.00–1.99 hectare). The high concentration of marginal farm holdings in all the five districts could be a cause of low productivity, low yield rates and low income (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, pp 36-37).

2.4 Infrastructure to facilitate work participation

2.4.1 Irrigation

Only 24.29% of the gross cropped area of the state is irrigated. For the districts covered under the study, the percentage of irrigated land to gross cropped area is even lower. The irrigated land in the five districts ranges from 0.78% (Kandhamal) to 4.47% (Mayurbhanj). Irrigated land in these five districts together accounts for a mere 14% of the total irrigated area in the state. In a region where agriculture is the main economic activity, lack of irrigation or less area covered under irrigation is indicative of low productivity. Over-dependence on rainfall is the major cause of low agricultural productivity.

2.4.2 Electrification

Seventy per cent of the villages in Orissa have been electrified as of

1994-95 (Economic Survey 1998-99). Less than 50% of villages in the districts of Kandhamal and Koraput have been electrified. More than 80% of villages in Keonjhar and Sundergarh have been electrified. The five districts under study (except Sundergarh and Keonjhar, which have mining-based industries) have obviously not been given priority in the rural electrification programme.

2.4.3 Communication

2.4.3.1 Railways

Sundergarh has the longest railway track length (264 km) amongst all the districts in Orissa. While Kandhamal has no railways, Keonjhar has 40 km and Koraput and Mayurbhanj have 178 km and 150 km of railway track length respectively (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa, 1996, p 96).

2.4.3.2 Roads

Kandhamal has the greatest length of state highway (340 km) amongst all the districts in the state. Koraput has the maximum length of classified village road (591 km) amongst all the districts. Mayurbhanj has 1,053 km of village road, which is the highest amongst all the districts in the state. The total state highway length in the five districts is 26% of the total state highway length in the state. The classified village road length of all five districts is about 35% of the total classified village road length in the state (Source: Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1996, p 97).

2.5 Female work participation rate

The female work participation rate (FWPR) is the percentage of total number of women workers (main plus marginal) to the total female population. As per the 1991 census, the FWPR of Orissa is 20.79 while the rural and urban FWPRs (RFWPR and UFWPR) are 22.70 and 8.3 respectively. All the districts under study have a FWPR that is more than the Orissa FWPR, the highest being in Kandhamal (39.62%). Of these five districts, the RFWPR is the highest in Koraput (45%), while the UFWPR is the highest in Kandhamal (11.39%). The tribal districts generally record a higher work participation rate of women than the other districts. The percentage of SC and ST population is found to be influencing the FWPR in the state (Panda 1996).

The FWPR has increased since 1981 in the five districts covered under this study as well as in Orissa state as a whole. The rural FWPR has also increased for all the districts since 1981. However, urban FWPR has decreased for Sundergarh district.

2.5.1 Main, marginal and total number of female workers

The five districts covered in this study account for 29.5% of the female main workers in the state, while they account for 31% of the total number of female workers (main plus marginal) in the whole state. The total number of female main workers in each district, as a percentage of the total number of main workers in that district, is 30.6% in Kandhamal, 20.04% in Keonjhar, 27.8% in Koraput, 28.3% in Mayurbhanj and 17% in Sundergarh, while the figure for the state as a whole is 18.18%. The total number of female marginal workers in each district as a percentage of the total marginal workers in that district is 89% in Kandhamal, 91.6% in Keonjhar, 93.2% in Koraput, 90.7% in Mayurbhanj and 90.8% in Sundergarh. (The percentage as far as the state total for marginal workers is concerned is 90%.) Female workers constitute 41.4% of the total number of workers in Kandhamal, 30.9% in Keonjhar, 39.4% in Koraput, 40.9% in Mayurbhanj and 30.4% in Sundergarh. The figure for the state as a whole is 27.28%.

2.5.2 Female non-workers

All the districts covered under the study have a smaller proportion of female non-workers than the state average. The female non-workers in each district as a percentage of the total number of non-workers in that district is 57.6% in Kandhamal, 60.9% in Keonjhar, 60.1% in Koraput, 57.5% in Mayurbhanj and 60.0% in Sundergarh, while the figures for the percentage of female non-workers in the district, in relation to the total number of female non-workers in the state, are 1.33%, 4.04%, 2.51%, 4.75% and 4.63% in the districts of Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj and Sundergarh respectively.

2.5.3 Occupational categories of female main workers

The census lists main workers under the following categories: cultivator, agricultural labourer, livestock, forestry, fishery, hunting and planting, mining and quarrying, manufacturing in household industry, manufacturing in non-household industry, construction, trade

and commerce, transport, storage and other services. The proportion of women cultivators for all the five districts in the study is higher than the all-Orissa proportion (25.83%) and as high as 36.60% in Kandhamal district. The number of women classified as cultivators has gone up since 1981 in all the five districts as well as for Orissa as a whole. Agricultural labourers constitute a high proportion of the workforce, accounting for 54.41% of the female main workers in Keonjhar and 41.5% in Sundergarh. The five districts, though, have a lower proportion of agricultural labourers as compared to the all-Orissa share (55.05%). The percentage of female main workers in occupations such as livestock, forestry, fishing, and plantation is negligible, at less than 1% in all the five districts. Keonjhar and Sundergarh have a high proportion of female main workers in the mining and quarrying sector, at 9.65% and 5.9% respectively. (The share of female main workers in this sector for the whole of Orissa is negligible at 0.97%.) The household industry sector employs 5.2% of female main workers in the state as a whole. Mayurbhanj has 8.3% share in this sector, which is the highest amongst the five districts under study. Three per cent of the female main workers in Kandhamal and Keonjhar district belong to this category.

2.6 Productivity support in Orissa: Overview of policy perspective for development of women

Before attempting to understand the benefits and the shortcomings as perceived by the women for whose benefit these programmes have been launched, it would be appropriate to look briefly at the various state initiatives undertaken in development policy and planning, particularly those aimed at improving women's lives and at ensuring greater gender equality.

2.6.1 Central government policies and programmes

The development of government policies that explicitly support women's economic participation is important for appropriate programme planning and implementation. Since the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56), there has been a measurable shift in the government's approach to women's development from 'welfare' to 'empowerment', as is evident in the Ninth Plan (1997-2000) (WCD Department 1996). The turning point came with the Sixth Plan (1980-85), when women's development received recognition as a distinct development sector and was included as a separate chapter in the plan document for the first time. The Sixth Plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a three-

pronged thrust on health, education and employment. The Seventh Plan (1985-90) introduced women's targets in mixed programmes in an attempt to mainstream women's development. The Eighth Plan (1992-97) initiated the transition to the 'empowerment' approach, with an emphasis on women's equal participation in the development process and on their economic independence. This empowerment approach continues to shape the strategy of the current Ninth Plan.

The Indian government has not yet finalised a national policy for women. Following the Beijing Conference for Women in 1995, a draft policy entitled the 'National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 1996 (Draft)' was prepared (this will hereafter be referred to as the Draft Policy).

The Draft Policy has been criticised on several counts (Haider 1996), which include the following: • Frequent use of terms like 'empowerment' and 'gender equality' without conceptual clarity. • An almost exclusive emphasis on women, rather than viewing women's development as a gender issue. Women (not men and women working together) are seen as the primary agents of change. • Being reformist in character and viewing reforms as ends in themselves, not as part of a broader transformation of social-economic-political structures that oppress women. • Existing in an ideological vacuum with no clear vision of the roles the central government expects women to play in social, economic, cultural and political development.

2.6.2 Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002)

In the Ninth Five-Year Plan, the central government declared empowerment of women as a major objective, broadening the focus from 'economic independence' in the Eighth Plan. The objectives of particular relevance to this study are (Nahbi 1997: 51): • To have an integrated approach to women's development. • Earmarking funds as women's component and adopting a women's quota system. • Expeditiously adopting a National Policy for Empowering Women. • Enhancing women's capacity to earn and have access to and control over their own family and community assets. • Strengthening/expanding the Rastriya Mahila Kosh, with linkages to market and credit facilities. • Increasing reliance on science and technology. • Protecting the interests of unorganised and home workers. • Providing occupational health and safety measures. • Strengthening women's ITIs and Regional Vocational Training Centres. • Land reform programmes as an anti-poverty strategy to include prevention of alienation of tribal land, preference to women in the distribution of ceiling land, and

protection of their land rights. • Giving IRDP a group/cluster approach to ensure higher investment levels and viability of projects. IRDP to include skill development through training, technology upgradation, forward and backward linkages, infrastructure availability and market link-ups. • Revamping TRYSEM to upgrade skills and enhance production under a group/cluster approach. • Developing mechanisms to replicate successful DWCRA groups, form Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and attempt the integration of DWCRA with IRDP and TRYSEM.

Currently, there exists a large gap between the goal of women's development as envisaged in the Constitution of India, various legislations, policies, plans and programmes, and the reality of women's situation in India. This gap has been highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 and analysed in the Shramshakti Report (NCSEW 1988), in which a national commission recommended that the government address the concerns of women working in the informal sector. Moreover, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) recommended several actions in 12 'critical areas of concern' including economy, poverty, education and training (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1997: 471-473).

2.6.3 State government programmes and policies

The state government's strategies to achieve policy goals include:

- Equal participation of women as recipients and participants in all programmes and activities of every central/state ministry and department to ensure mainstreaming of women.
- Review of development programmes and targets using sex-desegregated data, and ensuring funding for programmes for women.
- Widespread dissemination of information on rights and entitlements through legal literacy and rights information programmes.
- Strict enforcement of labour laws for organised and unorganised workers. Review of all labour legislations from a 'gender-just' viewpoint.

2.7 Overview of programmes and schemes in Orissa

Before looking at the details of the performance of the government schemes as perceived by the beneficiaries, it would be better to first briefly consider the various government initiatives in development and planning, aimed at improving the lives of women. A wide range of government programmes have targeted women. These have been listed below on the basis of their having the greatest potential to increase the economic participation of rural women in Orissa.

2.7.1 Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

IRDP is a centrally-sponsored anti-poverty programme established in 1979, and is executed by the Department of Panchayati Raj. Its primary objective is to raise poor rural families above the poverty line, through the provision of bank credit and government subsidies. IRDP has a women beneficiary target of 40% and a Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) combined target of 50%. The subsidy pattern under IRDP is as follows: 25% of the scheme's cost for small farmers, 33.5% for marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans, and 50% for SC/ST beneficiaries and handicapped persons. While women can benefit from these subsidies as members of a subsidised group, such as rural artisans, there is no specific subsidy for women.

2.7.1.1 Performance in Orissa

The data available for this study relates to the period from 1990 to 1997. The target relating to women has been achieved only in three years out of the seven under study, from 1991 to 1994. The number of women beneficiaries in 1996-97 was just 30,220, compared to a record 64,836 in 1993-94, while the percentage of women beneficiaries dropped from 40.5% to 33.1%. IRDP expenditure is shifting from an equal division between subsidy and credit towards a greater emphasis on credit extension.

2.7.2 Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY)

JRY is a centrally-sponsored scheme executed by the Department of Panchayati Raj. Its objective is to provide short-term wage employment to employed and underemployed rural people below the poverty line through small construction works. It has a 30% target of women beneficiaries. The minimum daily wage is set at Rs 30.

2.7.2.1 Performance in Orissa

JRY was introduced in Orissa in 1989, and the data available to the study relates to the period from 1990 to 1997. The scheme achieved its target relating to women in 1993. However, since then, 32% of the target has been achieved, and it has never risen above 32.7% (1996-97). The absolute number of person-days created each year has dropped sharply since 1995 — in 1995-96, women were allocated 187.8 lakh person-days, which came down to just 93.3 lakh in 1997-98. The annual budget has also decreased sharply, with a 42% decrease from

1995-96, its peak year. Average investment per person-day has risen slightly, from Rs 37.6 in 1990 to Rs 45.9 in 1996-97.

2.7.3 Training for Youth and Self-Employment Programme (TRYSEM)

TRYSEM was set up by the central government in 1979 as a supporting component of IRDP. Its target group is unemployed youth in the 18-35 age-group living below the poverty line, of which 40% should be women and 50% should be SC/ST. Its primary objective is to equip beneficiaries with technical and entrepreneurial skills, which would enable them to establish self-employment ventures in agriculture and allied activities, business and service sectors. The programme provides a training stipend of Rs 200-500 to each participant, and a free tool-kit (value: Rs 800) to rural artisans upon completion of the training course.

2.7.3.1 Performance in Orissa

Data was available for the period 1990-1997. TRYSEM is operational in all districts of Orissa. Data on training activities shows that TRYSEM has consistently met its target relating to women since 1990, with small annual increases, and has reached 47.6% by 1997. The absolute number of women trained peaked in 1991-92 at 10,213, after which it declined, but increased from 6,869 in 1993-94 to 8,832 in 1996-97. However, while the number of trainees is increasing, the number of women rehabilitated has been decreasing since 1991-92, from 9,608 in that year to just 5,376 in 1996-97. Consequently, while the proportion of women rehabilitated also remained above 40% since 1990 (the only exception was 1994-95, when only 20.1% of women were rehabilitated), it has been steadily decreasing from 45.8% in 1992 to 40.3% in 1996-97.

2.7.3.2 Provision of TRYSEM tool-kits

This component of TRYSEM has been in operation in Orissa since 1992. Between 1994 and 1997, the annual expenditure on the tool-kit scheme increased from Rs 27.4 lakh to Rs 281.7 lakh. The average investment per tool-kit provided has also risen from Rs 1,510 in 1994-95, to Rs 1,949 in 1996-97. The number has increased from 1,381 tool-kits in 1993-94 to 14,453 in 1996-97, a figure that fell below the state target of 25,962. It is unclear what proportion of these have gone to women.

2.7.4 Assistance to women's co-operatives

This central scheme operates in Orissa under the Department of Co-operation. Its primary objective is to improve women's socio-economic status by providing them with assured work through women-only co-operative societies. The scheme aims at women's economic development through training, production, and self-employment activities and small-scale agro-industrial units, which may be either home-based or centralised.

2.7.4.1 Performance in Orissa

The central government offers 100% funding to newly-formed or existing co-operatives (share capital Rs 40,000, working capital Rs 40,000 and managerial subsidy Rs 20,000). The annual budget for 1997-98 in Orissa was Rs 140 lakh. No further data is available.

2.7.5 Crèches for children of working and ailing mothers

The central programme of crèches for children of working and ailing mothers offers childcare and related services (healthcare, supplementary nutrition, sleeping facilities, immunisation and recreation) to children in the 0-5 age-group of working and ailing mothers. It is implemented by the CSWB through two national-level voluntary organisations — the Indian Council for Child Welfare and Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh. It is also implemented by local voluntary social welfare organisations. In 1995, the central WCD Department reported that the scheme had not expanded since 1988 due to lack of funds.

2.7.5.1 Performance in Orissa

Data on Orissa is limited. In 1996-97, 316 crèches (in 338 institutions) were funded to the tune of Rs 55.8 lakh (Rs 72.4 lakh was sanctioned), benefiting 7,900 mothers and children (CSWB 1997).

2.7.6 Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

DWCRA is a centrally-sponsored group scheme for women below the poverty line aged 18-35 years. The main objective of the scheme is to raise women above the poverty line by providing them with opportunities for self-employment. Sub-objectives relate to the provision of

income-generation activities, support to women's groups, and to strengthening social services.

2.7.6.1 Performance in Orissa

DWCRA operates in all districts of Orissa, and data on the scheme is available for the period from 1990 to 1998. In all, 7,397 groups, each group comprising 13-16 women, have been formed throughout Orissa during 1990-98, representing 102,863 women. The rate of group formation currently stands at approximately 2,000 per annum, indicating a three-fold increase since 1994-95. In 1995-96, half of the districts exceeded their group formation target. They were led by Mayurbhanj (396% increase) and Cuttack (213% increase). A crucial indicator of DWCRA's success in meeting its income-generation objectives, however, is not group formation per se, but the proportion of groups that take up Income-Generation Activities (IGAs). The data available indicates a high rate — 77% of groups in 1996-97 and 85% in 1997-98.

In terms of expenditure, the total investment per beneficiary decreased markedly from Rs 1,957 per woman in 1990-91, to Rs 1,208 per woman in 1991-92. However, it has been steadily increasing since then and currently stands at Rs 1,723 in 1997-98.

2.7.7 Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)

IMY is a centrally-sponsored scheme launched in 1995, executed by the WCD Department and implemented through NGOs. The target group is adult women aged 18 years and above, in both urban and rural areas. IMY aims to co-ordinate and integrate components of all sectoral programmes and facilitate their convergence in order to empower women (GOI 1995:15). IMY has three basic activity components:

- 1** Convergence of inter-sectoral services at the village level.
- 2** Income-generation activities and employment opportunities. These include the creation of employment opportunities through group dynamics and participation in a broad range of economic activities suited to local requirements. And the use of thrift and credit services to expand IGAs.
- 3** Sustained process of awareness-generation/education.

Mechanism of operation: The programmes are co-ordinated, funds are streamlined, and a match between women's needs and scheme activities is ensured through the sub-plan at the district level. This is

the aggregation of area plans at the block level, which, in turn, are based on micro plans at the village/anganwadi level. Women are organised at the anganwadi level into Indira Mahila Kendras (IMK), groups of 20-25 members, who evolve need-based micro plans. IMK objectives that relate to rural women producers are:

- To organise rural women's groups to promote thrift and credit activities, and create a common platform for collective action.
- To plan and execute awareness-generation programmes to enable women to directly access resources for IGAs for self-reliance.
- To disseminate information on, among other things, legal rights and constitutional safeguards.
- To launch training programmes to develop scientific temper, trade skills and leadership qualities amongst women.
- To plan and implement Women's Entrepreneurship Development Programmes to train potential entrepreneurs and mobilise credit/soft loans for establishing micro enterprises suited to local conditions.
- To promote participation in women-specific grassroots programmes like DWCR, Mahila Mandals and RMK (Rashtriya Mahila Kosh).
- To identify, and participate directly in, income-generation activities so that members' economic status is improved through the distribution of profits.

2.7.7.1 Performance in Orissa

The only data available relates to the 1997-1998 period. IMY is currently operating in seven blocks of Orissa (Belapada, Boden, Gudari, Naraganpatra, Nawarangpur, Rampur and Saintala) spread over six districts (Bolangir, Kalahandi, Koraput, Nawarengpur, Nuapada and Rayagada). According to the data available, 874 groups were formed.

2.7.8 Mahila Mandal Programme

One of the activities of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board (SSWAB) is to organise rural women into Mahila Samitis or Mahila Mandals. The mandals are expected to promote women's welfare by working in the fields of nutrition, balwadis, adult education, dowry prohibition and economic development. Economic activities for women are promoted in traditional areas such as tailoring, knitting and weaving. Women are also encouraged in less traditional areas such as sericulture and bee-keeping.

2.7.8.1 Performance in Orissa

In Orissa, during 1996-1997, a sum of Rs 61 lakh was released under the Mahila Mandal Programme. With this, 80 centres under 12 institutions reaching 8,200 women were funded.

2.7.9 Mahila Samiti Yojana (MSY)

MSY was a centrally-sponsored scheme launched in 1993, which was discontinued in 1997. The WCD Department implemented the scheme through rural post offices under the Department of Posts. As a women-only scheme, its target group was adult rural women below the poverty line. The primary objective of the scheme was to promote self-reliance and a measure of economic independence amongst rural women by encouraging thrift. The scheme encouraged women to open savings accounts at their local post office. The minimum deposit required was Rs 4, upto an annual maximum of Rs 300. For a lock-in period of one year, the government provided a 25% subsidy.

2.7.9.1 Performance in Orissa

The data on Orissa relates to the period 1993-1997. During this period, 9.3 lakh savings accounts were opened, in which Rs 11.9 crore was deposited, the average account deposit being Rs 127. Of these, 532,915 (56.8%) accounts were opened in tribal areas, with a deposit of Rs 4.7 crore. There was a substantial increase in the number of new accounts opened annually between 1993 to 1995, from 0.2 lakh to 2.9 lakh. The average deposit per account increased from Rs 106 in 1993 to Rs 129 in 1994, but it came down to Rs 118 in 1995. The scheme was discontinued by the central government in April 1997 following an evaluation carried out by the Planning Commission.

2.7.10 Mahila Vikas Samabaya Nigam (MVSN)

MVSN is a state nodal agency under the administrative control of the WCD Department. It was established in 1991 under a central scheme to set up Women's Development Corporations in all states, formulated in 1986-87. The major objective of the corporations is to play the role of a catalyst and create sustained income-generation activities and better avenues of employment for women.

MVSN works at both the government and grassroots levels, reaching women individually and as members of its 116 affiliated societies. MVSN

is funded by NORAD, GOI and RMK and is the nodal agency for publicising IMY. It has three broad categories of activity: economic, social and political. The economic activities are: • Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP). • Performance Improvement Programme (PIP). • Income-Generation Training (IGT).

MVSN is not directly involved in establishing production units following training. But it does assist in marketing products through state- and local-level exhibitions. However, MVSN reports that marketing is the main difficulty for them and individual women. In fact, only four exhibitions have been held since 1992.

There are various forms of assistance that women can tap from this scheme. These include Working Capital and Margin Money Assistance (WCMMA), Small-Scale Industry Support to women-owned small-scale industries, training in sales management and promotion, project planning, marketing and co-operative law, accounts management and related issues. The achievements under these are so low as to be negligible. MVSN collaborated with NGOs to prepare the NGO Draft State Women Policy in 1996.

2.7.11 National Crèche Fund (NCF)

The National Crèche Fund assists crèches and anganwadi-cum-crèche centres run by voluntary organisations and Mahila Mandals for children in the 0-5 age-group from families with a monthly income below Rs 1,800. The crèches are set up in schools or near schools in both rural and urban areas dominated by SC/STs. Services provided include day-care, supplementary nutrition, etc.

2.7.11.1 Performance in Orissa

In 1994-95, 40 crèches and nine anganwadi-cum-crèche centres were sanctioned in Orissa. With a maximum of 25 children at each NCF crèche, only 1,000 children and their mothers could have been benefited in 1994-95. Most, if not all, crèches and anganwadi-cum-crèche centres are located in urban areas, and the benefit to rural women is negligible.

2.7.12 Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

RMK is a centrally-sponsored scheme, which was established in 1993. It is implemented by the WCD Department through NGOs working in the field of women's economic development. The objective is to make

credit a widely known and used facility for enhancing the daily income of poor women, particularly those belonging to the informal sector. It has two sub-objectives:

1 To make credit available to the poorest women (who form SHGs) through NGOs, teach women about credit management and repayment schedules, and liaise with the state government to provide training in activities that SHGs want to take up. **2** To convince the formal lending machinery of the remarkable performance of poor women as borrowers.

RMK channels loans to NGOs with three or more years of experience in savings and credit mobilisation. These NGOs in turn give out loans to women. There are two types of loans advanced to NGOs. In the first category there is provision for loans of Rs 50,000 (8% interest rate) to start lending and recovery programmes, and in the second are interest-free loans for the formation and stabilisation of SHGs comprising 15-20 women.

NGOs then provide two types of loans to women: for dairy farming and agriculture, and for petty shopkeeping. Under the first category they provide short-term loans, up to a maximum of Rs 2,500, to be repaid within 15 months. Under the second, they provide medium-term loans up to a maximum of Rs 5,000 which are to be repaid within two-five years.

2.7.12.1 Performance in Orissa

The data available relates to the period from 1993 to June 1995. During this period, 780 women received loans from two NGOs. The total amount sanctioned was Rs 10.8 lakh.

2.7.13 Socio-Economic Programme (SEP)

SEP is a central programme established in 1958 and funded by the CSWB. In Orissa, it is implemented by the State Social Welfare Advisory Board through NGOs. The objective of the programme is to raise needy women above the poverty line through the provision of 'work and wage' opportunities. The target group consists of needy women, for example widows and destitute, disabled women, particularly from economically backward and underdeveloped areas.

The programme has three activity areas: **1** Financial assistance to voluntary organisations and individual women for IGAs at or near

women's homes. **2** Support for establishing production units: (i) Production: industrial, handloom, handicraft (ii) Agro-based: dairy, piggery, sheep and goat rearing, poultry (iii) Self-employment. **3** Trade shows.

2.7.13.1 Performance in Orissa

The data available relates to production units, from 1990-1995. During this period, very few NGOs were granted permission to establish production units: only five in 1990-91, eight in 1991-92, and just three in 1994-95. Five previously sanctioned units are still running. No new units have been sanctioned since 1995. One reason for this may be that all production units were running at a loss, probably as a result of the low quality of the products. There is a lack of marketing linkages.

2.7.14 Support to Training and Employment Programme for women (STEP)

The STEP-programme is a centrally-funded scheme implemented through the WCD Department. STEP's primary objective is to upgrade the skills and provide employment to women beneficiaries in traditional informal sectors (including agriculture, small animal husbandry, dairy farming, fisheries, handloom, handicrafts, khadi and village industries and sericulture), through action-oriented projects that involve women in large numbers. Its target group includes marginalised rural women without assets, including wage labourers, unpaid daily workers, tribal women and female-headed households. The target group criteria appears applicable to both farm and home-based producers, but it is unclear whether women cultivators working on their husband's/family's land, to which they have no title (cultivators without assets), would be considered eligible. The emphasis on skill upgradation and employment generation in traditional sectors suggests that STEP is less innovative than other schemes as far as women's income generation is concerned.

2.7.14.1 Performance in Orissa

The data available for this study relates to the period 1994-1996. STEP has undertaken a small number of projects, but the number of its beneficiaries is large. In 1995-96, for example, three STEP projects reached 34,000 women, while DWCRA involved 23,989 women and TRYSEM trained only 7,499 women.

2.7.15 Vocational training

Vocational training courses are executed by the SSWAB for various employment-generating vocations on a yearly basis. The target group consists of needy women aged 15 years and above. The objective is to train women in skills relevant to identifiable remunerative work opportunities. Courses are run in both urban and rural areas through training institutions and NGOs. Areas of training include occupations that are traditionally female-dominated, such as typing and stenography, tailoring, and also those that are more male-dominated such as TV and radio-repairing.

2.7.15.1 Performance in Orissa

During 1992-97, 63 institutions were funded to run training courses, of which 44 were in rural areas. The total number of institutions funded has decreased each year since 1992, and none were located in rural areas in 1995-96. During the same period, both the number of beneficiaries and amount sanctioned declined: from 625 to 250 beneficiaries, and Rs 15.8 lakh in 1992 to Rs 8.9 lakh in 1996-97.

2.8 Status of main government programmes in the districts under study

The effectiveness of any programme can be assessed using parameters such as target achievement, smooth running of programmes, constant and long-term monitoring of programmes and tangible benefits accrued out of programmes. An attempt has been made here to ascertain the target achievement status of the main programmes operating in five districts of Orissa covered under the present study.

These five districts account for 24.85% of the total women IRDP beneficiaries of the state. (These five districts account for 20.12% of the state population, and about the same percentage of the female population of the state.) The total expenditure amounts to Rs 1,624.41 lakh (22.05%) in the five districts. Of the five districts, Keonjhar has the maximum percentage of women beneficiaries to the total number of IRDP beneficiaries in that district. While the absolute number of women beneficiaries in the state has increased, the proportion of women to the total number of beneficiaries has declined.

Of the five districts, Mayurbhanj has the highest percentage of women JRY beneficiaries. Except Sundergarh, all the other districts record a

percentage of women beneficiaries which is higher than the Orissa average.

The five districts account for 27.43% of the total number of DWCRA beneficiaries. The total number of beneficiaries is 1,02,863, which is about 3.2% of the female population of the state.

In the case of TRYSEM, the percentage of women rehabilitated to the total number of rehabilitated young people is the highest in the Koraput district, amongst the five districts. These five districts account for 34.6% of women TRYSEM beneficiaries. The total expenditure in the five districts (Rs 90.2 lakh) is 23.6% of the total expenditure in the whole of the state.

2.9 Need for a coherent policy on economic participation of women

A shift of focus from development to empowerment of women was discernible in the Eighth Plan. Some empowerment measures which were acted upon were: **1** Thirty per cent representation for women in all elected local self-government bodies such as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). **2** Establishment of National Commission of Women (NCW) and State Commission of Women (SCW). **3** Launching of Mahila Samruddhi Yojana for sensitising women at the grassroots level in rural areas.

At the moment, the government does not have a coherent policy approach to women's socio-economic development. Certain central policy goals under the 'empowerment approach' of the Ninth Plan indicate a growing awareness of the need to increase the economic participation of the poorest women. However, the majority of policy goals reflect aspects of the welfare and development-oriented approach and are ad hoc in nature. A Ninth Plan policy goal indicates the government's interest in developing an integrated approach to development, which is central to the rights and entitlement approach. However, a lack of commitment to implementation and, crucially, a lack of focus on gender issues means that this government policy cannot yet be viewed as one which is oriented towards upholding women's rights and entitlement to economic participation.

At the programme level, the approach of most programmes is 'welfare' and 'development-oriented'. All programmes take a welfare approach to some degree as they view women as recipients of benefits of development. The majority also adopt a 'development-oriented approach' to women's role as participants in their own

development and to women's needs, defined as increased access to productive resources and benefits, largely through skill development and membership in group schemes and self-help groups.

Most 'development-oriented' programmes aim at supporting the production of goods for the market. Their focus is on increasing women's work participation and income through home-based income-generation activities. The occupational activities of the majority of rural women in Orissa (such as agricultural labour and subsistence cultivation) are not well supported. The emphasis on home-based IGAs without integrated support for current occupations or programmes to reduce women's workloads indicates a government view of IGAs as an 'add-on-activity', which adds to women's normal workloads. An important area of research would be the cost to women, as well as the benefits, of participation in these activities, such as the effect on women's control over productive resources such as time and labour power.

A major deficiency of both the welfare and development-oriented approaches concerns the lack of focus on women's role as decision-makers and development catalysts. The policy-level commitment to expanding this role is not reflected at the programme level. Only one programme — IMY — has an explicit mechanism to enlarge women's capacity for making decisions about their development needs and the overall development process. Increased government commitment would help ensure a more appropriate match between women's needs and programme benefits, and enable women to play a role as catalysts in the development process. It would also help women to claim their rights as full economic participants performing multiple roles and not just as producers. This would give them more control and ownership of productive resources and benefits.

Focusing on a situational analysis of the major programmes and policies and their target achievements, the next chapter will give an insight into the issue of women's economic participation.



3 More work, less control: Empirical findings of the study

To understand women's economic participation in the true sense of the term, a combination of methods was used in this study. Social mapping of each village was carried out with the help of the villagers themselves for rapport building and to identify population characteristics. This formed the basis for the selection of respondents. Seasonality was carried out to collect information on cropping patterns, distance of workplaces, work performed by women and the diseases women suffered from as a result of their work.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 865 respondents to gather information on all aspects of economic participation and non-participation. The interviewers focused on the hindrances faced by women, their needs as perceived by them and the initiatives that would solve their problems. Details of their marital status, age, caste, educational qualifications, family income sources, occupations and benefits received were analysed. This helped to understand their socio-economic status, their access to control over resources and the help they needed in various areas of their life. Focus group discussions supplemented the findings arrived at with the help of other methods. These discussions revealed information relating to wage discrimination, social constraints, work difficulties, access and control over resources of production, and income and role in decision-making, which could not be adequately covered while interviewing individual respondents. The discussions involved 15-20 women respondents representing three categories of women: workers, non-workers and beneficiaries.

In order to study various aspects of economic participation of women, and their perceptions, orientation, opinions and needs, it is necessary to know the socio-economic status of the sample respondents. In the present study, 865 respondents divided into three categories — workers, beneficiaries and non-workers — were interviewed. Workers included women who were involved in some income-generating activity and received wages in cash or kind (360 women). This category did not include beneficiaries of government schemes. Women who had benefited under some government scheme were considered beneficiaries (256 women). Women who were engaged only in household activities and were not earning for themselves or the family were

classified as non-workers (249 women). The aim was to cover 300 respondents in each category, but due to the unavailability of beneficiaries and non-workers in the selected villages, there were fewer respondents in these two categories in comparison to workers.

The concept of non-workers has been a misleading one in this context, as more than 50% of the sample included tribal women who generally go out of their houses to work. Also, most of the women belonging to the non-workers category were not engaged in any wage occupation either because they had small children or due to some other family responsibility or on account of health problems. This phase was a temporary one in their lives, and they would probably go back to work after a few months or years.

3.1 Demographic characteristics

As already discussed, the sample consisted of 865 respondents from five districts of Orissa. The distribution of the sample in five districts has been given in Table 3.1. These five districts are part of the tribal belt of Orissa, and hence a majority of the respondents were tribal women living below the poverty line. Due to non-availability of the desired number of respondents in the three categories, there has been a variation in the number of respondents in each of the districts as well. The maximum number of respondents was from Sundergarh district and the minimum from Mayurbhanj district, as shown in the Table.

Table 3.1: District-wise distribution of workers, beneficiaries and non-workers

Name of the district	Workers	Beneficiaries	Non-workers	Total
Koraput	82	52	48	182
Mayurbhanj	44	51	44	139
Phulbani	66	46	43	155
Keonjhar	75	51	56	182
Sundergarh	93	56	58	207
Total	100.0 (360)	100.0 (256)	100.0 (249)	100.0 (865)

Source: CYSD Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

The family structure or size of family is also one of the factors determining the socio-economic condition of the family. The respondents have been divided into four categories on the basis of their family size: small family (1-4 members), medium-sized family (5-8 members), large-medium-sized family (9-12 members) and large-sized family (13 and more members). Most of the respondents (51.56%) had medium-sized families, while 40.35% had small families. 7.51% had large-medium-

sized families, while only 0.58% had large families.

Most of the respondents were married (91.33%). Unmarried respondents constituted 4.51% of the sample, while 4.16% were widows. Fewer unmarried women and widows were found to be in the workforce. As revealed in the interview with a BDO, unmarried women were avoided in the selection of beneficiaries because of the chances of them getting married and moving out of the village. This often made loan repayment a lengthy process involving lots of enquiries. Married women were preferred as their mobility was restricted.

46.66% of respondents belong to the age-group 25-35 years, followed by 29.83% in the age-group 15-25 years. Samples belonging to the age-group 55 years and above constitute only 0.23%. Most of the workers (45.56%) and beneficiaries (41.80%) come from the age-group 25-35 years, while most of the non-workers belong to the age-group 15-25 years (45.38%). This difference in the work participation rate of women based on age-groups may have stemmed from various factors. The general trend in rural areas is that girls aged between 15 and 24 are married off as soon as possible. Once married they get occupied with reproductive duties, which reduces the extent of their work participation compared to other age-groups. Low participation of women belonging to the 45 years and above age-group occurs because at this age women lack the vigour needed to undertake physical strain, and demand in the market for their labour power reduces. The number of beneficiaries in this age-group was larger compared to that of workers, which indicates the availability of aid from some old-age benefit schemes.

Caste plays a crucial role in determining women's access to work opportunities and government support. Table 3.2 shows that 51.10% of our sample consists of Scheduled Tribes (STs) followed by Other Backward Castes (OBCs) (26.13%) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) (14.22%). Only 5.55% of women belonged to the general category. Moreover, among all categories of samples, STs constitute the maximum percentage: 53.33% among workers, 55.47% among beneficiaries, and 43.37% among non-workers.

The districts under study are primarily dominated by scheduled tribes where the government has special programmes for women. However, the data also confirms the social implication of caste. It confirms the observation that under the caste system, women's mobility is restricted, which has implications for their participation in the workforce.

Out of 360 workers, 76.11% were illiterate and only 0.56% had

received education up to the high school level. Out of the 256 beneficiaries, 58.98% were illiterate. The number having received high school education in this category was also very small (1.17%). Out of 249 non-workers, 55.42% were illiterate, followed by those who had received education up to Class 4-6 (22.89%). On the whole, of 865 respondents, 65.09% were illiterate. There were more illiterates among workers than among beneficiaries and non-workers. Non-workers seemed to be more educated than the other two categories. This study has not, however, deeply explored the relationship between education and women's economic participation.

Table 3.2: *Distribution of the sample on the basis of caste and tribe*

Caste/Tribe	Category of samples			
	Workers	Beneficiaries	Non-workers	Total
General	3.89	4.69	8.84	5.55
Scheduled Caste	15.83	15.63	10.44	14.22
Scheduled Tribe	53.33	55.47	43.37	51.10
Other Backward Caste	25.28	23.05	30.52	26.13
Minority	1.67	1.17	6.83	3.01
Total	100.0 (360)	100.0 (256)	100.0 (249)	100.0 (865)

Source: Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

An analysis of the respondents' educational attainments with reference to age shows that the category of young respondents, ie those belonging to the 15-25 age-group, are more educated but the number is very small. This indicates that, though more educational facilities made available to rural women are resulting in an increase in the number receiving high school education, the process is a very slow one.

3.2.1 Occupational characteristics

This section deals with women's participation in different economic activities. Economic activities belong broadly to two sectors: formal and informal. Occupational data reveals a concentration of women in the informal sector. Table 3.3 (see Statistical Appendix) presents a comparison between workers and beneficiaries on the basis of their main and secondary occupations. As these women participate in multiple occupations depending on seasonal availability of work and raw material, the data shows a larger number of responses in each category (main and secondary occupation). The multiple/seasonal nature of occupations points to a weak economic base. The respondents were asked to indicate the main occupation they were

engaged in. This, however, did not mean occupations that gave them a greater economic return, but referred to occupations which consumed most of their time. Similarly, secondary occupations referred to occupations that demanded less time.

The data reveals a slight difference between the main and secondary occupations of the respondents. The table shows that the main occupations in which the women in the study area were engaged were mostly wage labour (30.29%) and agriculture (29.46%), followed by cottage industry (21.80%) and petty business (10.75%). The presence of a larger number of women in the labour market, which is considered secondary work, characterises their work participation in terms of low status, less wages, irregularity of employment, less use of skill and training. Even those engaged in agriculture are perceived as offering only a helping hand. As far as these two occupations are concerned, workers outnumber beneficiaries. As compared to workers, beneficiaries were engaged more in cottage industries and petty businesses. Other occupations account for only a small proportion of the main and secondary occupation categories.

The data on secondary occupation clearly shows that most of the women were engaged in petty business (40.55%). This means that a majority were self-employed and were mainly engaged in the collection of forest produce (25.12%) and selling it in the market. This significant proportion of forest produce collection and sale also indicates their dependence on forests — a productive resource over which they do not have any control.

Their participation in cottage industry (17.29%) also indicates the self-employed nature of their occupation. Some of them did get regular employee status in this sector, but most were engaged in making hand-crafts on their own and selling them in the market. The source of raw material for these products was mainly the forests. Leaf-plates and bamboo craft were the main products belonging to this category.

The table also shows that 8.47% of workers and 17.01% of beneficiaries had no secondary occupations. Some of the beneficiaries were housewives (1.33%) who were not involved in any economic activity. This reveals that they were mere rubber stamps, and the benefits they had received were utilised and controlled by others. On the whole, 11.07% did not take up any secondary occupation. They depended only on their main occupation like wage labour, or on being helping hands in family occupations or self-employment for their livelihood. The participation on the part of both workers and beneficiaries in other occupations was negligible.

These women, whether involved in any occupation or not, possessed some skill or the other, which had not been learnt at any formal school. Table 3.4 (see Statistical Appendix) presents a picture of the skills possessed by workers and beneficiaries. The table clearly shows that, though there were many workers (27.13%) and beneficiaries (20.80%) who did not possess any skill, the main skills possessed by both beneficiaries and workers were the same, with some variations in the percentages. The main skills of the workers and beneficiaries included leaf-plate making (36.09% and 26.91%), bamboo craft (9.66% and 14.07%), mat making (8.97% and 11.31%) and broom making (6.67% and 7.03%). This also shows that, except for leaf-plate making, beneficiaries possessed more skills than the workers. This is true of all other skills. This also indicates a major involvement in small-scale industry. 75.59% of the women possessed skills, which probably went unutilised or under-utilised. It should be mentioned that 24.41% of the women did not possess any skills.

Women do not have any access and control over their income. They do not have any savings of their own because their earnings are spent on daily purchases, which makes their income secondary and invisible. Table 3.5 (see Statistical Appendix) shows a comparison between the help provided by workers and beneficiaries to their families from their income/occupation. Both these categories show that a major part of their income is spent on the purchase of groceries and vegetables (41.94%) followed by clothes (21.70%), medicines (10.85%) and on children's education (6.44%). There are various other areas where their income caters to the needs of their family. 3.04% of workers and 4.78% of beneficiaries believe that their income provides no assistance to the family. It may, however, be noted that the nature of expenditure is such that their income gets merged with the family income and goes unnoticed. These minor purchases add to the invisibility of their income even if it is the main source of survival. This is probably one of the reasons why these women do not have any savings in their own names. When everything they earn is spent on day-to-day grocery purchases, how can they save anything for themselves?

3.2.2 Means of livelihood

An important variable, which has a bearing on the economic status of a family, is the source of its income. Income in this context, however, does not mean just the economic returns from main occupations. Rather, it refers to all the sources through which members of the family get some returns from their economic activities. It does not

distinguish between production for consumption and for sale.

Table 3.6 gives the number of male and female members involved in different occupations. The main source of livelihood for male adults is agriculture (31.48%) followed by wage labour (25.37%), forest produce collection and sale (15.34%), domestic animals (8.94%), petty business (8.29%) and cottage industries (5.66%). For female adults these were wage labour (23.31%), agriculture (22.82%), cottage industries (16.97%), forest produce collection and sale (16.65%), petty business (11.31%) and rearing of domestic animals (7.62%). The level of women's participation in cottage industries, collection and sale of forest produce and in petty business was much higher than that of men. Men concentrated more on means of livelihood such as agriculture, domestic animals and service. Male and female children were mostly involved in forest produce collection/sale followed by agriculture, cottage industries and wage labour. Female children participated more in agriculture and cottage industry, while male children participated more in wage labour, though the difference was negligible.

Table 3.6: *Distribution of family members on the basis of livelihood sources*

Means of livelihood	Male Adult	Female Adult	Male Child	Female Child	Row Total
Agriculture	31.48	22.82	16.00	28.00	26.64
Cottage industries	5.66	16.97	16.00	24.00	12.00
Forest produce collection/sale	15.34	16.65	36.00	32.00	16.26
Domestic animals	8.94	7.62	4.00	4.00	8.16
Petty business	8.29	11.31	4.00	0.00	9.87
Daily wage	25.37	23.31	16.00	12.00	24.12
Service	2.58	1.04	4.00	0.00	1.73
Others	2.33	0.28	4.00	0.00	1.21
Total	100.0 (2,014)	100.0 (2,493)	100.0 (25)	100.0 (25)	100.0 (4,557)

Source: Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

The most noticeable feature here is that women were engaged in a larger number of occupations than their male counterparts. Except in agriculture and service, their participation has been found to be greater in all other occupations. Even in the sphere of wage labour, their participation was found to be almost equal that of men, though the general belief is that men are engaged more in wage labour. Is this high demand for female labour in the labour market because of the availability of female labour at lower rates for equal work?

We will now deal with different occupations separately to identify the

specific needs in each of them. This will also show the success or failure of the government's attempts to help, through development schemes. The respondents in this section were not only main workers but also marginal workers. For them, the occupation may be a secondary source of income generation as well, as already stated in the introductory chapter.

3.2.2.1 Agriculture

As is clear from the earlier sections, the main source of livelihood for most of the respondents is agriculture. The economy is basically agrarian in nature, where the main factor of production is land. A majority of the rural population does not enjoy ownership of land. It is necessary to examine whether the few women who do possess land have any actual access or control over land as a resource. The work participation of women depends on the land holdings and income of the family. Their participation is relatively low in families with large holdings, which are financially better off (Dhongada et al 1985).

The mere ownership of land may not always be a source of prosperity, as it may also be land with low productivity or under-utilised land. Table 3.7 shows the ownership of land (in acres) by different members of the family. Out of the 597 families in the study that possessed land, in 91.45% of cases the owner was a male member of the family. Only in 4.03% of cases was the land in the name of female members of the family. It is therefore clear that land ownership is the prerogative of male in-laws followed by the husband and other male members of the family. Of those who possessed less than one acre of land, 6% were female. Of those who owned 1-2 acres and 2-3 acres of land, only 3.83% and 1.16% respectively were women. 4.05% of women owners did not know how much land their families possessed.

One therefore concludes that women do not inherit paternal property, including land, due to social traditions and customs. So, they have little or no control over this significant productive resource. This adds to women's limited access to other resources like credit, seeds, fertilisers, irrigation, training in agricultural extension, etc. Steps should therefore be taken to distribute land ownership equally between males and females in the family in particular and in society in general.

Even when women do possess land, the title is not legally sound. The study showed that of women who possessed land in their own names, only 3.8% owned pattas and 0.57% did not even know what type of land (with patta, encroached, shared or leased) they possessed.

Of the families in the study, 88.27% possessed pattas, 4.19% encroached land, 3.35% shared land and only 1.01% had land on lease. 3.18% did not know what kind of land they owned. Further, as we have seen, land holdings were by and large marginal or small. Table 3.7 shows that 30.65% owned land of between 1-2 acres, followed by those who possessed less than 1 acre (16.42%). Very few possessed more than 3 acres (14.41%) and between 2-3 acres (9.55%). This shows that most of them were marginal landholders and only a few were small landholders. None of our sample respondents were medium or large landholders. 28.98% did not know how much land they possessed.

Table 3.7: *Distribution of land ownership among family members*

Owners of land	Quantity of land owned					Total
	< 1 Acre	1-2 Acres	2-3 Acres	> 3 Acres	Do not know	
Husband	34.69	27.87	33.33	39.53	31.21	32.16
Male in-laws	44.90	55.74	56.14	44.19	38.15	47.24
Female in-laws	3.06	2.19	0.00	1.16	1.16	1.68
Self	1.02	1.64	1.75	0.00	1.73	1.34
Other male members	13.27	10.93	7.02	11.63	14.45	12.06
Other female members	1.02	0.00	0.00	3.49	1.16	1.01
Don't know	2.04	1.64	1.75	0.00	12.14	4.52
Total land owned	100.0 (98)	100.0 (183)	100.0 (57)	100.0 (86)	100.0 (173)	100.0 (597)
Percentage of families	16.42	30.65	9.55	14.41	28.98	100.00

Source: Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

Table 3.8 (see Statistical Appendix) lists agricultural products sold by the families of the respondents. To see whether any difference existed between the products sold by men and those by women, they were asked to list the items sold only by men, only by women and by both men and women. Since the items produced and sold were more than one for each respondent, the number of responses was 1,787 for 591 women.

It is clear from the table that of the various items produced, the products were sold by men in 10.30% cases, by women in only 3.97% cases and men and women together in 12.14% of families. 77.17% of families did not sell their produce. This shows that out of the total number of producers, only a small number was involved in selling their produce. The rest produced only for consumption. Another noticeable feature is that the participation of women in selling was as low as 1.73% in selling millets and as high as 11.28% in selling vegetables. Men exercised more control over the sale of more profitable products

like sugarcane (33.33%), oilseeds (24.22%) and pulses (11.28%).

All these findings help us understand how women lack access and control over what they produce. In the case of almost every agricultural product, the number of items sold by women was found to be really small when compared to the items sold by men or men and women combined. Women do not possess total control over their produce, and that is why their role is limited to producing and not selling.

Women work for longer hours, and their share in producing is as much as, if not more than, that of men. Yet they do not have any control on the sale of their produce. Not only this, even in day-to-day decisions they play a subordinate role. Control is exercised by male members of the family, which is evident from the marketing of produce.

An attempt was also made in the study to find out the role of women in price fixation, and whether the price fixed by the various agents was perceived by them as fair or not. Of those who sell their produce, in 10.71% cases male family members fix the price of the products that are to be sold, followed by middlemen (9.90%) and market forces (8.60%). Only 6.17% of women could take decisions regarding the price. 61.04% of women did not know who was responsible for price fixation.

As far as fairness of price is concerned, a majority could not say whether the price was fair or not (73.54%). Some thought it was fair (18.67%), while a few thought it was sometimes fair (3.73%). Only 4.06% thought that the price fixed was not fair. Information on markets and prices is critical for women's economic participation. The study shows that women's knowledge of markets and prices is very poor, which further perpetuates lack of control over their produce.

As already discussed, it is not that no efforts have been made by the government to improve the condition of the poor. Many development programmes have been launched with the aim of improving living standards and meeting the basic needs of the poor. But despite these efforts, the condition of the poor remains the same and the intended benefits of the programmes do not reach the people for whom the programmes are designed.

Of the respondents in the study, 90.56% have not received any government assistance in agriculture. Of the 9.44% who have received assistance, 6.42% have got loans, 1.97% grants, 0.79% fertilisers/seeds and 0.26% have received other kinds of assistance. No equipment or training in agricultural practices was provided to these beneficiaries to help them

build their capacity for the future. Women's limited access to agricultural assistance is indicative of the gender stereotypes preventing women being accepted as farmers. Of the 72 women who had received assistance, 41.7% felt that their needs were fulfilled, followed by those who said that their needs were temporarily fulfilled (31.94%). 15.28% could not answer this question and 11.11% said that their needs were not met. Analysis of the benefits from government programmes shows that the majority have received loans and the outreach is very limited. Further, there was very little room for capacity-building of women in agriculture.

In the area of agriculture, women do a lot of work that remains invisible. They are involved in a variety of agricultural operations like breaking clods of earth, manuring, weeding, transplanting, harvesting, threshing and winnowing and taking care of the cattle. Not only do they perform more tasks than men, their work is also more arduous as compared to tasks performed by men. The findings of our study are corroborated by earlier research. According to Saikia, the female work participation rate and the volume of their employment is higher in paddy-dominated villages where transplanting and harvesting are done by women (Saikia 1985). Moreover these activities require women to spend the whole day working in muddy soil with their hands, toiling all day long under the hot sun, while men's activities such as ploughing and watering the fields are invariably carried out early in the morning before the sun gets too hot.

As already mentioned, women are involved in a variety of activities, which may not always be physically visible. In this study, as many as 16 tasks have been identified, where women have a major role to play (see Table 3.9). They work harder and the total number of hours spent in this work are much more than those of their male counterparts. But in the absence of indicators to measure their share in production, women's efforts go unrecognised.

A number of studies have established that, in addition to household work, collection of water and fuel for the family, and taking care of the livestock, women work in their own fields or on a daily wage basis, and their working hours exceed those of men (Singh, Sharma & Singh, 1988). In order to find out more about their workload and their own perceptions relating to their participation and recognition, the respondents of the study were encouraged to identify their needs and problems and point to the solutions that they felt would solve these problems.

Table 3.9: Agricultural tasks performed by women in respondents' families

Type of agricultural tasks
Manuring
Loosening soil
Transplanting/Sowing/Broadcasting
Cutting and burning
Fertilising/Pesticides
Irrigating
Application of pesticides
Weeding
Harvesting/Plucking
Processing
Guarding the crops
Land development
Carrying seeds and meals
Supervision
Vegetable cultivation/Planting/Irrigating
Ranza bandhiba (fencing for plants—creeper)

Source: Field Survey 1998

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for all respondents. Even if they do not possess any land of their own, they work as wage labourers in others' fields for their livelihood. Even those who possess family land and are engaged in other occupations work on their own land throughout the year besides undertaking cultivation in the agricultural seasons. As already discussed, their workload in the fields is heavier than that of the male members of the family. These women face many difficulties. Table 3.10 gives a description of the difficulties faced while cultivating the land.

As the study intends to focus on women's perceptions, an attempt was made to collect their insights into the nature of their problems and the solutions they felt were called for. Table 3.11 lists the initiatives that women feel would solve their problems. A number of initiatives were presented as solutions. Irrigation facilities, a majority thought, would solve water-related problems. Mobilisation of resources and development of infrastructure were other major initiatives identified. Mobilising resources meant financial assistance, equipment, seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, etc, that would help them invest more, produce more and increase their incomes. Improved infrastructure meant better roads and transport facilities that would help them market their products.

Due to lack of ownership of land, these women are deprived of support facilities. They also lack training in, and knowledge of, new

methods of agriculture. As they are not trained to operate new equipment, a task reserved for men, they are forced to perform only manual tasks. Their labour is rendered secondary and is looked upon as a helping hand or as part of their duty towards their family. These problems need to be looked into before any steps are taken to raise the level of their participation in agricultural activities. The suggestions by women for improvement in the agricultural sector reflect their vision and understanding of the type of development needed.

Table 3.10: *Difficulties faced by women in agriculture*

WATER-RELATED
Scarcity of water
Washed-out bunds
Excess water
Covered by sand
LACK OF RESOURCES
Limited capital
Lack of manpower/labour
Don't have bullocks
Poor quality seeds/fertilisers
Lack of infrastructural facilities
PHYSICAL AILMENTS
LAND-RELATED PROBLEMS
Small land holdings
Poor land quality
No land ownership
Land in different areas
Constraints due to household responsibilities
Lack of family support for childcare
Excess/multiple workload
LONG DISTANCES
Distance from residence
Distance from market
LACK OF KNOWLEDGE
Don't know market value/costs
Lack knowledge in new methods of agriculture
ANIMAL AND PESTS
Wild animals destroy crop
Affected by insects

Source: *Field Survey 1998*

To see whether they had any idea about a possible solution to the problems and the resulting benefits, they were also asked to mention the benefits they would receive after these initiatives were taken. Table 3.12 gives a list of the benefits that the women engaged in agriculture felt they would receive if the initiatives were taken.

Table 3.11: *Type of initiatives required to remove difficulties in agriculture*

Type of initiative
WATER-RELATED
Construction of well/canal
Install pump sets
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
Land development
Purchase machine for paddy processing
Storage and transport facilities
CREATING RESOURCES
Apply for loan/approach government officials
Hire labour from nearby villages
Own more cows/bullocks/animals
Capital investment
Need capital/seed/fertiliser/pesticides, etc
NEW LEARNING/TRAINING
To learn modern methods of using pesticides/fertilisers
Acquiring knowledge about new methods of agriculture
HEALTH-RELATED
Access to health checkup facilities
PERSONAL PROBLEM-RELATED
Schools and crèches for mothers to be free
Time management
OTHERS (guarding crops, etc)

Source: *Field Survey 1998*

Table 3.12: *Perceived benefits from removal of difficulties in agriculture*

Benefits
Increased income
Reduction in cost of production
Production of multiple crops
Diversifying trades
Time spent on childcare can be used in other tasks
Improved standard of living
Reduction of workload
Security
Increased work opportunities

Source: *Field Survey 1998*

3.2.2.2 Cottage industry

This section highlights issues relating to cottage industries based on semi-structured information collected from 462 respondents. These women were mostly self-employed and were engaged in home-based productive activities. These were small-scale units or micro-businesses, producing and selling goods involving little capital, using a low level of technology and operating at a low level of productivity, generating low and sometimes irregular incomes. They rely on indigenous

resources, simpler technology and skills achieved outside the formal school system (family/tradition/skills), which makes their entry into the business easy.

The study showed that leaf-plate making, bamboo work, rice processing, tile and utensil making, spice processing, etc, were activities undertaken for business purposes more than for consumption. Fruit processing, rope/mat/oil/broom making, tailoring/embroidery, and badi/papad making were activities taken up more for consumption. On the whole, leaf-plate making was the task most commonly taken up in the study area.

The main factors prompting production included the availability of raw materials and marketing facilities, proximity of forests, possession of the required skills, and availability of tools/technology. Other reasons included the lack of alternatives, the fact that it was a traditional occupation, or because the occupation was a home-based one. Only for very few respondents was the government beneficiary programme the reason for choosing various occupations in the cottage industry sector. The reasons mentioned above suggest that the choice of an occupation in this sector depended on the availability of time and resources.

One striking feature is that women were aware of having access to raw materials and that they possessed some skills which enabled them to produce certain items. These skills were available to them as traditional skills. To some, the availability of tools and technology as benefits of a government scheme were added advantages.

An important issue is that of the problems faced by those engaged in cottage industry-related occupations. For producing goods in the cottage industry sector, bamboo and sal/siali leaves have been listed as the main materials required. Bamboo goods were required for their own households also, but were generally produced in large quantities for sale. Bamboo was used to make bamboo craft while sal leaves were mainly used to make leaf-plates, which was the main item produced by these women. Women in this section were totally dependent on forests for their raw material.

An attempt was also made to identify the main sources of raw material used by women in this section for production. The main source of raw material was the forest (72.57%). The other important sources of raw material were villages (16.46%), nearby towns, the women's own houses (3.24% each) and the place of production (2.24%). Though a majority of them depended on the forest, where raw material was easily available, it was important to find out whether these women

had any access and control over the sources of raw material.

Forests are owned by the state, and village markets are controlled by men or their male employers. Women therefore have no control over these resources. They had control only over the time they utilised in production, which had to be adjusted to enable them to meet other requirements of the household.

Women producing goods from forest produce faced a number of problems. Table 3.13 (see Statistical Appendix) enumerates the obstacles faced by them while collecting raw materials from the above sources. The main obstacles were the long distances women had to travel (22.81%), physical problems (14.21%), expensive raw materials/inadequate working capital/travel expenses (12.63%), attacks by wild animals (11.23%), and harassment by forest officials (10.88%). All these factors had to do with the main source of raw material — the forest — over which they had no control. Answering queries about their business, they said that they either worked with difficulty or their work was not going well.

As far as the training of women engaged in cottage industries was concerned, 78.82% had never received any formal training. Table 3.14 (see Statistical Appendix) shows that of the 21.18% who had received training, many (9.41%) were trained in leaf-plate making. Others had received training in broom making (2.65%), agarbatti making (2.35%), bamboo works (5.00%), fruit processing (0.88%) and mat making (0.88%). Out of 340 women, only 72 had received training and of these only 37 had been trained by the government. Others had picked up the skills in the family or from friends. Most had received training more than 4-6 years ago.

As women working in the informal sector do not always get paid in cash, it becomes very difficult for them to calculate the amount they earn per day. It is also very difficult for them to keep a record of the time spent in terms of hours. These women usually work depending on the availability of time, which may increase or decrease depending on the urgency of the task. Despite the problem of unavailability of accurate information on hours of work and income per day, an effort has been made to collect information on this, which has been represented in Table 3.15 (see Statistical Appendix). Most of these women generally worked for 1-5 hours (45.00%) or 5-10 hours (35.00%). There were also some who worked for 10-15 hours (6.47%). Many worked according to the availability of time (13.53%). Those who said that their hours of work depended upon availability of time meant to say that the number of hours depended on the urgency of

the work at home or at the production site. The income of such women was mostly on the lower side.

As far as income is concerned, women generally fell in the category of those who earned less than Rs 5 per day (36.76%), followed by those who earned Rs 5-10 per day (25.88%). Some women (11.47%) could not convert their income into precise monetary terms. Only 8.82% said that they earned more than Rs 30 per day.

When asked whether they were able to sell everything they produced, more than 80% said that they could successfully sell their produce. This, however, did not mean that they were making a lot of profit from their sales. As a matter of fact, they were either producing quantities small enough to sell, or they were selling at no or minimal profit. The reason was lack of storage facilities, and distress sale was probably the only way out. Table 3.16 enumerates the obstacles faced while selling products. The main problem was the seasonal nature of the produce. As they lack storage and other infrastructure facilities such as a proper network to market their products, they are harassed by middlemen and have to sell the products at little or no profit. Forest officials also harassed some during the collection of raw materials.

Table 3.16: *Obstacles in selling products*

Obstacles faced
Products left over/not sold
Poor quality
Seasonal/No demand
Sold at no/less profit
Distance to market
Harassment by middlemen
Lack of infrastructure facilities
No bargaining capacity
Harassment by officials

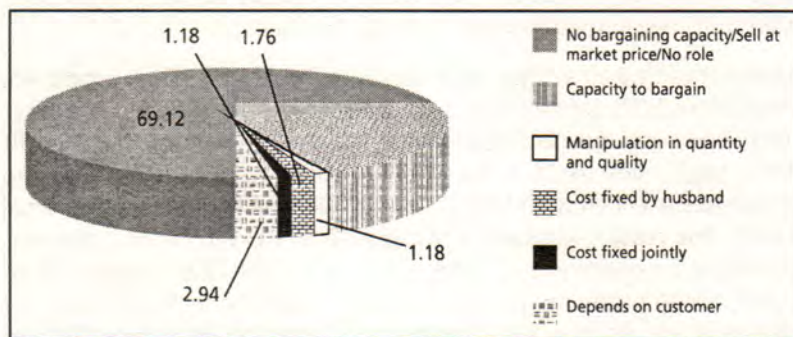
Source: Field Survey 1998

Figure 3.1 reveals women's role in price fixation of the products they sell. 69.12% said that they had no bargaining power or role in price fixation. They had to sell at the market price. 23.82% said that they enjoyed some bargaining power. By this they meant that they kept the prices high so that even after bargaining they got some profit or at least recovered the cost price. For 2.94%, it was the customer who fixed the price. Some respondents said their husbands fixed the prices (1.76%). For some (1.18%) the price was fixed jointly with their husbands.

What is the impact of the government development schemes target-

ing workers in cottage industries? To identify the benefits that women in the cottage industry sector received under these schemes, and also to highlight the reasons behind the failure of any of these schemes, questions related to such schemes were also put to the respondents.

Figure 3.1: Role of women in price fixation



Source: Field Survey 1998

The study found that of the 424 respondents who have answered this question, only 82 had received government aid (19.34%). Of those who had received aid, a majority did not have any knowledge of the scheme. Even those who knew about the schemes either knew only the name or that loans were available under this scheme and not the purpose for which it had been launched. No clarity existed among the respondents regarding what the schemes were for or what made them eligible for the schemes or how to utilise the benefits. Does this mean that they were not given proper orientation before and after receiving the aid?

When the question about problems in receiving government aid was put to those who had received some government assistance, many issues came up. These problems have been listed in Table 3.17. They fall into three main categories. As is clear from the table, the main problem was corruption at the government level. Government officials sometimes harassed these women, and often demanded bribes. The women had to make several trips to block offices, which led to increased travel expenses. The second problem, improper support, was related to the first one. The aid that they had received was partial and they were not able to make proper use of it in the absence of other supporting factors. For example, those who had received equipment did not receive training or those who got trained lacked equipment and capital. The aid was also not always relevant to the needs of the people. For example, they were trained for trades for which raw

material was not easily available and often expensive. Skill upgradation was not based on the availability of raw material. The main problem in this improper support category related to receiving a loan in small instalments. This often led to the loan being spent on solving other problems at work and at home rather than being used in the area for which it had been taken. Some respondents said that they did not know the use of the equipment provided by the government under certain schemes. Some thought the problem besetting cottage industries was that of ignorance. They either were not aware of the schemes launched for their benefit or were hesitant to approach the government due to their personal problems and corruption in government offices.

Table 3.17: Problems in receiving government aid

Problems	F
CORRUPTION	44
Several trips to block office/bank	28
Travel expenses	3
Bribes to procure loans	10
Harassment by government officials	3
IMPROPER SUPPORT	20
Partial support (only equipment/training/capital)	4
Not relevant to needs/control of people*	2
Loan in small instalments	13
Don't know the use of equipment	1
IGNORANCE	5
Lack of awareness	3
Any other	2

*Skill upgradation is not according to the availability of raw materials

Source: Field Survey 1998

3.2.2.3 Petty business

As already discussed in previous sections, petty business is the secondary occupation in which a majority of women in the study are engaged. It has already been mentioned that most of the women in rural/tribal Orissa are self-employed. As very few of them are given regular employee status due to various factors such as low levels of literacy, conservatism and domestic burdens, they usually find themselves pushed into less structured occupations like petty businesses in which they can work according to their convenience.

When respondents were asked what petty businesses they were engaged in, they listed several categories on the basis of their sources of income: forest produce collection and sale, agricultural produce,

and others. This division clearly shows that the women were largely dependent on forests for their livelihood or income. The products were either collected or sold, or bought and sold directly. These were not processed and therefore could not belong to the cottage industries sector. Table 3.18 lists all the petty businesses in which these women were engaged. 360 respondents answered questions in this section.

Table 3.18: *Petty businesses undertaken by women*

Type of business
FOREST PRODUCE
Mahul
Tola
Sal/Kusum seed/Alsi
Jhuna
Broom/Badun
Salap/Handia/Mahuli
Kendu leaf
Charkoli seed
Kendu leaf
Firewood
Karadi
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
Vegetables
Processed rice
Chhana
Spices
Mango
Sabai grass
Tamarind
Kanda
Puffed rice
Roasted nuts
Cocum business
Mushroom
Other agricultural products
OTHERS
Fish/Dry fish
Grocery
Tailoring

Source: Field Survey 1998

When respondents were questioned about their reasons for taking up a particular business, a majority said that availability of NTFP governed their choice of a particular business. For others, marketing of the products of their chosen business was easier (ie processing was not needed, which saved time for other work). Ownership of mahul/kusum trees was also one of the reasons behind their choice of business. Some had no option but to work to earn their livelihood.

Women faced various problems in petty business. A majority had problems related to infrastructure and resource mobilisation. The other

frequently cited reason was that they lacked bargaining power and, in order to prevent wastage of the seasonal products, they had no choice but to sell these at low prices. Many also said that physical ailments were a major obstacle. It is pertinent to note that women in rural areas avail of health services to a lesser degree than their male counterparts. Their poor health is to a large extent the result of their lack of education and health consciousness and also due to malnutrition, poor economic conditions and lack of availability of medical services. Personal problems such as heavy workload, small children, or absence of work opportunities in the family were other obstacles cited.

The respondents were asked about their future plans for their businesses. A majority wanted to expand their businesses by generating alternative sources of income, investing more capital/using more raw materials, introducing new products, and storing and selling during lean periods. Many preferred to keep this as a secondary occupation and not go in for expansion. A number of respondents wanted no interference from forest guards. One thing emerged clearly from this exercise: their future plans depended on the availability of raw materials or NTFP.

The respondents were also asked about the inputs that they thought would help them achieve their goals. The most common response was additional capital. Some said that they could not do anything and were helpless. Additional manpower for their businesses and some governmental assistance were among the responses given. But a substantial majority was unable to give a response to this question.

3.2.4 Wage labour

In the sample there were 495 respondents who were daily wage earners. Most of them did not have any regular employee status. Most of these women were casual labourers whose labour power was occasionally made use of and recognised. But the penury of the rural women becomes evident in the wage discrepancies between men and women in rural India. The irregular nature of employment of casual labourers was another visible factor responsible for their downtrodden status.

In this sector, employment is not available throughout the year as a majority who are employed as agricultural labourers find themselves jobless during non-agricultural seasons, and employment in the construction sector etc is not available all the year round either. To arrive at an estimate of the number of workdays available to these

women, they were asked to give an estimate of the number of days they worked in a month. Table 3.19 gives information on this. Though it was difficult for the women to cite the exact number of days they worked, they gave rough estimates. Most were employed for 5-10 days (30.10%) a month followed by those who were employed for 1-5 days (29.70%). Many of them were employed irregularly (14.95%). 14.55% were employed for 10-15 days. 4.65% were employed for about 15-20 days in a month. Only 2.83% were employed for 20-25 days, while 3.23% were employed for 26 days and more. About 60-70% remained unemployed for about 10-15 days or more in a month.

Table 3.19: *Workdays in a month*

Sl No	Workdays	F	%
01	1 to 5 days	147	29.70
02	5 to 10 days	149	30.10
03	10 to 15 days	72	14.55
04	15 to 20 days	23	4.65
05	20 to 25 days	14	2.83
06	26 days and above	16	3.23
07	Irregular	74	14.95
	Total	495	100

The picture becomes clearer if we consider the extent of migration and the seasonality data given in the annexure. Only about 40% of respondents had taken up employment inside their own villages, with almost 60% having to move out of their villages in search of employment in non-agricultural seasons, for work on construction sites. Most of the women labourers were employed as agricultural labourers, and in non-agricultural seasons they had to migrate due to non-availability of work in their villages (for details on seasonality, see Annexure).

When respondents were asked what work they did on days other than their workdays, a variety of other tasks were mentioned. Most of them were engaged in housework followed by those who were engaged in making and marketing cottage industry products, NTFP collection and sale, fuelwood collection for consumption, work on development of their own land, etc. This shows that even when they were not employed as wage labourers they did not sit idle. Rather, they engaged themselves in productive activities throughout the year with or without remuneration.

With respect to interventions that would help increase their income, many felt that more work opportunities inside their villages and contractual work would help them augment their incomes. Other responses included more government works like road and canal

construction, increase in the wage structure and regular payment of wages, etc.

To ascertain the nature of work wage labourers did they were asked about the tasks they performed. The information collected is shown in Table 3.20.

Table 3.20

Tasks performed
Agricultural work in fields
Road work
Canal construction
House construction
Whitewashing
Work in the mill
Spice processing (DWCRA)
Others

The miserable economic condition of rural women emerges from the wage discrepancies found in rural areas. Even if our Constitution declares equal pay for equal work, women in rural India always receive a low wage compared to men, just because they are women. Table 3.21 (see Statistical Appendix) gives a comparison between wages received by men and those received by women and is based on information provided by respondents.

Sukanti Bhoi's burden

Sukanti Bhoi, 34, of Suruguda, district Sundergarh, has been educated up to Class V. She is a beneficiary of the Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) and president of the Indira Mahila Kendra (IMK). She gets up early in the morning and finishes her household chores. She works as a wage labourer in the house of her landlord. She goes to work at 7 am and works in the paddy, pulses and vegetable fields. In between she also goes to the forest to collect firewood for her own use. At around noon, she returns home to cook for her family and do other household chores like fetching water from the tubewell, cleaning utensils, etc. She goes back to the field at about 2 pm and comes home around 6 pm. She gets only Rs 15 per day for her work, though occasional/casual labourers are paid Rs 20 for the same kind of work. After serving food to her family she eats at around 9.30 pm and goes to bed around 10 pm after doing the dishes.

Table 3.21 (see Statistical Appendix) clearly shows that 39.92% of men earned Rs 25-35 while a majority of women (40.84%) earned between Rs 15-25 per day. Only 1.84% of men earned Rs 5-15 per day, while 18.63% of women received this wage per day. There was a significant difference between wages received by men and those received by women in terms of cash and grain. What is clear is that women generally earn low wages as compared to men. Men were found to be engaged in activities which brought them higher wages, while women were forced to take up work which brought them lower wages.

3.2.2.5 Animal husbandry

Though animal husbandry or livestock business were absent in the list of main or secondary occupations of women, women play a major role in taking care of livestock. According to Bijubala (1999), women are engaged in business related to livestock, though their supervision of breeding activities and sale or purchase of livestock and feed items is minimal. Women are found to be solely responsible for activities such as giving feed and water to animals, cleaning and bathing animals, maintenance and cleaning of cattle-sheds, fodder collection, collection of cowdung to make cowdung cakes and preparation of milk products.

This section deals with those women who were dependent on livestock for their livelihood. 402 women responded to the questions related to this occupation. There were altogether 952 animals reared by these women. Most of them had more than one animal in their houses. 253 of the 402 women traded in domestic animals while the rest had animals for their own use.

When asked about the facilities they require for this business, the women gave a variety of responses which are listed in Table 3.22 in order of frequency.

Regarding knowledge of government schemes, out of 402 respondents, 148 had knowledge of government schemes while 254 were completely ignorant of government schemes. Out of 148 respondents who knew of government schemes, only 22 had received aid while 126 had not. Out of 254 respondents who had no knowledge of government schemes which target women, their purposes and provisions etc, 8 had received some government aid but had not been oriented about the schemes/benefits that they had received. This certainly shows a gap between the way the schemes are conceived and the way they are actually implemented. The

beneficiaries were utterly ignorant even of the benefits that they were entitled to.

Of the respondents who had received government assistance, 21 (70%) had received loans for rearing animals, 3 (10%) had taken watershed loans for animal husbandry, 5 (16.67%) were ignorant about the purpose of aid they had received and 1 (3.33%) had taken a loan for the purchase of animals. Orientation of people for proper utilisation of the schemes was lacking. It needs to be mentioned here that none of these women had received any training in animal husbandry, despite performing a key role in the field of animal care.

Table 3.22: Facilities required for animal husbandry

More animals
More space
Government loans
Veterinary care
Training
More capital
Manpower
Marketing facilities

Source: Field Survey 1998

Women are generally deprived of credit and other government benefits in this sector of employment because they do not have any decision-making powers as far as purchase of animals or animal feed is concerned. They work only as labourers who do all the cleaning, washing, feeding, etc. It is generally perceived that business is for men. This is probably the reason why women are viewed as providers of support to male members of the family. It becomes difficult for women to assert their ownership rights and entitlement to the benefits they should receive from government schemes.

Table 3.23: Reasons for not getting government assistance

Reasons
Lack of awareness
Already received loan for other purposes
Don't possess any collateral
Applied and awaiting approval
Inability to repay
Perform multiple tasks
Did not apply
Corruption by government officials
Others

Source: Field Survey 1998

Table 3.23 enumerates the reasons why women fail to receive government aid. The main reason seemed to be lack of awareness and lack of interest, which was responsible for them not applying. Other reasons included inability to repay loans, corruption in government offices, etc. On the whole, the main fact to be noted was people's ignorance of the availability of government aid. Organising awareness campaigns about the schemes, and orientation programmes after loans were given out, would be beneficial to all.

3.2.3 Credit

This section deals with the kinds of credit that respondents had availed of. 816 respondents answered this question. On account of a few multiple sources of loans, the number of responses has gone up to 822. Table 3.24 (see Statistical Appendix) gives information on the number of respondents who had taken family loans and the sources of these loans. Out of 816 respondents, only 357 (43.75%) had taken loans. Those who had availed of loans had generally taken these from banks (63.03%) or from the government directly under some scheme (18.77%). Other sources of credit included moneylenders (2.24%), savings societies (7.57%), relatives (1.99%) and other people (3.36%). Some respondents did not know from whom the family loan had been taken. Loans from the government when combined with those taken from a bank accounted for an overwhelming majority of loans taken. As some women pointed out in the focus group discussions, savings societies have helped women get loans at lower interest rates in times of need.

The respondents were also found to be ignorant of the objectives, sources and amount of loans. On the basis of the knowledge of respondents, the main reasons appeared to be business purposes, agricultural purposes and cottage industry. A few did not even know why the loan had been taken. A few had taken loans and used these for household consumption or social functions. A few had taken loans to repay previous loans.

It is unfortunate that some people had to take loans to repay previous loans. And that others used loans for consumption and social functions. This was mainly because the loans were given out in instalments, which were small in relation to the needs that were to be met. As reported by one of the BDOs interviewed, when a loan under any scheme is sanctioned, it is usually for a unit. For example, a person can get a loan amounting to Rs 30,000 to buy bullocks. However, the

borrower buys a bullock costing Rs 4,000. In this case, the borrower would be paid only Rs 4,000 and the remaining amount would be deposited as a fixed deposit or in a savings account. The borrower does not receive any guidance on skill upgradation or follow-up of other work, etc. As a result, the amount kept in his account is consumed by the family. They borrow again to repay the loans as the modes of production still remain the same old traditional ones and there is no actual benefit accruing from the loan taken; in fact, it increases the burden on the family.

From the data it is clear that most of the women who have availed of a loan have taken it from banks (225). This is primarily because all loans from government schemes are channelised through banks. These banks have a lot of formalities, which creates a problem for women. This was revealed by women during focus group discussions. The other issue raised was that to receive a bank loan, the women had to mortgage some property, which also limits women's access to credit.

Banks were the main source of credit, but the formalities involved in applying for a bank loan demanded skills possessed only by educated people. This made the process more difficult for uneducated people, as they did not understand the complicated procedure. They were not able to make proper use of the benefit received in the absence of supervision, which was not always provided. This was revealed in the focus group discussions and interviews with the officers, according to whom good supervision was not possible due to lack of manpower. A question arises here: does the government really lack manpower?

3.2.4 Savings

It is said that rural women have very little access to and control over resources. But to see whether these women have any control over their income and whether they are able to save anything out of it, another set of questions related to their savings was put to all the respondents of our study. Of the total number of 865 respondents, only 241 (27.86%) had some saving deposits. The remaining 72.14% had no savings of their own.

Of 241 respondents only 3 had put their savings in two places, while 238 had only one savings account. Among the women who had savings (ie 27.86%), 21.62% had their accounts in savings societies. Others had their accounts in banks (3.35%) and in post offices (2.20%). Some had their savings with other agents like moneylenders (0.46%). Some women (0.58%) did not specify where

they had kept their savings.

To see whether these women had benefited from these savings or not, questions related to pre-saving problems and post-saving benefits were asked. Of the various problems faced before starting saving, the main problems seemed to be difficulties in arranging for loans in times of need, high rates of interest on loans and selling/mortgaging of assets for money.

Post-saving benefits that these respondents received included immediate access to funds, saving for future needs and low interest rates. 11.18% did not answer this question. These savings had thus solved their pre-saving problems to some extent, and savings societies were the major source of assistance.

Table 3.25: *Pre-savings problems faced by women*

Type of problem
Difficult to arrange for loan in times of need
High interest rates on loans
Lack of awareness
Lack of opportunity for group interaction
Sell/mortgage land, bullocks, etc
Poor/No assets for mortgage

Source: Field Survey 1998

Savings societies have not only helped these women by advancing loans to them at low interest rates, but also have the advantage of being immediately accessible in times of need. Moreover, they have empowered women by creating awareness in them on various issues. But the need for education still exists, for this is the key to empowerment.

Table 3.26: *Post-saving benefits obtained by women*

Benefits
Immediate access to funds
Low interest rates
Invest in business
Future needs
No need for collateral
Increased awareness
Other benefits (seeds, etc)

3.3 Non-workers

It is clear from the previous sections that women constitute a significant portion of the workforce engaged both in the primary and the secondary sector. Even women who are categorised as non-workers are engaged in one or more of the activities relating to primary

occupation solely for household consumption. As they constitute a minority of women in the tribal belt, and on account of factors like lack of semi-technical skills, inability to become mobile, conservatism, illiteracy, etc, they are looked upon as consumers and not producers. As they do not earn cash, their contribution to the family income goes unrecognised.

Keeping all this in mind, the non-workers category was included in this study to refer to women who were not earning or were not engaged in any structured occupation. As the number of women in this category was smaller in the tribal belts (on which our study focuses, for the most part), our study could include only 249 women in this category. Those who belonged to the non-workers sample were non-workers either because they were financially better off and didn't need to work or due to some family responsibilities. In some cases they had retired temporarily from their work because of illness or pregnancy and would probably go back to work when their problems were solved. The concept of the non-worker in a pure sense is alien to these areas. Being a non-worker was only a temporary phase in their lives and they would soon have to resume work for their survival.

When respondents were asked about the unpaid work they were doing at home, many answers came up, which showed that, even within the household, they were involved in the production of a variety of goods for family consumption. Besides the routine tasks of cooking, cleaning, washing, etc, they were responsible for fetching water and collecting firewood every day. Childcare was another important task. The dawn-to-dusk exercise followed by the personal interviews revealed that their day began before sunrise and ended late in the night, after everyone in the family had gone to sleep. They did all the chores at home, and, once the cooking, cleaning, etc, were over, they busied themselves with making leaf-plates, bamboo craft, mats or working in their own fields, providing a helping hand to their men without being paid. Had these tasks been a part of their income-generation activities, they would have earned cash and contributed to family incomes. They worked for longer hours and their tasks — carrying heavy loads of wood, water, etc — rendered them vulnerable to health hazards. They travelled long distances carrying these loads and were often exposed to heat and rain, suffering from cracked feet, etc, as the seasonality exercise revealed. Freedom from these tasks would give them some time for skill development and education.

To get a further insight, respondents were also asked to identify the activities, among those that they were already doing, for which other

women were getting paid. It was not that these women were not aware of the economic activities that were being performed and remunerated in the market. Only a few said that there was no scope for work for others. Most women were aware that others were earning by working as agricultural labourers, through the collection of NTFP/firewood, by making leaf-plates or other cottage industries, or by engaging in small business. They were aware that given a chance they could also earn like the others.

When asked whether they would like to become economically independent, 81.93% responded positively while 18.07% replied in the negative. Thus it is clear that willingness among women to participate in economic activities was high but daily household chores and other responsibilities of childcare, etc, did not permit them to work. The women who worked were also not free of these responsibilities. Their workload was doubled by their work participation, which was essential to fulfil the basic needs of the family.

The women came up with various responses on how they could become economically independent. Many of them said they could become wage labourers, followed by those who said they could engage in small business. Others said they could do tailoring or engage in some cottage industry. Vegetable selling, marketing of NTFP (8.30%), home-based work (6.23%), animal husbandry (2.77%), etc, were other areas where they saw some scope for becoming economically independent.

Table 3.27: *Type of unpaid work performed by women*

Type of work
Household chores
Childcare
Firewood and water collection
Agricultural work (own field)
Helping in family occupation
NTFP collection (own use)
Mat, broom, leaf-plate making
Kitchen garden
Marketing for own house
Other social responsibilities
Feeding cattle/veterinary care
Stitching for own use
Supervision of labour/field work
Rice processing for consumption

Source: Field Survey 1998

But to achieve their goals they needed external help. The type of help required included assistance from the government and from the family. Many of them needed support in the area of childcare. Training and loan facilities, family support, inputs to engage in some occupation, and equipment were some other requirements.

Despite their ambition of economic independence, they were forced to sacrifice their rights and desires. According to them, the main personal problems faced were poor health, unwillingness, lack of confidence and lack of ability. Most respondents (78.03%) were not comfortable about answering this question and avoided answering it. The problems listed here have also surfaced during focus group discussions and the seasonality exercise, where women talked about social constraints and other factors that forced them to stay at home. Health combined with pregnancy emerged as one of the main factors hampering their economic independence. Due to lack of education and awareness, they also lacked confidence and felt that they did not have the ability to become economically independent.

The main external hindrance they faced was that they had small children at home. While some could not identify the external causes, others said that they were overburdened with work. Tradition and family constraints prevented some from achieving economic independence. Some perceived lack of capital as the cause while others said that there was no scope for self-development because of their tight work schedule. A communication gap and lack of interaction with outsiders were also considered factors responsible for women's failure to become economically independent.

However, these non-workers contributed to their family income through unpaid labour. They wanted to earn and become economically independent, but certain factors like family responsibilities, social constraints, financial limitations and health problems prevented them from doing so. They needed help from their families as well as the government for improving their status.

3.4 Beneficiaries

Since Independence, India has initiated a number of plans and programmes to bring about a rapid transformation of socio-economic life in rural areas. These pertain to the overall development of the area, provision of social welfare services to rural populations, creation of opportunities for income and employment generation among them, and encouragement of people's participation in

development programmes.

Development has been understood differently at different points of time. Initiatives for development intend to bring about development of men as well as women. However, realising that men and women do not enjoy equal opportunities in rural development programmes, special provisions for rural women are built into programmes like IRDP, TRYSEM and JRY. A special programme like Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was launched for poverty alleviation among poor rural women.

SHG gives Sushila Patra independence and awareness

Sushila Patra, 30, of Talapada village of Saharpada block, Keonjhar district, lives in a tiled (khapra) house with her husband and four children. Kaibalya Patra, her husband, owns two maans (approximately half an acre) of land. They also have three bullocks to plough their land, and four hens. Although she is illiterate, Sushila has been president of the Maa Mangala Sanchaya Samiti (a self-help group, or SHG) since 1998.

She gets up at 5 am and sleeps around 12 at night. During the day she cleans the house and the cowshed, feeds the animals three times, collects water for cooking and drinking, cooks for the family (two meals) and feeds them. After cleaning, cooking and serving food in the morning, she goes to the jungle to collect sal leaves (500-600 sal leaves per day). She comes back around 11 am, cleans the paddy, puts it out in the sun and pounds it when it is dry. She then makes leaf-plates till it is dark.

After cooking dinner she again makes leaf-plates with the remaining leaves. As president of the SHG, she organises weekly village meetings. Members of the SHG contribute Rs 2 each towards a savings fund. Being members of a SHG has helped the women get financial support for improving healthcare and children's education. It has also protected them from exploitation at the hands of the mahajans (moneylenders). Women of the SHGs work very hard to make sure that the savings society doesn't break up, though there are only a few members.

Even though much care has been taken to improve the status of women and repeated attempts have been made to assimilate them in the development mainstream, the real situation of rural women is different from the theoretical assumptions made by the government.

An attempt has been made in this section to explain the gap between policy formulations and policy implementation in rural Orissa. The way the beneficiaries perceive the programme is important from the point of view of programme planners and those who implement programmes. Beneficiary opinion provides valuable insights not only into the implementation of programmes but also into their utility. It can point to ways of removing the shortcomings observed therein. 256 respondents who have benefited under one or the other development scheme have answered the questions in this section.

During the field investigation it was found that women on the whole had availed of support from four main government schemes. Officials interviewed reported that programmes such as the Mahila Vikash Samabya Nigam (MVSN), Balika Samridhhi Yojana, ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Programme, mainly for SC/ST beneficiaries who constituted a major part of the study), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Indira Awas Yojana, TRYSEM, Maternity Benefit Scheme, Widow Old Age Pension, Million Wells Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme, etc, were in operation in the area. But the data reveals that a majority of women have received support from the DWCRA (126 respondents — 49.22%). Other programmes under which these women had benefited were IRDP (23.05%), IMY (8.20%) and ICDS (1.95%). Only one programme out of the four — IMY — has a mechanism for increasing women's capacity to make decisions about their development needs and the overall development process. But this programme had benefited only 21 of the beneficiaries. Only 3 out of 256 beneficiaries had availed of benefits under two schemes each.

Table 3.28: *Scheme/schemes under which benefits were taken*

Scheme	Total
	F
Name of scheme not known	48
DWCRA	126
IRDP	59
IMY (IMK)	21
Mahila Mandal (ICDS)	5
Total (Respondents=256)	259

When asked about changes in their status after receiving benefits, about one-fourth said there had been no change. Some said they had received short-term benefits and used them for income-generation purposes. Most of the beneficiaries had used the benefits for consumption purposes, family functions, and construction of houses. Only a few used the benefits to expand their businesses and acquire

new skills. Very few increased their earning capacity as a result of the benefit received. In some cases only the male members of the family used the financial aid. A question arises here: are the current programmes adequate for increasing women's economic participation?

The awareness level of these women regarding development schemes operating in the area was also very low. Most of them did not know of any other schemes besides the ones under which they had received some benefits.

They had heard mainly of DWCRA and IMY. Even though some women knew about loans available for the purchase of animals or leaf-plate making or bamboo craft, they did not know the name of the scheme. This indicates a gap between the schemes on paper and their actual implementation. The people for whom these schemes were launched were not even aware of them and hence could derive few benefits from them.

Those who knew about other schemes generally knew some beneficiaries of DWCRA and IRDP. Some knew other beneficiaries but did not know the name of the scheme under which the benefit was available. Some knew other beneficiaries of their own scheme, but they themselves did not know the name of the scheme. This question was a corollary of the previous one relating to the awareness level of the beneficiaries. They also gave information about the benefits received by other beneficiaries who were known to them. The main benefit seemed to be capital, whereas benefits such as training, raw material and equipment were negligible.

To find out whether any differences existed between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, the respondents were asked to identify the differences. A majority said there was no difference in the status of the two groups, while a few said that beneficiaries were better off.

The next section deals with the benefits that the respondents themselves had received. A majority of beneficiaries had received capital. Many did not know what benefits they had got. The perceived benefits are given in Table 3.29.

A question suggests itself here: if the beneficiaries themselves do not know what benefits they have received, what economic participation and development of women are we talking about? They were beneficiaries only on paper and they did not know what benefits had been taken in their names. Their lack of access to and control over the benefits meant for them become painfully evident. While a small

number received training in new skills or the opportunity to upgrade old ones, very few received equipment for production. Some also said that their mobility had increased due to job opportunities outside their village.

Table 3.29: Benefits from government schemes

Benefits	F
Capital	187
Training in new skill/upgradation of skills	32
Equipment	9
Increased mobility due to work outside	4
Can't say	66
Total (Respondents=256)	298

There were several obstacles that these beneficiaries faced in receiving government aid. These obstacles have been presented in Table 3.30. The most common difficulty was in dealing with the government machinery. Many had to make several trips to the block office or the bank, which involved a lot of expense. They also had to pay bribes. If they did not, officials harassed them, and even abused them at times. Some also said that the support system was inadequate (6.71%), meaning thereby that loans were paid in small installments and the amount was consumed to meet day-to-day needs rather than for the purpose for which the loan had been taken. Partial support meant that if they were given equipment, no training was imparted to them on how to use the equipment. If training was given it was not based on their needs or availability of resources. This partial support left them handicapped and overburdened as they had to repay the loan without any increase in their incomes. Some mentioned that as the procedure for getting benefits was too complicated and time-consuming, they usually opted out to concentrate on work which was more important for their survival. The main obstacle mentioned was corruption and the improper support system at the government level, which, when combined, accounted for more than 40% of the problems. Efforts made to provide need-based support and smoothen the procedure would remove half the obstacles that the beneficiaries faced in getting benefits from the government.

After receiving benefits from the government, 85.55% of respondents said that government officials contacted them, while 14.45% said they were not contacted by officials. Even of those who were contacted, many were contacted only by VLWs. About a third said they did not

know why they had been contacted. Some said that the officials came to pressurise them for loan repayment and others said that they came to enquire about the utilisation of funds. Very few said that the officials had come to meet beneficiaries to see whether their work was going well. A minuscule number said that they had come to make them aware of other government programmes.

Table 3.30: Obstacles faced by women in getting benefits from government schemes

Obstacles
Corruption
Several trips to the block office/bank
Pay bribes/harassment
Cost involved/travel expenses
Verbal abuse by officers
Improper support system
Loan paid in small installments
Partial support (only training/only capital/only equipment)
Lengthy process/dropout
Lack of awareness about the scheme

Source: Field Survey 1998

On being asked what they expected from the officials, most of the beneficiaries responded that they expected more capital. Others expected regular supervision and advice for better use of the benefits, while some did not expect anything. According to the women beneficiaries these schemes should be combined with proper orientation, training on equipment provided, supervision and advice. They also feel that regular information should be provided at public meetings about government programmes and on facilities for proper marketing.

Table 3.31: Government officials who contacted respondents

	F
VLW	96
CDPO	22
Supervisor	29
SEO	4
Panchayat secretary	7
Sarpanch	2
BDO	21
Bank officer	21
IPO	18
WO	1
Anganwadi didi	14
DRDA chairman	4
Can't say	89
Total (Respondents=256)	328

The next set of questions related to training received under such schemes. Only 33.59% of the respondents had received training, while no answer was given by 1.95% of respondents. 64.45% had not received any training under any of the development schemes.

Out of 256 beneficiaries, only 86 women had received training. Of the 86 women who had received training, the duration for 30 (34.88%) was 1-5 days. 22 women (25.58%) were trained for 3-6 months while 18 (20.93%) were trained for 1-3 months. Only 2 respondents (2.33%) were trained for more than 6 months. Some respondents (3.49%) could not remember the duration of training (see Table 3.32). 60.46% were trained inside the village whereas 31.40% were trained at the block office or panchayat. 5.81% were trained elsewhere and 2 respondents did not answer this question. Location of training is a critical factor in determining women's access to training. Usually, women find it difficult to go out for training, so when the training is in their village it is better for them. But this also limits women's exposure to the outside world, which has always been a constraint in their empowerment.

The respondents were asked about the benefits they had received from the training programme. Of those who had received training, some said they had acquired skills with the help of which they could increase their income. Many were of the opinion that the training was of no use to them. Some said they gained knowledge about childcare and hygiene; others had gained confidence.

Every scheme has specific selection criteria and unless and until people know what these are they will not be able to benefit from them. Keeping this in mind the beneficiaries were asked about these criteria.

~Table 3.32: Duration of training received under different schemes

Number of days	Percentage
1-5 days	34.88
15-30 days	12.79
1-3 months	20.93
3-6 months	25.58
More than 6 months	2.33
No answer available	3.49
Total	100.0 (86)

Source: Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

Table 3.33 enumerates the criteria used in the selection of beneficiaries. About 18 criteria have been identified, and many of them pertain to the level of connections an applicant has. No specific method of

selection of beneficiaries was adopted and people were generally ignorant about selection criteria. Mostly recommendations by some agent or those who were active on the scene influenced decisions on the matter. In such a situation it might be the most needy who are neglected and deprived of the benefits of development programmes launched for them by the government.

The respondents were asked to name the best scheme available. Most could give no answer to this. 88% could not say which scheme was better. DWCRA and IRDP were perceived as the better schemes. Some said no programme was good.

The reasons given by the respondents for the superiority of a particular programme also varied. While most could not give any reason, others said specifically that DWCRA and IRDP were more effective and efficient. The other reasons for the superiority of the two programmes were that they had a regular schedule, individual loans in large amounts were available, and rates of interest were lower.

Table 3.33: *Criteria for selection of beneficiaries*

Criteria for selection
Those recommended by the panchayat secretary and sarpanch
Those recommended by a ward member/VLW/anganwadi teacher/village leader
Landless/BPL
Persons who are articulate and "free" get selected
Village meetings select the more needy persons
Those who are keen, show initiative and enthusiasm
Those who approach the block office/bank
Those who were available in the village at the time of VLW's visit
Previously known person
Those who can attend meetings regularly
Patta land holders
Those who are related or known to government officials
Those who can bribe
Young women
Those who can repay
CDPO selects/IPO/supervision
Already existing group having some skill
Having some skill

The aim of the study was to develop a need-based policy perspective. In accordance with this objective, the last question of the interview schedule related to the changes these beneficiaries would like to see in the existing government schemes to make them more effective. These suggestions have been clubbed into various categories to give a

clearer picture (see Table 3.34). The suggestions have come from the beneficiaries themselves and, if acted upon, will help smoothen the process of development. The data suggests that the main need of respondents is capital which is provided in installments, making things difficult for them.

Table 3.34: Changes needed to improve government schemes

Type of changes in government scheme
SUPERVISION AND CHECKING CORRUPTION
Remove corruption
No harassment
Regular supervision
Government official's supervision/training/visits should be compulsory
More awareness about programmes
LOAN-RELATED
Eliminate installment system
Provision for individual loan/business
Provide more capital
Loan repayment period should be extended
Group finance
NEED-BASED
Those who are poor should benefit
Should primarily address basic needs
Based on requirement of the poor
Based on availability of raw material
TRAINING
MARKETING AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Marketing of products to be ensured
Infrastructure facilities

Source: Field Survey 1998

These findings resulted from interviews with women beneficiaries and have been supplemented by information gathered with the help of other research tools such as seasonality, interviews with government officials, focus group discussions and bed-to-bed exercises. All of these exercises point to the absence of a need-based approach on the part of the state and national governments to the economic participation of rural women. This could be due to two factors: (i) lack of awareness or understanding of women's needs, perspectives and aspirations with regard to their economic participation and (ii) a lack of government commitment to planning and implementation processes, which has been discussed in previous sections. Questions related to the hurdles faced by women revealed that lack of commitment on the part of government officials and harassment by them are identified as the main problems facing women.



4 10 hours a day at Rs 0-30: Summary of findings

Even 50-odd years after Independence, women in rural (and tribal) areas live in deplorable conditions. Illiteracy, lack of land ownership rights, unemployment, under-employment, low wages, lack of bargaining power, ill health, malnutrition, low social status and above all exploitation continue to plague women in rural Indian society.

It is not as if no effort has been made to address these problems. Many government programmes have been launched. However, despite a long list of plans and programmes, rural women remain marginalised. Documented evidence substantiates the claim that women are discriminated against and denied access to resources and control over their produce.

Taking these problems into consideration, an attempt has been made in the present study to analyse the economic participation of women, identify the benefits accruing to women, and measure the gap dividing policy intentions and policy action.

The study comprises three parts. The first part discusses the features of various occupations that the women are engaged in and women workers' perceptions of government interventions in each sector. It also attempts to focus on the skills possessed by these women, which often go unutilised or under-utilised.

The second part consists of an analysis of the problems and needs of non-workers who, despite being categorised as non-workers, cater to family consumption needs and work to assist the men in their family. It also attempts to define the women's perceptions on potential areas where they could participate in the future and become economically independent.

The third part analyses the opinions and perceptions of the women beneficiaries relating to development programmes. An effort is made in this part to analyse how far the women have benefited from these development schemes, and the lacunae in these programmes, if any. It also attempts to identify the expectations of beneficiaries from these schemes.

Besides these three sections, the study contains two sections on credit and savings, which examine access to and control over the income

earned by women themselves. Women's access to credit in their own name is another variable affecting their status.

This section presents a summary of the findings. However, before taking a look at the results of the interviews occupation-wise, we will take a brief look at the findings of the secondary data review. According to the census, the occupational profile of rural women workers in Orissa is as follows:

Over 92% of women workers in Orissa live in rural areas, just above the national rate of 90%. Rural women comprise 27.3% of the total Orissa workforce and almost a third of the state's rural workforce (29%). The work participation rate of rural women is rising, following the national trend. It increased from 23.1% in 1981 to 27.3% in 1991. Compared to the national average, a lower proportion of rural female workers is involved in main work (56.8%), and a higher proportion in marginal work (43.3%). (The national average is 69.6% in main work and 30.4% in marginal work.) A majority of rural female main workers are engaged in farm-based work (85.4%), and home-based production (5.2%). The primary occupation of rural female main workers is agricultural labour, followed by cultivation. The third highest occupation of female main workers in 23 districts of Orissa is in household industry.

There has been a rise in the sex ratio across occupations in rural Orissa between 1971-1991. This indicates that the participation of women as a proportion of the total workforce is increasing. However, the occupational breakdown of sex-ratio changes reveals that 'agricultural labour' has experienced the greatest increase in sex ratio. This may indicate growing impoverishment, rather than rising status or income of women, as agricultural labourers are generally landless. 'Cultivator' records the least increase in sex ratio, as cultivation involves land-ownership or tenure, which is often not available to women.

Major problems with census data on women's work participation include the following:

- The work participation rate as defined and measured by the national census excludes a massive amount of unpaid women's work, and classifies unpaid women workers as 'non-workers'.
 - The lack of data on sub-occupations of marginal workers excludes almost half (43.3%) of rural women workers in Orissa from any statistical analysis and planning based on sub-occupational data.
- The extent to which marginal workers are excluded from

government programmes needs to be studied further.

The invisibility of women in statistics has serious implications for programme planning, implementation and evaluation, and raises questions about government staff perceptions about the success of programmes like DWCR (Department of Panchayati Raj staff, personal communication 12/98). The problem has been recognised by the central government in its strategies to achieve the policy goals of the Draft Policy. The strategies propose to: redefine conventional official concepts of work; reflect women's contribution as workers and producers in documents such as census records; develop gender development indices to support government planning and implementation of laws, policies, plans and programmes; and review all programmes on the basis of sex-desegregated data. However, these strategies are yet to be uniformly implemented across all central and state government departments and commissions.

The findings of the study may be summarised as:

4.1 Occupational indicators

Some key features characterise women's work:

- Women perform a variety of tasks in a single day as revealed in the dawn-to-dusk exercise.
- They work for longer periods in comparison to their male counterparts both in the workplace and at home, where male members of the family do not share domestic responsibilities.
- Very little or no economic value is attached to their output at home as well as in the workplace.
- They are mostly employed in unorganised sectors like wage labour, which require few skills, and where they get low wages and have a low status. As a result they become dependent on men.
- Women tend to get concentrated in similar occupations (wage labour, leaf-plate making, bamboo craft, etc) due to the availability of raw material or traditional skills. This leads to a neglect of occupations which have the potential to help them earn more. These women prefer travelling long distances to collect forest produce, rather than take up alternative businesses in newer areas.
- They work longer hours. They contribute most of their income to the family. Their earnings are spent on minor day-to-day purchases like groceries, liquor for their husbands, medicine, clothes, etc. Like their income, this expenditure becomes invisible since it is spent on daily consumption items and it is difficult for them to keep a record

of how it is spent, as they are illiterate. They cannot save anything either.

- A high rate of illiteracy (65.09%, according to this study) is one of the major reasons behind the low status accorded to women.

The main sources of livelihood for women include agriculture, wage labour, and forest produce collection and sale. The main features of the different occupations taken up by women may be listed under the following headings:

4.1.1 Agriculture

- Women exercise no control over the main resource of an agrarian economy — land. Only 4.03% of the women in our study possessed land in their own names. This limits their access to other resources like credit, seeds, fertilisers, training, etc.
- Most women produce only for consumption. Even those who produce for sale have no control over the marketing of their products. It is men who sell the main crops, and women sell minor products like vegetables, if at all they have any access to the market.
- They generally have no role to play in fixing the price of the products to be sold. It is the male members of the family who take the decision.
- Although a number of development schemes have been launched in this sector, in our study only 9.40% were found to have received some government aid in the form of loans, grants, fertilisers, seeds, etc. Nobody was provided equipment or training.
- Women perform a number of 'invisible' tasks. Besides their household chores, they also carry out a variety of agricultural tasks (for longer hours than men) which are considered easier than ploughing, which is traditionally reserved only for men.
- The main problems that adversely affect agriculture and agricultural activities are lack of irrigation facilities, physical ailments, limited capital and failure to control pests and insects.
- To solve these problems women need mobilisation of resources (capital, etc) and development of infrastructure, which includes the construction of canals, tubewells, etc, which would help them raise multiple crops and increase their income.

4.1.2 Cottage industry

- Women are mostly employed in the unorganised or informal sector, that is home-based production, relying on indigenous

resources, involving little capital and with a low level of technology, generating very low or irregular incomes. These goods are generally produced for sale. The skills they possess are mostly traditional skills, which are acquired outside the formal school system.

- The main reason for taking up this occupation is the availability of raw material from forests nearby (which means no cash investment), availability of time after household tasks are completed, possession of traditional skills and easy marketing.
- The raw materials used in this sector are mainly items collected from forests (70%), which are the main sources of their livelihood. Leaf-plates and bamboo craft are the main items produced in this sector.
- Seasonal availability of raw material and their seasonal demand, long distances travelled (to forests and the market), physical ailments, harassment by forest officials, attacks by wild animals, lack of bargaining power and lack of storage facilities are the main obstacles that women pursuing this occupation face. A majority of them work against heavy odds.
- The skills they have are traditional in nature, acquired in their families. 83.02% have not received any formal training in any of the skills.
- As already discussed, women in the informal sector do not always earn in cash; they usually barter their goods. They work for 1-10 hours and earn Rs 5-15 per day. A few, who work for 10-15 hours, are able to earn around Rs 30 per day.
- These women produce in small quantities and sell at little or no profit as they lack storage facilities, and as the products cannot stand wear-and-tear. This is probably the reason why most of them have no difficulty selling what they produce.
- As far as their role in fixing the price of the products is concerned, these women generally lack bargaining power, since — given the lack of infrastructural facilities and the seasonal nature of the products — they have no option but to sell at the prices available.
- Lack of awareness of government schemes is a major problem faced by women working in this sector. This makes it impossible for them to take advantage of schemes meant for their development. About 80% of women working in this area have not received any government aid and about 65% do not have any knowledge of any government schemes. Even those who have availed of some benefits do not have much information about the programmes. They know only the name of the scheme or the purpose for

which the loan has been taken. There are also some among the beneficiaries who do not know anything about the scheme benefiting them. It seems that no orientation is provided to them to maximise the benefits of the schemes.

- The main problem here seems to be the corruption prevailing in government offices. Women face harassment in various forms. They also believe that the support they are given is not relevant to their needs. The loans, which they receive in installments, or the equipment they get without being trained in its use, actually make things more difficult for them.
- Most of these women want to expand their business but find themselves unable to do so on account of the heavy workload, lack of infrastructure, etc.
- To be able to expand their business they need resources in the form of capital, raw material, equipment and infrastructure; marketing facilities and support from the government in terms of training and capital; and support from their families in the areas of childcare and sharing of household responsibilities.

4.1.3 Petty business

- As already discussed, most of the women are also engaged in petty business, which involves the collection and sale of NTFP (80%) and agricultural products. They either collect the items from the forests or buy and sell these at some profit. Since going to the forest for collection of various items of daily use is part of their way of life, they also collect seasonal items which fetches them money without requiring any investment.
- Lack of bargaining power, physical ailments and personal problems such as excess workload and small children are the main constraints that women taking up this occupation face.
- What women in this sector need is capital, as they make very little profit. A majority do not know what they could do to improve their businesses. There are some who believe they cannot do anything at all to improve their lot.

4.1.4 Wage labour

- Women employed as wage labour do not have any regular employee status. They make up a greater proportion of casual labourers than men.
- About 60-70% of these women remain unemployed for about 10-15 days or more in a month.

- As most of these women are employed as agricultural labourers (57.19%), unavailability of work inside the village in the non-agricultural seasons leads to about 58% of the women labour force migrating in search of alternative employment. The seasonality exercise revealed a high migration rate in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts, especially in the months from January to March or April and again June to September.
- Women are paid less than men in all sectors of wage labour. They do not get more than Rs 20-25, whereas men receive Rs 30-35. The women are aware of this wage discrimination but they either believe that men work harder than them or that they must meekly accept whatever they get, as other women are ready to work at even lower wages.
- Alternative sources of income for casual labourers include cottage industry and NTFP collection and sale. Most of them remain unemployed and engage in household activities and development of their own land during lean periods.
- More opportunities for work inside villages and more construction works undertaken by the government might make things easier for them. Changes in wage structure may also constitute a possible solution to their problems.

4.1.5 Animal husbandry

- Those who are dependent on livestock as a means of livelihood mostly keep more than one animal in their houses.
- Though women do all the tasks related to animal care, from feeding the animals to cleaning the cowsheds and bathing the animals, they are not allowed any say in the purchase or sale of the animals or animal products. They do not play any decision-making role at all.
- Insufficient capital and lack of clear ideas about the expansion of business are the main hurdles. Government assistance in the form of more animals, veterinary care, loans, space and training to improve the livestock business will enable women to overcome these hurdles.
- Lack of awareness about government schemes for the development of businesses makes it difficult for women to take advantage of these schemes.
- In spite of playing a major role in the field of animal care, no government scheme addresses the training needs of women.

4.2. Credit and savings

- Most of the women have not taken any family loans. Lack of ownership of resources is one of the reasons for the non-availability of formal credit (NCSEW 1988). Of those who have taken loans, the main sources are banks, government schemes and savings societies. Ignorance about the source and the reason for taking a loan also characterised the women's attitudes. Most had taken loans in the form of cash.
- The fact that women lack control over their income becomes clear from the finding that only 241 out of 865 respondents have savings deposits. Most of them have deposited these in savings societies. Savings societies play a major role in providing them loans in times of need and at lower interest. Before they started saving, they faced a lot of problems in getting loans.

4.3 Non-workers

- Women constitute a significant proportion of the workforce engaged in the primary and secondary sectors. Even women classified as non-workers are engaged in one or more activities relating to primary occupations solely for household consumption.
- Their unpaid work included domestic work, child rearing, firewood and water collection, work in their own agricultural fields, and leaf-plate, mat and broom making for household consumption. Had these tasks been done for others, these women would have earned money and their contribution to the family income would have been visible. Many women say they will have to wait till their children grow up to be able to use the skills they possess to earn money. A significant number of women did not know how they could use their skills to become economically independent.
- These women need assistance from government and family (52.90%), support for childcare, training, loans, equipment and inputs to be able to engage in some form of occupation.
- The personal problems the women themselves perceive include health problems, unwillingness to work, lack of confidence and lack of ability. External problems include small children at home, heavy workloads and family constraints. Lack of capital is also an external cause that inhibits participation in income-generating activities.

4.4 Beneficiaries

- The main schemes that benefited women were DWCRA, IRDP, IMY

and Mahila Mandals under ICDS.

- The cash received in the name of women is in most cases either consumed by the family or used by male members of the family. Only a few could use it to increase their income-generating capacity.
- Most of the women covered by our study were not aware of any schemes operating in Orissa other than the one under which they had benefited. This limited their access to various other benefits, which could have been available to them. Most of the beneficiaries of DWCRA and IRDP were known to each other and most had got capital from the government.
- No difference between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries existed in the eyes of most respondents. Only a few said that beneficiaries were better off.
- Quite a significant number did not know what benefits they had received, thereby implying that they were beneficiaries only on paper.
- The difficulties that beneficiaries face in receiving government assistance mostly relate to corruption at government offices. They have to make several trips to the offices, entailing considerable expense. They even have to pay bribes to get their loans sanctioned. Some believe that the support system is partial and not need-based, so that they have to repay the loan without being able to increase their incomes.
- Those who have received training usually feel that the training was insufficient, while to some the training seemed of no use at all.
- The selection of beneficiaries was not guided by any objective criteria. They were either referred by somebody or were selected for being active in the group. In such a situation, where no specific method of selection of beneficiaries is used, the most needy might be most neglected.
- More than 50% could not decide which scheme was better for them. Among those who could decide, DWCRA and IRDP were the main schemes perceived as good, though most respondents could not specify why they felt this.
- The suggestions put forward by beneficiaries to improve the schemes related mainly to the provision of more capital, mobilisation of resources, infrastructure and training. Suitable action at the government level, they thought, would make it easier for them to access benefits from government schemes.



5 Facilitating economic participation: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter highlights the factors that restrict or facilitate economic participation, identifies women's needs and looks at the gaps and potential of government intervention.

5.1 Conclusion

5.1.1 Factors that facilitate or inhibit women's economic participation

From the study it was evident that the factors that restrict the economic participation of women in tribal Orissa outnumber those that facilitate their economic participation. Since tribals largely depend on forests for their livelihood, growing deforestation threatens their livelihood base. This situation hits women particularly hard, making their workload even heavier. Women have to travel long distances and spend longer hours collecting minor forest produce, but they get less when they sell this. It was observed that most women engaged in more than one occupation and undertook multiple ventures to support themselves. Some of the facilitating factors are mentioned below:

- Women depend on the collection of minor forest produce; the facilitating factor is easy availability of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), which is the major source of their livelihood. But with increasing deforestation and restrictions imposed on the collection of forest produce, their participation is limited.
- Given their abject poverty, survival is the main concern of most people. Women are forced to engage in income-generating activities in addition to their household chores. As a consequence they have to bear a heavier workload.
- In some areas where NGOs are working, savings societies have started playing an important role by increasing women's access to capital in a limited way. Self-help groups present alternatives to high-interest loans, but for these groups to function effectively they must be run by literate women.

5.1.2 Problems or constraints faced by women in all sectors of employment

- Women lack access to and control over the main sources of production such as land, capital and technology. They lack proper irrigation facilities for agriculture, which is their main source of livelihood. To fetch drinking water they have to walk long distances, which consumes much of their time and energy.
- Health is another inhibiting factor that often forces women to stay at home. Women in general have been found to neglect their health and nutritional needs. They therefore suffer from frequent physical ailments. Unhygienic health practices, lack of medical facilities and the high price of medicines contribute to their poor health status. Having to carry heavy loads adds to their problems. Walking long distances to forests and the market exposes them to heat, rain and cold. They commonly suffer from malaria.
- A heavy workload at home — childcare, animal care, work in the fields, collection of forest produce, cooking, cleaning and washing — prevents them from taking up full-time employment. This leads to low participation in full-time jobs.
- The seasonal availability of raw material from forests, the seasonal nature of agriculture and lack of work opportunities in the villages in the non-agricultural season keeps them unemployed for more than half the year. Those who can move out in search of work often migrate with their families in non-agricultural seasons. Those who cannot, stay behind and remain unemployed or take up some petty business to support themselves, which often fails to provide them food security.
- With deforestation, decreasing supplies of fuel increase the amount of time required for gathering fuelwood and other materials. Scarcity of forest produce, which is a source of income, may result in loss of jobs for women, especially in the case of self-employed women. For such people, the only option is wage labour, which is not available throughout the year.
- Lack of capital and infrastructure is cause for concern. Low investment capacity, lack of storage capacity and limited access to markets forces them to sell their products at little or no profit, and they thus get exploited by middlemen who have access to the market.
- Insufficient capital combined with lack of knowledge about the latest technology, lack of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, etc, and lack of clear ideas about the expansion of businesses also constitute major problems.

- Lack of awareness about government schemes meant for their development leads to a failure to take advantage of the schemes. Ignorance among those who have availed of benefits affects proper utilisation of the benefits received.
- These women do not have any access to savings. A major part of their income is spent on day-to-day purchases, making their contribution to household incomes invisible.
- According to the beneficiaries, the difficulty in receiving government aid is mainly the result of corruption in government offices to which they have to make several trips, involving a lot of expense. They even have to pay bribes to get their loans sanctioned. Some believe that the support system is partial and not need-based, which worsens their plight as they have to repay their loans without any corresponding increase in their income.
- Because they have no control over the resources of production, women lack confidence in their abilities. To become economically independent women must be able to exercise control over the means of production. Economic independence would contribute significantly to their sense of social security and self-esteem.
- Wage discrimination deprives women of their right to equal pay for equal work. Policy measures have failed to ensure equality in this sphere.
- Women are harassed by forest officials during the collection of NTFP, by middlemen while marketing their products, and by government officials while getting government benefits. These problems need to be addressed.
- The findings of the study also suggest that the assistance provided by the government under various schemes is not need-based. In most cases, the support is partial or inappropriate. For example, if equipment is provided, proper training on operating the same is missing. Electrical equipment is provided in places where there is rarely any power supply. Women are often trained in skills for which raw materials are either expensive or not easily available. As a result, the skills acquired become redundant.
- If specific criteria for the selection of beneficiaries are not adhered to, the most needy get neglected. Most of these women are unaware of the selection criteria; they often do not know that such schemes exist or what a BPL card is. Some of them do not have the time to participate in meetings, which seem unimportant to them in comparison to their pressing daily chores and survival needs.

5.1.3 Conditions identified by rural women as likely to facilitate their economic participation

- Most of the women want to become economically independent. Their economic independence requires mobilisation of resources (capital, etc) and development of infrastructure, which includes construction of canals, tubewells, storage facilities and proper linkages to markets. These would help them produce multiple crops, increase production and store their produce for future sale. Proper linkages to the market would rescue them from exploitation by middlemen.
- Those who want to expand their businesses and increase production find themselves unable to do so because of a heavy workload, lack of infrastructure and childcare responsibilities. Adequate support from families in the form of shared responsibilities and from the government in the form of childcare centres like anganwadis would help women spare more time for productive work.
- Most of the women are agricultural labourers for whom no employment is available during non-agricultural seasons, when they occupy themselves with household activities and develop their own land or migrate in search of work. More work opportunities inside villages such as government construction work during non-agricultural seasons might make things easier for them.
- Women are often deprived of credit and training facilities in agriculture and animal husbandry because they do not legally own the resources of production. Women carry out most of the activities in agriculture and livestock-related businesses as far as production is concerned. Thus training in related areas of employment would equip them with better skills, which would ensure better business and better quality of produce. Training in newer skills would also help them take up new and more profitable businesses.
- Equal pay for equal work is one of the most important needs of the women as most of them are employed as wage labour and find themselves unable to get equal wages for the same amount of work that men do.
- Financial assistance provided to all sectors of employment has been found to be inadequate. The capital base of these women is usually very weak and they are unable to avail of adequate financial assistance as they cannot provide the security demanded by lending agencies due to lack of ownership of resources.

- Simplifying government procedures for advancing loans and taking steps against corrupt practices by government officials would help women improve their economic situation.

5.1.4 The government's policy interventions and programme approaches

Discussion of the problems and needs of women has already dealt with the various aspects of government policy interventions and programme approaches from the women's point of view in each sector of employment separately. The main features of the programmes in the study area can be enumerated as follows:

- Four schemes — IRDP, DWCRA, IMY and ICDS — were the only ones the beneficiaries had taken advantage of. Women knew nothing about the other schemes.
- While many had received capital, only a few had received the training needed to upgrade their skills. Many did not know what benefits they had received. A question arises here: what difference can these programmes make to the lives of the women beneficiaries when they do not even know what help they have been given?
- Making several trips to government offices represents an expense that women cannot afford. It also wastes their time, which they could utilise in carrying out many productive tasks. Bribing officers to get their loans sanctioned is another problem they face.
- The assistance is not need-based.
- Non-adherence to the selection criteria and lack of knowledge about the criteria on the part of people.

The views of government officials from the various blocks under study, on government programmes, provide a new perspective on the problems addressed by the study. Some of these are mentioned below:

- The DWCRA manual is voluminous and most of the officials are not aware of all the provisions.
- The government still follows a target-oriented approach in which numbers — not the needs of people and the quality of assistance provided — are more important.
- Lack of in-built mechanisms for the recovery of loans is one of the limitations of the programmes.
- Acute shortage of manpower is a problem. Anganwadi staff have a heavy workload. The sectors are too big and it is difficult for

supervisors to manage each sector properly with the help of a few staff members.

- It is difficult to ensure efficiency in the absence of proper monitoring of the programmes.

5.2 Recommendations

The economic contributions made by women have been found to be related to their status in society. Some scholars, however, believe that economic contribution by itself is not enough to guarantee equal status for women. They must have control over the means of production and should have opportunities for equal participation in family and community decision-making processes (Desai and Raj 1987). As a majority of women workers belong to the unprotected, self-employed and unorganised sector, and as their earnings are extremely low, their contribution to the family income and the national income goes unrecognised. Even the definition of economic participation provided by the census is flawed, for it does not include productive work done inside households, which is a major source of livelihood. Based on the empirical data collected in the study, the following suggestions can be made:

- It is apparent that the first step towards understanding the process of development in rural areas is to redefine and re-analyse women's work. What is urgently needed is a quantification of their contribution, and a critical reflection of their roles and positions in the community as well as the institutions in which they work. In describing such contributions to the economy and making women's work visible, new meanings will need to be given to the concepts of 'labour', 'paid jobs' and other components of employment and productivity. Efforts should be made to enumerate women's unpaid work and compile statistical evidence of their qualitative and quantitative contributions to the family as well as national income.
- Given that a large majority of women in the area are illiterate and have no access to formal knowledge, facilities for Non-Formal Education (NFE) should be provided on a massive scale, ensuring equal access to education for all. However, this task will be incomplete if serious efforts to enhance both enrolment and retention are not made. Apart from this, adult education centres should strive to attract more women. Skill development programmes, if included in NFE, could help women find alternative sources of livelihood so that they will not have to accept low or irregular income-generating occupations.

- The planning, conception and implementation of any programme should take into consideration the needs and concerns of the women for whom the programmes are designed. In the absence of this, the opportunities provided will not be utilised to the full and the burdens of these women will become heavier. The suggestions that have been offered by the beneficiaries themselves to improve the functioning of the schemes relate mainly to provisions for more capital, mobilisation of resources, infrastructure and training and market linkages.
- While women perform more tasks than men in the fields and at home, women are totally deprived of formal training in appropriate production technologies. Special emphasis needs to be placed on upgrading the existing skills of rural women (who possess traditional skills) through well-planned and carefully monitored training programmes.
- Training proves most useful for women when it relates to their current occupations and upgrades their skills in an area they already know well and feel confident in. The challenge for the government is therefore designing programmes that strike a balance between supporting women in their current occupations, which may be low status and low income, and encouraging movement into new areas of production which may be more lucrative, less strenuous, or traditionally reserved for men, for example bee-keeping, animal husbandry, etc.
- Availability of water is identified as a major problem area. The women lack drinking water facilities. They travel long distances everyday to fetch water. Irrigation facilities are also lacking. Building canals, digging tubewells, and creating water harvesting structures would help solve the problem to some extent.
- Housework is important for women in all economic groups. Maintenance responsibilities take away at least 50% of their time.
- Economically weaker sections of society have to do the chores at home and outside. Their days begin very early in the morning and continue until very late at night. Long working hours deny women rest or leisure and, as a consequence, they become vulnerable to health problems. Access to health facilities, nutrition and family planning services have been included in ICDS programmes. But they are not made available to women. Micro-assessment can help us study the implementation and impact of these programmes. Vigorous follow-up for the implementation and utilisation of existing schemes is also necessary.

- Women generally feel inhibited while seeking help for illnesses related to pregnancy, delivery, etc, and often cannot undertake paid work because of frequent pregnancies, mishaps or morbidity. Health services provided through locally trained nurses (*dais*) in whom they have faith should be brought within the reach of women.
- Steps to check the spread of malaria, which is the most common disease people in this region suffer from, must be taken.
- Government must establish marketing outlets at different centres. These would provide small entrepreneurs direct access to the market, which would eliminate the middlemen who routinely exploit entrepreneurs. Development of infrastructure for storage would also solve the problems of handling and preservation of goods. In the absence of such mechanisms and networks, people have no option but to barter their products for cheaper goods.
- To prevent the rural poor from migrating in search of work, steps need to be taken to increase job opportunities inside villages or blocks. Development programmes should be executed at a faster pace. Once their livelihood problems are solved, out-migration will automatically be reduced.
- Women lack access to land, resources, information and fair wages. All these constraints limit their productivity. Hence, government programmes and policies need to be restructured to address these constraints in a more focused way.
- In all sections of the questionnaire, FGD reports and interviews with officials, one thing that was repeatedly emphasised was the lack of awareness and clarity about government schemes. These schemes generally follow a target-oriented approach, in which the authorities forget the women who are really needy and handicapped by family constraints. The personnel rarely bother to persuade such women to participate in programmes. This target-oriented approach should be discouraged because, in the process of fulfilling targets, the government is not able to reach out to the needy and build the trust which would motivate the women to accept the challenges of the programmes.
- Emphasis needs to be placed on promoting awareness of the development programmes being executed in the area. Orientation about the schemes — eligibility, proper utilisation, repayment, etc — is essential for their implementation. There are a number of formalities that the beneficiaries have to complete. If they are ignorant about them, they may not be able to utilise the benefits of the scheme and will end up being overburdened with the responsibility of repaying the loan without receiving any benefits

from the scheme.

- It should be kept in mind that merely creating awareness among rural women would be counter-productive if delivery of services according to their requirements is not ensured. The problems of harassment by officials, lengthy procedures, multiple trips to the block office leading to heavy travel expenses form a feature of all schemes. Thus, simplifying procedures, raising the awareness level, and checking corruption at government offices should be prioritised.
- Support from families and help from the government in the form of childcare centres like anganwadis would relieve the women of childcare responsibilities. Those women who cannot go to work because they have to take care of small children at home will thus be able to return to work. The need for such help was stressed by all the workers, non-workers and beneficiaries covered by the study. This should therefore be urgently addressed. Some relief from childcare would reduce the time spent on household activities and enable women to undergo training or receive education, acquire new skills or take up income-generating activities.
- Possession of land or other resources of production not only confers status and recognition on owners, but also provides them with power over the means of production. Efforts should be made to increase women's access to land and other resources of production, thereby increasing their access to other forms of credit and benefits. Women are often at a disadvantage in the absence of resource ownership, because banks, while advancing loans, often ask for some type of guarantee, which the women are not in a position to provide.
- Though wage structures are revised from time to time, there is a discrepancy between male and female wages that goes against the equal wage for equal work policy. The wages received by women are much lower than the minimum prescribed wage. The need of the hour is wage revision in tune with the realities that characterise the lives of the workers. Awareness of such revisions is required if they are to get what they are entitled to, because these women have no option but to accept whatever they get in view of the surplus labour available and the scarcity of work.
- Savings societies have emerged as viable solutions to the problem of the lengthy procedure of procurement of funds from the government. They have helped women with loans at lower interest rates, but illiteracy among women often renders the process difficult. Efforts should be made to build and strengthen women's co-operatives and ensure full participation of women in the same.

This would not only make them aware of their rights as workers but also help them gain confidence.

- Last but not least, the success of development schemes for women depends on the participation of women themselves. The attitudes of women and society need to be reshaped. NGOs have an important role to play here because they have the capacity to reach the grassroots. They can establish a better rapport with the rural poor than government employees can. Since rigid bureaucratic rules and procedures do not bind them, NGOs can function with greater flexibility and readjust their activities quickly and continuously as they learn from experience.

To conclude, it must be accepted that though efforts have been made to bring women into the mainstream, factors such as lack of awareness, illiteracy, social constraints and heavy workloads have been responsible for their poor economic situation. The peculiarities and problems of a state like Orissa are manifold. These are compounded by the absence of a holistic approach by planners. Rural/tribal women are burdened with illiteracy, social constraints, heavy workloads, etc, which lead to a mismatch between the needs and aspirations of women and the actual benefits of policies and programmes.

To empower rural/tribal women in a real sense — to make their lives more meaningful socially, economically and politically — there has to be a concerted effort by the government in meaningful partnership with various formal and non-formal agencies. This will ensure — by developing their skills, both formal and informal, by disseminating more information about the various government schemes and by correcting the lopsided planning and policies — that women are gainfully employed within village society throughout the year. The above-mentioned suggestions, if taken seriously, would help reduce, if not remove, the existing gaps. Women must recognise that they are participants and citizens who, though poor and illiterate, still have constitutional rights to fair treatment, justice, dignity, a fair share in the fruits of development, and, above all, to information about their entitlements and the alternatives available to them to make decisions about their own lives.

Annexure 1

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Among the most widely used research tools in the social sciences are in-depth group interviews or focus group discussions. A 'group' is a number of interacting individuals with common interests; 'depth' involves seeking information that is more profound, that is usually accessible at inter-personal levels; and 'interview' implies the presence of a moderator who uses the group as a device for eliciting information. The term 'focus' implies that the interview is limited to a small number of issues and that the participants are carefully selected.

The focus group interview in the study involved 15-20 individuals who discussed various issues under the guidance of a moderator who promoted interaction and ensured that the discussion remained fixed on the topic. The focus of the FGDs of the present study was on the different aspects of economic participation of women.

- 1 Various income-generation activities.
- 2 The facilities available to them that enabled their work.
- 3 Whether they had any access to and control over both the income they were generating and the family income, as well as the role they played in family decision-making.
- 4 The social constraints that prevented their participation in economic activities.
- 5 Whether any wage discrimination existed; if it did, what they could do about it.
- 6 Difficulties they faced in their work and at home.
- 7 The needs of the women for improving their present status.

All these aspects as covered in the five districts have been compiled in the table at the end of this section. The information gathered from this technique gives supporting information in areas that were not covered in the questionnaire. Probing these areas gave sufficient information about the social constraints and difficulties women face.

As far as income-generating activities are concerned, the information

from FGDs supports the findings of the previous section: that in all districts women are mostly dependent on forests and wage labour. The main source of their livelihood seems to be the forest, on which they are dependent for everyday items like fuelwood.

When asked about facilities that have made work participation easier for them, women in Keonjhar and Sundergarh said that savings societies have helped them with loans at low interest rates in times of need. They can depend on anganwadis to take care of their children when they go out for work, and their group unity has helped in the success of schemes like DWCRA. In other districts the women could not speak of any facility that helped their economic participation. Rather, they spoke of the many difficulties they need to overcome.

The general picture that emerges about their access and control as well as their decision-making authority is almost the same across the five districts. Women have no decision-making authority. They have to consult their male counterparts on every small decision. The male members take all the decisions in all families, with a few exceptions where male and female members take decisions after mutual consultation. In some cases, though the women keep their earnings, they are allowed to spend it only on day-to-day household needs like groceries. Men have full control over their income and they even take money from their wives for alcohol consumption. Women play a subordinate role in all families.

An important finding of the FGDs is that there are many social constraints that prevent women's participation in economic activities. They are harassed by men in their own family and by forest officials. The family does not appreciate their attendance at meetings of the savings society. They cannot go to the market at will. These women are treated as useless and their work is considered worthless, which makes them feel inferior to men. The women generally believe that their primary duty is towards their family and children, so to attend to family duties they have to compromise on work. Their work is always secondary.

Though wage revisions are made from time to time and 'equal pay for equal work' is the policy, none of the women workers get the same wages as their male counterparts. At places where men get Rs 30, women generally get Rs 20. This wage discrepancy exists even in cases where they earn in kind. When men get 6 units of rice in exchange for their labour, women get 4-5 units. The women are aware of the wage discrepancy but as poverty forces other women to work at even lower wages, they have to accept whatever they get. Women in Sundergarh believe that men work harder so they should get more wages. They do

not see wage discrepancy as a problem. This shows that one of the causes of the low status of women is their own perception of themselves as inferior to men.

The difficulties that these women face vary from one district to the other. Harassment by forest guards or middlemen is common to all districts. In Keonjhar, the main difficulty emerged as the multiple workload borne by women. Low awareness of government schemes and the criteria for selection of beneficiaries prevented them from availing of government benefits. Not all people below the poverty line have BPL cards. In Koraput, wage labour is not available throughout the year. They are dependent on the collection and sale of forest produce. They are harassed by forest guards and have to pay bribes in cash or kind. Wild animals in the forest are also a problem. Markets are far away, which means exploitation by middlemen. For women in Phulbani, multiple roles and long working hours were the main difficulties. Low wage structure, lack of social security and dependence on forest produce are added difficulties. For women in Sundergarh, the distance to the market makes things difficult. They do not get the actual price of their products as middlemen take large cuts. The misbehaviour of DWCRAs supervisors is one reason for the lack of popularity of the scheme. These women also complained of harassment by forest officials.

The needs expressed by the women themselves vary from district to district. In Keonjhar, the main requirement of the women related to rice processing. They don't want middlemen involved in the sale of their products. They want to become self-sufficient and sell their products on their own. Joint rice processing schemes, awareness about government schemes, training in rice processing, long-term loans and equipment for rice processing, and regular supervision by government officials were the other needs related to government interventions which would help them achieve their goals.

Women in Koraput felt more knowledge and awareness of government schemes, proper marketing facilities, and effective group formation under the government schemes would solve their problems. They believe that collective action is always better than individual action and hence want to build up their strength in groups.

Women in Phulbani wanted equal property rights. Access to property and other resources of production would give them some control over the products and they would have a better position in the family, they felt. They would also have more bargaining power once they got control over the resources. They can get access to new technology and

markets if they are owners of resources and products.

Most of the responses in Sundergarh were similar. These women believe that they need to get a proper price for their goods. They also asked for minimum wages to be at least Rs 30. They need regular sources of income and believe that if they had facilities to look after their children (like anganwadis), they could go to work and contribute to the family income.

These are the main findings of the focus group discussions. Though these women are aware of the existing wage regulations, they accept the lower wage because there is excess labour available or because they believe that men deserve more. They are subject to physical and verbal harassment at home and at the workplace, which often limits their participation. The FGDs also show that these women have no decision-making power or control over their income. Since these women spend their income on day-to-day purchases, no record of the total income and total support provided to the family is kept (a majority of the women are illiterate). It also shows that though they wanted to participate in savings society meetings, their men beat them up for having done so.

The main features of the focus group discussions in the five districts have been enumerated in the opposite table.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS							
Districts	Income-generation activities	Facilities	Access and control (decision-making)	Social constraints	Wage discrimination	Difficulties	Needs
Mayurbhanj	- Agricultural labour daily wage - Leaf-plate making - Firewood collection and sale	- For leaf-plate making, no capital is to be invested - Children taken care by others in joint family - If more than one child, elder one takes care - Take child to workplace and leave them to play - In times of hardship savings societies helped them with loans at low rates of interest - Funds for small business	- Male earnings spent as per their own wishes - Part of their money given to men for liquor - Household expenditure planned by women - Permission by men required for work and expenditure	- No recognition for their work - Physical torture by men, abused by husband and other men	- Men get more than 30, women get 20 - They get 6 units of rice, women get 4-5 units of rice	- Sexual harassment - Work burden but no escape	- Joint rice processing - Self sufficient to be able to sell on their own - No middlemen
Koraput	- Leaf-plate making - Wage labour - Firewood	- In times of hardship savings societies helped them with loans at low rates of interest - Funds for small business	- No decision-making by men, men decide before making any expenditure	- Abused by husbands - No family support - Attending meetings of savings society with difficulty	- Labour always not available so accept whatever is given	- Exchange of leaf-plates - Small children - Water shortage	- More group tasks - Water facilities
Koraput	- Forest produce collection and sale - No daily wage throughout year	- Forming of savings society has helped them with loans at lower interest rate and in small trades	- No access and control over income - Income spent on groceries, clothing and children's education - Decision-made members - Permission-any expenditure over income of men, and women can spend on groceries or household consumption or cosmetics but major expenses are decided together - Spend on household consumption and personal needs - No land ownership	- Cannot interact with others - No access to market	- No other alternative than accept whatever they get	- Marketing - Harassed by forest officers - Harassed by middlemen	- More knowledge about government schemes - Proper marketing facilities
Phulbani	- NTFP fuel and fodder not timber - Wage agricultural labour		- Active earner but considered secondary breadwinner of family - Social attitudes towards women: taboos against women ploughing	- Know about the minimum wage but poverty forces them to accept what they get or they'll be ousted	- Collection of minor produce only - Multiple role lack	- More land titles - New and profitable trade should be introduced	- More land titles - New and profitable trade should be introduced
Sundergarh	- NTFP collection and sale - Bamboo craft - Vegetables	- Acquainted to take care of children	- Permission of male members - Women keep earnings - Male members purchase major items - Decision-making is always mutual	- Men get more wages as they work harder. It is not a problem for them	- Dual role time management - To attend to family, compromise on work	- Less work inside village - Distance to market	- Someone to take care of children - Access to market and proper price of products - Just wages

Annexure 2

Seasonality (Note: Migration)

Sl No	District	Block	Villages
1	Mayurbhanj	Karanjia	Saraspasi, Balipasi, Beunria
		Thakurmunda	Bhodubeda, Khuntaposi, Raipada
2	Keonjhar	Saharpada	Radhapur, Ucchantangara, Talapada
		Ghatgaon	Mudrabeda, Kapasapada, Tikira
3	Koraput	Boipariguda	Rupabeda, Cherka, Majhiaguda
		Kundra	Kenduguda, Ambaguda, Padarkanta
4	Phulbani	Tumudibandh	Mundigarh, Desughati, Bhaliapani
		Kotagarh	Madaguda, Nuasahi, Landabali
5	Sundergarh	Hemgir	Munderkhet, Beheramunda, Ramlata
		Lefripada	Telendihi, Suruguda, Saletikra

DISTRICTS	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
	Cropping pattern	Paddy	Nil	Nil	*	Paddy, blackgram, vegetables, maize, ragi, horsegram, sesame, kandula
MAYURBHANJ	Distance to work	F: 1-5 km WL: Migration outside district	F: 2 km WL: To Cuttack, BBSR, Bhadrak, Balasore	F: 2-3 km WL: 2-3 km M: CTC, BBSR, Bhadrak, Balasore		F: 2 km WL: 3 km Inside the village
	Diseases	Dysentery, cracked hands and feet, Paddy, mouth ulcers	Fever, cough, dysentery, cracked feet	Cold, cough, bodyache, headache		Weakness, backache, bodyache
	Cropping pattern	Paddy, horsegram, blackgram, sesame, turmeric, ginger, saru	Vegetable, cabbage, brinjal, tomato, chilly	Nil	Nothing	Paddy, maize, ragi, vegetable, turmeric, ginger
	Distance to work	WL: 30 km M: 5 km	WL: 4-15 km M: 6-7 km	F: 7-8 km WL: 4-5 km M: 30/40 km	F: 7-8 km WL: 2-5 km M: 6-15 km	F: 1-10 km WL: 3-4 km M: 6-7 km
KEONJHAR	Diseases	Malaria, dysentery, fever, waterborne diseases	Illness related to change in weather, bodyache, headache, diarrhoea	Bodyache, vomiting, fever, diarrhoea	Diarrhoea, vomiting, bodyache, boils and skin rashes	Cold, bodyache, vomiting, diarrhoea, malaria, skin diseases
	Cropping pattern	Paddy, horsegram, allasi, ragi	Paddy, horsegram, ragi, blackgram, allasi	Nil	Nothing	Ragi, suan, kandula
KORAPUT	Distance to work	M: 10 km		F: 10 km/13 kosa	WL: Hyderabad	1/2 km to nearest fields
	Diseases	Sesame, horsegram, blackgram, turmeric, mustard	Sesame, horsegram, blackgram, sugarcane, mustard	Headache, measles	Bodyache	Bodyache
PHULBANI	Cropping pattern	F: 5-40 km WL: 8-10 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 7-10 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 8-9 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 8-9 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 8-9 km
	Distance to work	Malaria, fever, bodyache, cracked skin	Malaria, fever, dysentery, bodyache	Malaria, fever, dysentery, headache, bodyache	Measles, smallpox, malaria, bodyache, dysentery	Fewer, bodyache, chickenpox, meningitis
	Diseases	Paddy, vegetables	Vegetables, paddy, sugarcane	Vegetables	Peanuts, mung, vegetables (judung), paddy	Watermelon, vegetables, anjar dal, paddy
	Cropping pattern	F: 1 km	WL: Long distance	F: 1-5 km M: 5-15 km	F: 2-4 km Market: 1-15 km	F: 3-4 km M: 1-15 km
SUNDERGARH	Distance to work	Cold/cough, fever, stomach pain, cracked skin	Cough, vomiting, dysentery	Headache	Malaria, skin diseases, bodyache, chickenpox	prickly heat, fever
	Diseases					

* Key for migration. WL - Migration outside district. F - Distance travelled to get work. M - Migration within district

DISTRICTS		JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
MAYURBHANJ	Cropping pattern	Blackgram, greengram, sesame, vegetables	Paddy, blackgram, upland paddy, vegetables	Paddy, blackgram, ragi, maize, vegetables, khasa horsegram, sesame, kandula	Vegetable, maize, black horsegram, paddy	Paddy	Paddy
	Distance to work	WL: 4-5 km	Close to village WL: 4-6 km	WL: In and out of village F: 2 km	WL: In the village or 3 km	WL: 4-6 km	WL: 4-6 km
	Diseases	Cold, fever, headache bodyache, starvation, stomach upset	Cold, fever, headache, bodyache, starvation	Fever, bodyache, pani-khia	Fever, headache, bali-khia, red eyes	Cold, bodyache, fever	Cold, fever, bodyache, diarrhoea, headache, cracked feet
	Cropping pattern	Vegetables, blackgram	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables, potato, cabbage, tomato	Vegetables, potato, cabbage, tomato
KEONJHAR	Distance to work	F: 4-8 km WL: 10-15 km M: 6-7 km	F: 7-8 km WL: 10-30 km M: 6-7 km	F: 4-12 km WL: 30 km (3 weeks)	F: 7-8 km WL: Inside village or 10-30 km M: 6-7 km	F: 7-8 kosa WL: 10-15 km M: 6-7 km	WL: 7-30 km M: 6-7 km
	Diseases	Viral fever, skin diseases, body pain	Cold due to old rice consumption, fever, bali-khia, bodyache, pani-khia	Cold/cough, samipat, viral fever, malaria, skin diseases	Malaria, headache, fever, pani-khia, skin diseases	Cold, fever, bodyache, chapped skin	Cold, fever, bodyache, cracked skin
	Cropping pattern	Small paddy, maize, upland paddy, ragi, guji, vegetables	Upland paddy, maize, ragi	Mushroom, kanda, vegetables	Upland paddy, suan, blackgram, maize, horsegram	Upland paddy, horsegram, maize, vegetables	Suan, sesame, black and horsegram, ragi, alasi, upland paddy
	Distance to work			F: 10-13 kosa	F: 13 kosa		
KORAPUT	Diseases	Pani-khia, fever, cracked skin		Cough	Pani-khia, malaria, bali-khia, diarrhoea, vomiting		
	Cropping pattern	Maize, paddy, guji, jhan, kosala, suan, sesame, mustard, black and greengram	Paddy, vegetables, koir, blackgram	Small paddy, ragi, maize, kosala, vegetables	Maize	Paddy, ragi, koir, vegetables, black and horsegram	Bajra, kusa, sesame
	Distance to work	F: 5-15 km WL: 8-9 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 7-9 km Fishing: 1-2 km	F: 3-15 km WL: 8-9 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 8-9 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 4-10 km	F: 5-15 km WL: 7-9 km
	Diseases	Malaria, fever, dysentery, bodyache	Malaria, dysentery, fever, bodyache	Malaria, fever, dysentery, headache, cough, skin diseases, bodyache	Malaria, fever, bodyache, dysentery, skin diseases, headache, cold and cough	Malaria, fever, bodyache, dysentery	Malaria, fever, bodyache, dysentery
SUNDERGARH	Cropping pattern	Jhudung, peanut, green and blackgram, vegetables, guji, paddy	Paddy, black and greengram, vegetables, ragi, peanuts, juhundung, maize, sesame, guji	Vegetables, green and blackgram, maize, peanuts, ragi, sesame, jatangi, guji	Vegetables	Vegetables, paddy, maize, peanuts, black, green and horsegram, sugarcane	Vegetables, paddy, peanuts, horsegram
	Distance to work	F: 3-4 km M: 5-15 km	F: 1 km	F: 3 km M: 1-15 km	F: 4 km M: 4-15 km	F: 1 km M: 30 km	F: 1 km
	Diseases	Malaria, dysentery, vomiting, waterborne diseases, cold/cough	Cracked skin, fever, dysentery	Malaria, bodyache, skin diseases, pani-khia, dysentery, cold/cough, fever	Malaria, fever, cold, cough, vomiting, waterborne diseases, headache, dysentery	Cold/cough, fits and cracked skin	Fever, dysentery, cracked skin

SEASONS		BAISAKHA (APRIL-MAY)					JYESTHA (MAY-JUNE)				
DISTRICTS		MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH
Type of work											
Collection and sale of forest produce		Kendu leaf, charkoli, tola, mango, kendu, firewood, sal leaf	Firewood, tola, kendu, kusum, sal leaf and seeds, mahula, charkoli, neem stick	Kusum, pita, mango, kendu, sal seeds, saranda, kendu leaf, tola, kanda, mahula, bamboo shoots, firewood, blackberry	Mango, kendu leaf, tola, charkoli, mushroom	Mango, kendu leaf, tola, firewood, mahula, sabai grass, charkoli	Kusum, sal leaf and seeds, tola, firewood, neem stick	Kusum, sal leaf and seeds, kendu leaf, tola, firewood	Mango, mushroom, tola	Kusum, mango, kendu, sal seeds, tola, kanda, bamboo shoots, firewood, blackberry, barada saag, mushroom	Kusum, mango, kendu, sal leaf, sabai grass, firewood and fruit collection
Agriculture		Loosening soil, manuring, bonding	Manuring, loosening soil, weeding, ploughing, irrigating, bonding, taking food to field	Loosening soil, manuring, weeding, bonding, sowing maize and blackgram	Loosening soil, manuring, weeding, sowing maize and ginger, planting of turmeric	Manuring and weeding of paddy, peanuts and sugarcane and their marketing	Loosening soil, manuring, weeding, transplanting	Loosening soil, manuring, weeding, carrying food and seed to field, irrigating	Loosening soil, manuring, weeding, transplanting, vegetable plantation, shifting cultivation, sowing paddy	Manuring, weeding, sowing maize, turmeric, kosala saag, jhari, banana, transplanting and developing	Manuring, weeding, sowing maize, transplanting paddy, harvesting, vegetable cultivation and marketing
Cottage industry		Handa, leaf-plate making, processing tamarind	Leaf-plate making	Leaf-plate making and fruit processing			Leaf-plate making, bamboo work and mat making	Leaf-plate making	Bamboo craft	Fruit processing	Fruit and mango seed processing
Wage labour		Agriculture	Agriculture and road construction	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	

SEASONS		ASADHA (JUNE-JULY)					SHRAVANA (JULY-AUGUST)				
DISTRICTS		MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH
Type of work											
Collection and sale of forest produce		Sai leaf, mushroom, khajuri leaf, mango, jackfruit, blackberries, ruku and gurudakoli	Tola, kusuma, mushroom, blackberries, other greens	Bada mushroom, kanda, bamboo shoots, kendu, bamboo	Kanda, mushroom, firewood, bamboo shoots, greens	Mushroom, firewood, bamboo shoots, koral	Mushroom, sai leaf, budakoli, firewood, grass	Mushroom and greens	Mushroom, kanda	Kanda, karadi, mushroom, greens, bamboo shoots, juna	Mushroom, bamboo shoots, khajuri leaf, firewood
Agriculture		Weeding, transplanting	Loosening the soil, weeding, transplanting, taking food to field	Weeding, transplanting, sowing paddy, alasi, suan, maize ragi, horsegram, harvesting beda dhana, kandula, vegetable cultivation	Transplanting, harvesting, sowing ragi, work in sugarcane field, vegetable cultivation, weeding, loosening soil	Transplanting, weeding, sowing mung, blackgram, greengram, ragi, sesame, peanut, jatingi, guri, vegetables	Weeding, transplanting, harvesting	Transplanting, weeding	Weeding, transplanting, sowing alasi, horsegram, maize, harvesting, vegetable cultivation	Transplanting, weeding, sowing horsegram, blackgram, sesame, paddy, kwer, harvesting maize, taking food to the field, guarding the field	Transplanting, weeding, sowing greengram, blackgram, application of pesticides, harvesting vegetables
Cottage industry			Leaf-plate making, oilseeds processing		Karadi processing, gudra work			Leaf-plate making	Bamboo craft		
Wage labour		Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
Others		Fishing									

SEASONS		BHADRABA (AUGUST-SEPTEMBER)					ASHWINA (SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER)				
DISTRICTS		MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH
Type of work											
Collection and sale of forest produce		Sal leaf, custard apple, indigenous potato collection	Khajuri leaf, Jhuna, cheru, bana alu, pita alu, sal leaf, mushroom	Mushroom, bamboo shoots	Jhuna, mushroom, sal leaf, greens	Mushroom, bamboo shoots	Sal leaf, custard apple	Pita alu, sal leaf	Bamboo and kanda, kendu leaf	Jhuna and honey, sal leaf, karadi, firewood, mushroom, date leaf	Kanda, bamboo shoots, pita alu, sabai grass, badun (broom), khajuri leaf, firewood
Agriculture		Harvesting of upland paddy, sowing of ragi, horsegram, blackgram	Harvesting of upland paddy, maize, sowing of ragi, sesame and horsegram, manuring and weeding	Weeding, harvesting of small paddy, ragi, upland paddy, guji, sowing of alisi, sesame, horsegram, vegetable cultivation	Weeding, harvesting maize	Weeding, transplanting, harvesting (peanut, paddy, guji, jhuding, and greengram), sowing of blackgram, greengram, horsegram, vegetable cultivation	Planting of blackgram, horsegram, harvesting	Harvesting lowland and upland, small paddy, ragi, sesame, sowing horsegram, greengram, weeding	Harvesting and processing of upland paddy, maize, ragi	Harvesting paddy	Weeding, harvesting and processing, sowing horsegram, vegetable cultivation
Cottage industry			Leaf-plate making	Bamboo craft	Leaf-plate making			Leaf-plate making		Mat making	
Wage labour		Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
Others										Fishing	

SEASONS		KARTIKA (OCTOBER-NOVEMBER)					MARGASIRA (NOVEMBER-DECEMBER)				
DISTRICTS		MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH
Type of work											
Collection and sale of forest produce		Sal leaf	Sal leaf and firewood	Bamboo, kanda,	Firewood, sal leaf, karadi, honey, mushroom	Badian (broom),			Sal leaf, bamboo collection	Sal leaf, honey	Firewood
Agriculture		Harvesting, storing paddy, processing paddy	Harvesting and processing paddy, sesame, horsegram, sowing of sesame, horsegram, blackgram	Harvesting of beta paddy, processing of maize, vegetable cultivation	Harvesting ragi, paddy, koire, sowing mustard	Harvesting and processing paddy, loosening soil, planting vegetables	Harvesting paddy, mustard, ragi, blackgram, horsegram, sesame	Harvesting paddy, sesame, horsegram, mustard, yam, processing paddy	Harvesting suan, sesame, blackgram, alas, ragi, beta paddy, processing horsegram	Sowing mustard, harvesting bafla, kusa, sesame, bunding, vegetable cultivation	Vegetable planting, paddy processing, sowing blackgram, harvesting
Cottage industry		Leaf-plate making	Leaf-plate making	Bamboo craft	Leaf-plate making		Rice processing	Leaf-plate making	Bamboo craft	Leaf-plate making	
Wage labour		Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
Others						Marketing vegetables					Marketing vegetables

SEASONS		PALASHA (DECEMBER-JANUARY)					MAGHA (JANUARY-FEBRUARY)				
DISTRICTS		KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	MAYURBHANJ	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	
Type of work		Sal leaf, firewood, stacking hay	Bamboo and firewood	Badun (broom), honey, firewood, khajuri leaf, turmeric, clearing forest for shifting cultivation	Sal leaf, firewood	Sal leaf, mahula, kendu, charkoli	Firewood, sal leaf	Mahula, bamboo, tamarind, kendu leaf	Firewood, bahun, turmeric, sal leaf, date palm leaf	Firewood, sal leaf, badun (broom)	
Collection and sale of forest produce											
Agriculture		Harvesting paddy, sesame, broadcasting of summer crop, paddy	Harvesting and processing of paddy, alsi, horsegram, paddy, vegetable cultivation, sowing of saag	Harvesting and sowing	Processing of paddy, peanuts and whatever is produced, vegetable cultivation, application of pesticides			Loosening soil, manuring, harvesting	Bunding, weeding, harvesting sugarcane, land development, planting of ginger	Harvesting and processing of paddy, sugarcane, vegetable cultivation, loosening soil, manuring, sowing paddy, wheat, greengram, peanut, mustard, pesticide application	
Cottage industry		Leaf-plate making	Brick making			Leaf-plate making, bamboo craft	Leaf-plate making			Leaf-plate making, liquor	
Wage labour		Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	House repairing	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	
Others		Handia marketing	Selling vegetables	Fishing, marketing of rice			Vegetable selling				

SEASONS		PHALGUNA (FEBRUARY-MARCH)					CHAITRA (MARCH-APRIL)				
DISTRICTS		MAYURBHANU	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH	MAYURBHANU	KEONJHAR	KORAPUT	PHULBANI	SUNDERGARH
Type of work		Firewood, sal leaf, mahula, charkoti, kendu leaf	Mahula, sal leaf	Sal seed, mahula, sal leaf, firewood, kendu leaf, tamarind	Mahula, firewood, khajuri leaf, castor	Mahula, bamboo, charkoti, firewood, grill, kendu leaf, badun (broom)	Mahula, sal leaf, firewood, kendu leaf, charkoti	Mahula, tamarind, charkoti, sal leaf	Mahula, kendu leaf, tola, kusuma, firewood, jhuna	Mahula, firewood, kendu, clearing forest for shifting cultivation	Sal leaf, mahula, firewood, charkoti, mushroom, kendu leaf, bamboo shoots
Collection and sale of forest produce											
Agriculture			Paddy processing		Levelling, bunding of land	Manuring, sugarcane planting, weeding, vegetable cultivation, guarding fields			Bunding	Levelling and bunding	Loosening soil, planting sugarcane, pesticide application, harvesting paddy, peanut, green gram
Cottage industry		Leaf-plate making, mat, broom	Handa preparation		Leaf-plate making		Leaf-plate making	Leaf-plate making	Bamboo craft	Leaf-plate making, gudia work	
Wage labour		Agriculture	Agriculture		Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture		Agriculture	Agriculture
Others			Vegetable selling								

Annexure 3

Statistical Appendix

Table 3.3: Comparison between main and secondary occupations of workers and beneficiaries

SL No	OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION	MAIN OCCUPATION			TOTAL OCCUPATION			SECONDARY OCCUPATION			TOTAL OCCUPATION		
		WORKER		BENEFICIARY	F	%	F	WORKER		BENEFICIARY	F	%	F
		F	%	F				F	%	F			
01	NO OCCUPATION			9	3.31	9	1.33	40	8.47	49	14.76	89	11.07
02	AGRICULTURE	134	32.92	66	24.26	200	29.46	36	7.63	36	10.84	72	8.96
03	COTTAGE INDUSTRY	72	17.69	76	27.94	148	21.80	84	17.80	55	16.57	139	17.29
	Leaf-plate making	53	13.02	31	11.40	84	12.37	57	12.08	28	8.43	85	10.57
	Mat making							1	0.21			1	0.12
	Tile making									1	0.30	1	0.12
	Spice making/Business			3	1.10	3	0.44			4	1.20	4	0.50
	Bamboo work	18	4.42	33	12.13	51	7.51	16	3.39	11	3.31	27	3.36
	Rope making	1	0.25	6	2.21	7	1.03	7	1.48	4	1.20	11	1.37
	Broom making							3	0.64			3	0.37
	Agarbatti making			3	1.10	3	0.44			6	1.81	6	0.75
	Badli/Papad making									1	0.30	1	0.12
04	WAGE LABOUR	146	35.87	64	23.53	210	30.93	146	30.93	94	28.31	240	29.85
05	OTHERS	1	0.25	7	2.57	8	1.18	2	0.42	2	0.60	4	0.50
	Tailoring	1	0.25	3	1.10	4	0.59	1	0.21	1	0.30	2	0.25
	Blacksmith/Helper							1	0.21	1	0.30	2	0.25
	Helping hand in utensil making			4	1.47	4	0.59			1	0.30	1	0.12
06	SERVICE	14	3.44	12	4.41	26	3.83	10	2.12	1	0.30	11	1.37
	Community service	7	1.72	6	2.21	13	1.91	2	0.42			2	0.25
	Service	3	0.74			3	0.44						
	Housework (maid servant)	4	0.98	6	2.21	10	1.47	8	1.69	1	0.30	9	1.12
07	LIVESTOCK-RELATED	2	0.49	3	1.10	5	0.74	6	1.27	6	1.81	12	1.49
	Grazing cattle/sheep	2	0.49			2	0.29	5	1.06	1	0.30	6	0.75
	Livestock/Animal husbandry							1	0.21	5	1.51	6	0.75
	Dairy products			3	1.10	3	0.44						
08	PETTY BUSINESS	38	9.34	35	12.87	73	10.75	148	31.36	89	26.81	327	40.67
	Forest produce collection/sale	27	6.63	9	3.31	36	5.30	134	28.39	68	20.48	202	25.12
	Firewood collection							2	0.42	1	0.30	3	0.37
	Rice processing/Business	4	0.98	11	4.04	15	2.21			5	1.51	5	0.62
	Puffed rice business	1	0.25	4	1.47	5	0.74	1	0.21	1	0.30	2	0.25
	Vegetable business	3	0.74	4	1.47	7	1.03	9	1.91	9	2.71	18	2.24
	Fish/dry fish business	2	0.49	1	0.37	3	0.44			1	0.30	1	0.12
	Mushroom business									1	0.30	1	0.12
	Grocery/tea shop	1	0.25	6	2.21	7	1.03			2	0.60	2	0.25
	Liquor production/sale									1	0.30	1	0.12
	Paddy business							2	0.42			2	0.25
	Total number of occupations	407	100	272	100	679	100	472	100	332	100	804	100
	Total number of respondents	360		256		616		360		256		616	

Table 3.4: Comparison between skills of workers and beneficiaries

SL No	SKILL DESCRIPTION	WORKER			BENEFICIARY			TOTAL SKILL		
		F	%		F	%		F	%	
01	Rope making	12	2.76		12	3.67		24	3.15	
02	Leaf-plate making	157	36.09		88	26.91		245	32.15	
03	Mat making	39	8.97		37	11.31		76	9.97	
04	Bamboo craft	42	9.66		46	14.07		88	11.55	
05	Tailoring	6	1.38		10	3.06		16	2.10	
06	Masonry				1	0.31		1	0.13	
07	Rice processing	2	0.46		5	1.53		7	0.92	
08	Packaging				1	0.31		1	0.13	
09	Broom making	29	6.67		23	7.03		52	6.82	
10	Embroidery/Knitting	5	1.15		7	2.14		12	1.57	
11	Agarbatti making	1	0.23		9	2.75		10	1.31	
12	Weaving	1	0.23		1	0.31		2	0.26	
13	Tile making	1	0.23		1	0.31		2	0.26	
14	Others	22	5.06		18	5.50		40	5.25	
Total number of skills		317	72.87		259	79.20		576	75.59	
**	No skill	118	27.13		68	20.80		186	24.41	
Total number of respondents		435	100		327	100		762	100	
Total number of respondents		360			256			616		

Table 3.5: Comparison between expenditure of income of women workers and beneficiaries

SL No	HELP DESCRIPTION	TOTAL				TOTAL			
		WORKER		BENEFICIARY		WORKER		BENEFICIARY	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
01	Children's education	39	5.39	40	7.97			79	6.44
02	Grocery and vegetable purchase	305	42.13	203	40.44			508	41.44
03	To mother for DWCKA investment	1	0.14	1	0.20			2	0.16
04	Medicines	86	11.88	47	9.36			133	10.85
05	Processing/marketing of rice	3	0.41	1	0.20			4	0.33
06	Purchase of clothes	166	22.93	100	19.92			266	21.70
07	Cultivation	5	0.69	2	0.40			7	0.57
08	Purchase as per need	8	1.10	5	1.00			13	1.06
09	Contribution at time of need	6	0.83	9	1.79			15	1.22
10	Only doing housework	1	0.14					1	0.08
11	Total responsibility	29	4.01	18	3.59			47	3.83
12	Contribution to family/social events	21	2.90	24	4.78			45	3.67
13	Savings	25	3.45	12	2.39			37	3.02
14	Reinvestment for business	5	0.69	6	1.20			11	0.90
15	Repayment of loans			7	1.39			7	0.57
16	Any other	2	0.28	3	0.60			5	0.41
Total help provided		702	96.96	478	95.22			1180	96.25
No assistance		22	3.04	24	4.78			46	3.75
Total number of responses		724	100	478	95			1202	98
Total number of respondents		360		256				616	

Table 3.8: Control and sale of agricultural produce on the basis of gender

ITEMS PRODUCED	CONTROL BY MALE	CONTROL BY FEMALE	CONTROL BY BOTH	NO SALE OF PRODUCE	TOTAL
Cereals	3.94	1.88	5.48	88.70	100.0
Pulses	11.28	3.05	14.02	71.65	100.0
Millet	7.96	1.73	12.46	77.85	100.0
Vegetables	12.78	11.28	16.17	59.77	100.0
Oilseeds	24.22	4.69	18.36	52.73	100.0
Onion	4.44	4.44	20.00	71.11	100.0
Sugarcane	33.33	11.11	22.22	33.33	100.0
Banana	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	100.0
Orum	0.0	0.00	14.29	85.71	100.0
Total	10.30 (184)	3.97 (71)	12.14 (217)	77.17 (1,379)	100.0 (1,787)

Source: Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

Table 3.13: Obstacles faced in getting materials

Obstacles faced	Production for sale
Animal attack	11.23
Harassment by forest officials/harassment/bribes	10.88
Distance	22.81
No profit/less profit	0.35
Seasonal availability of raw material/low availability	4.21
Non-flexible pricing	0.53
Expensive raw material/inadequate working capital/travel expenses	12.63
Lack of marketing facilities	0.88
Physical problems	14.21
No problems	8.42
Lack of manpower	1.05
Infrastructural problems	0.70
Non-availability of raw material/poor quality	7.54
Lack of equipment	0.18
Lack of training	0.00
Deforestation	0.70
Others	1.40
Can't say	2.28
Total	100

Source: Field Survey 1998

Table 3.14: Training received vs training provided

Training provider	Government	Family	Businessmen	Others	Traditional skill	No answer	Total	
Training received	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	%
Leaf-plate making	10	7	9	3	2	1	32	9.41
Broom making	7			1	1		9	2.65
Mat making		3					3	0.88
Bamboo craft	10	6			1		17	5.00
Fruit processing	2			1			3	0.88
Agarbatti making	8						8	2.35
Total	37	16	9	5	4	1	72	21.18

Table 3.15: Hours of work vis-à-vis per day income

Hours of work	Per day income (rupees)								Can't calculate	Total
	< 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	> 35		
1 to 5 hours	37.50	48.80	40.91	32.00	64.29	60.00	25.00	0.00	51.28	45.00
5 to 10 hours	33.33	29.60	39.77	48.00	35.71	26.67	50.00	66.67	30.77	35.00
10 to 15 hours	0.00	8.00	6.82	0.00	0.00	13.33	25.00	33.33	2.56	6.47
Can't specify (worked in available time)	29.17	13.60	12.50	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15.38	13.53
Total	100.0 (125)	100.0 (88)	100.0 (25)	100.0 (14)	100.0 (15)	100.0 (4)	100.0 (6)	100.0 (24)	100.0 (39)	100.0 (340)

Source: Field Survey 1998

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute numbers

Table 3.21: Comparison between male and female wages

WAGE STRUCTURE	MALE	FEMALE
Below Rs 5	0.13	0.26
Rs 5 to Rs 15	1.84	18.45
Rs 15 to Rs 25	22.79	40.84
Rs 25 to Rs 35	39.92	7.51
More than Rs 35	1.98	0.40
1 to 2 kg of paddy	1.58	5.14
2 to 3 kg of paddy	3.16	13.18
3 to 4 kg of paddy	13.44	5.53
4 to 5 kg of paddy	5.93	2.90
5 to 6 kg of paddy	2.50	3.29
6 to 7 kg of paddy	1.71	1.05
More than 7 kg of paddy	3.03	0.79
Can't calculate	1.98	0.66
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1998

Table 3.24: Source of family loan

Loan: From where	Bank	Moneylender	Savings society	Relatives	Government	Others	Don't know	Total	
Taken family loan?	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	%
Yes	225	8	27	7	67	12	11	357	43.43
No								465	56.57
Total	225	8	27	7	67	12	11	822	100

Note: Throughout the report, F refers to frequency

Appendix 1

Orissa: Demography and socio-economic profile

Orissa makes up 4.74% of India's landmass and with 36,706,920 people (according to the 2001 census) accounts for 3.57% of the population of India. Orissa has one of the largest concentrations of tribal populations in India. Over a fifth of the state population is tribal. Nearly 85% of Orissa's population lives in rural areas and depends mostly on agriculture for a livelihood.

Demography

The population of Orissa increased from 316.60 lakh in 1991 to 367.07 lakh in 2001. The population density increased from 203 persons per sq km in 1991 to 236 per sq km in 2001. The total rural population is 31,210,602 and the total urban population 5,496,318.

According to the 1991 census, scheduled castes make up 16.20% and scheduled tribes 22.21% of the total population. The sex ratio for Orissa according to the 1991 census is 972 females per 1,000 males. Orissa ranked 27th in the Gender Disparity Index in 1991 with a value of 0.639.

According to the latest estimates of the Planning Commission available for Orissa, the percentage of population below the poverty line was 48.01 in rural areas and 42.83 in urban areas in 1999-2000. According to the 2001 census, 47.15% of people live below the poverty line. This gives the state the dubious distinction of being the second poorest state in the country.

Economy

Orissa's economy is characterised by poverty, unemployment, low per capita income, low capital formation, under-exploitation of abundant natural resources and inadequate development of socio-economic infrastructure.

The economy of Orissa is basically agricultural. The majority of the workforce is composed of cultivators and agricultural labourers (44.2% and 28.9% respectively). The rest are engaged in household

industries and other occupations.

State income

The Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) increased from Rs 15861.30 crore in 1993-94 to Rs 18690.25 (quick estimate) in 2000-01 at 1993-94 prices. The per capita income at 1993-94 prices has been estimated at Rs 5187.00 in 2000-01 as against Rs 4797.00 in 1993-94.

Orissa has had huge revenue deficits year after year, leading to repeated borrowings. The outstanding debt burden at the end of 2000-2001 was Rs 21,035 crore and this is likely to go up to Rs 37,063 crore by 2005-2006. At present, the state's own revenue together with its share of central taxes and grants from the Centre falls short of the expenditure on salary, pension, interest payment and repayment of principal by more than Rs 150 crore and to meet this deficit and other expenses, the state is borrowing heavily.

According to a Government of Orissa white paper on Public & Cooperative Enterprise reforms, Department of Public Enterprises, April 2002, the state is no longer in a position to pay for the increasing needs of Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), which have accumulated heavy losses and require heavy doses of fresh equity capital and loans to survive. The government cannot afford such expenditure, which would be better used for social development.

The social sector in Orissa is in urgent need of investments in education, health, housing, infrastructure etc. Independent professional estimates show that if only the hidden subsidies enjoyed by the PSEs were diverted to these sectors, it would have led to the creation of about 21,000 new primary schools, 26,000 kilometres of new metal roads, 17,000 new doctors, nearly 100,000 resettlement houses or 500,000 new jobs over the three years, 1997-2000.

Employment

With the increase in population and consequent addition to the labour force, the supply of labour continues to outstrip demand, accentuating the problem of unemployment and under-employment. This problem poses a formidable challenge to the state. It has been estimated that the total backlog of unemployment at the beginning of the year 2001-02 was in the order of 7.72 lakh.

Agriculture

Over 76% of the people are dependent on agriculture. According to 1995-96 figures, 81.97% are small and marginal farmers and 18.03% are semi-medium, medium and large farmers.

The major crops in Orissa are rice, pulses, oilseeds, jute, sugarcane, coconut and turmeric. Sugarcane is the chief cash crop of the state.

Drinking water and electricity

In 1981, only 14.58% of households in Orissa had a safe drinking water supply. The number increased to 39.54% in 1991. The percentage of households with electricity was 17.75 in 1981, which rose to 23.54% in 1991.

Note: All figures are from the National Human Development Report 2001, prepared by the Planning Commission and Economic Survey 2000-2001, Government of Orissa

Appendix 2

Orissa: Social indicators

Poverty

Orissa is one of the poorest states in India. In 1993-94 about 48.56% of the population of the state was below the poverty line. The 2001 census did not record any significant difference, with 47.15% of the population below the poverty line. In the Human Poverty Index (HPI) for 1981, Orissa ranked 31st, with a value of 59.34. In 1991 it still ranked 31st with a value of 49.85. In the 1991 Human Poverty Index (not comparable to 1981), Orissa ranked 27th with a value of 45.22.

Health

The Maternal Mortality Rate in Orissa was 367 per hundred thousand in 1998 as against an all-India figure of 407. The Infant Mortality Rate for Orissa in 1991 was 125/1,000 live births as against all-India figures of 77/1,000.

The crude death rate according to social development indicators of 2000-2001 is 10.60.

The all-India figure for under-five mortality was 152/1,000 live births in 1981 as compared to 94/1,000 live births in 1991. In 1981, under-five mortality in Orissa was substantially higher than the all-India average at 175-200/1,000 live births. By 1991 under-five mortality in Orissa was still in the range of 130-150/1,000 live births.

Literacy

The literacy rate in the state increased from 49.1% in the 1991 census to 63.6% in 2001. The male and female literacy rates were 63.1% and 34.7% in 1991. They increased to 76.1% and 51.0% respectively in 2001.

Vulnerability to natural disasters

Natural calamities — drought, cyclones and floods — strike Orissa with

grim regularity year after year.

The entire east coast of Orissa is vulnerable to cyclones of varying frequency and intensity. A supercyclonic storm of great intensity hit Orissa in October 1964. In 1971, a cyclone killed 10,000 people in Kendrapara. The supercyclone in October 1999 left the state paralysed, with its communication system and infrastructure totally wrecked. It severely affected 13 million people in 97 blocks; 9,885 people were killed.

In Orissa, almost every year more than 10 million people reel under drought. Since 2000, severe drought has led to several starvation deaths in the state. Around 11,914 villages in various districts of the state are currently drought-affected. The 1996 drought affected 26 districts and 293.48 lakh people. Orissa has faced drought several times in the past few decades but the drought in 2000 was the worst in current times. Bargarh, Nuapada and Bolangir were the worst-affected districts. The recurrent annual droughts are caused by erratic rainfall and improper water-harvesting systems.

The river Mahanadi causes regular floods in the state. In 1999, the supercyclone was followed by torrential rains leading to severe floods. During the 2001 flood, 24 districts and 18,790 villages were affected: 99 lives were lost and 96.78 lakh people affected.

Disparity amongst the districts

The coastal districts of Orissa are better-off compared to the southern districts. However, in the southern district of Malkangiri 79% of the population lives below the poverty line (BPL). In Koraput the BPL percentage is 69, in Rayagada it is also 69. In Kalahandi the BPL percentage is 79. All these districts also show lower literacy rates. In Koraput the literacy rate is 36.2%, in Rayagada it is 35.61%. However, the coastal district of Puri has a literacy rate of 78.4%, and Khorda 80.3%.

Development-induced displacement

In the last 50 years, the local population of Orissa has been dispossessed of thousands of hectares of land in the tribal regions. These lands have been brought under dam projects, industries and mines. The displaced have been poorly compensated, if at all, and many have lost their livelihoods and their homes.

Estimates claim that about 1.5 lakh people have been deprived of their livelihood in the name of national development between 1951 and

1995. Forty-two per cent of these people are tribals. A total of 2.3 million acres of land have been acquired for dams, industries, mines and miscellaneous projects in Orissa between 1951-1995. Of this, 107,000 acres were for industries. Recent trends show that a further 200,000 acres will be acquired in Orissa for industries alone during the next 10 years (Indian Social Institute, 1996).

Note: All figures are from the National Human Development Report 2001, prepared by the Planning Commission

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The Long Wait: *Time spent by people below the poverty line in accessing public services*

In Koraput district of Orissa, a person below the poverty line spends up to seven hours each time he/she accesses subsidised foodgrain from the public distribution system or accesses public health facilities. In Badaposi village, Keonjhar block, villagers spend all day getting to and from the nearest PDS outlet 12 km away. One villager has visited a primary health centre eight times to get a death certificate for her husband that would entitle her to the National Family Benefit Scheme.

Forty-seven per cent of Orissa's people live below the poverty line. The government has a number of social security and poverty alleviation programmes in place for them. However, this first-ever time use survey on the hours spent by the poor in accessing public services reveals that the net value of these services to those entitled is at best marginal, and at worst zero and even negative. The value of the public services is greatly diminished by the loss of wages for the hours spent accessing the services. Multiple visits in quest of inaccessible or unavailable services can make the process of availing of public services counter-productive for the poor. This is a startling revelation.

Also in the CYSD Public Education Series



The Vanishing Poor: *A study of the shrinking coverage of pro-poor issues in the print media*

Forty-seven per cent of Orissa's people live below the poverty line. Yet, this study of five Oriya newspapers and four English-language papers reveals that Oriya newspapers devote less than 4% of their total space to pro-poor and social development issues. The English-language newspapers devote less than 1% of their space to issues concerning the poor. The few stories that do appear lack depth and analysis.

Clearly, politics, business, entertainment, sport and advertisements are edging the poor further and further into the margins. Newspapers have reporters on the food and fashion beats, but few have correspondents to cover rural poverty or labour issues any more. Though it is the democratic function of the media to monitor and reflect the condition of society as a whole, the poor seem to be vanishing from the news pages.

What happens when the press fails to signal the weaknesses of society? Why has the Indian press, which arose out of the freedom struggle, abandoned its activist role? What do publishers and mediapersons feel about the diminishing coverage of pro-poor issues in the Indian media? Do readers themselves feel that the press is representing their concerns and needs adequately?

About CYSD

The Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) has been working to improve the lives of the poor and deprived in Orissa since its inception in 1982.

CYSD carries out community development programmes in direct partnership with the poor and marginalised in remote tribal districts of the state. Its grassroots activities are aimed at enabling people to create their own institutions to fulfil their needs and secure their entitlements. It extends capacity-building support to primary-level community-based organisations (CBOs), secondary-level NGOs and other tertiary development organisations and networks to accelerate the process of social change. It also engages in policy research and advocacy on issues concerning the poor, trying to reorient development policies and paradigms along their needs and aspirations.

CYSD strategic wings include the Centre for Human and Sustainable Development (CHSD), the Development Resource and Training Centre (DRTC), and the Centre for Policy Research and Advocacy (CEPRA). RACHANA, a centre for disaster response and preparedness, was formed in the aftermath of the 1999 supercyclone.

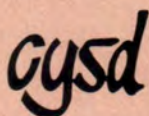
CYSD's development projects span 373 villages and 7 slums in nine districts of the state, from the tribal districts of Koraput, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj to the urban slums of Bhubaneswar and the coastal districts of Puri and Jagatsinghpur, which are most vulnerable to natural disasters.

The Centre is part of several alliances including Social Watch, and was awarded the National Environment Award in 1989.

Orissa's rural women form almost a third of the total workforce. They work in agriculture, as casual labour, and at various income-generation activities such as leaf-plate making for over 10 hours a day, earning anything from Rs 0-30. Almost all of them are employed in the unorganised sector. Both at the workplace and at home women work longer hours than men do. But they earn much less, have no control over land, capital and technology, no access to resources such as credit, fertiliser or seeds, and no say in the pricing and marketing of their produce. Their economic contribution is quite invisible.

This study, conducted in five districts of Orissa, is one of the first to actually go to the state's vulnerable and largely illiterate female workforce to identify their needs.

What do these rural and tribal women really need to strengthen their economic participation? What are the factors that the 865 women surveyed here feel will help them become economically independent? Why is it that these workers scarcely know about the host of government programmes promoting their economic empowerment? Why are even the beneficiaries of these government schemes dissatisfied with them?



Centre for Youth and Social Development