



FIAN - Uttar Pradesh

Report on
Status of Right to Food in U. P., India



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Preface

I fondly recollect when a group of sensitive, concerned and professionally equipped individuals, burning with a zeal to play a synergetic and proactive role for strengthening, activating and mobilizing the poorest of the poor, deprived/ displaced, vulnerable, marginalized, unorganized and voiceless cohorts of our society collected together. They started FIAN in UP and committed themselves to work for issues related with these people -- their pain, misery, and suffering – as well as the neglectful, stonewalled, insensitively degrading responses of those accountable for ensuring fundamental human rights to them.

We are passing through very troubled times. Governance in the state is transitory (three governments in a five-term of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly), administration is insensitive to such segments of our population, and law and order has gone completely haywire. Exploitation, injustice, enslavement, deprivation of fundamental human rights and violence have reached their zenith. The chasm between 'haves' and 'have nots' is broadening – while the neo-rich are obtaining more riches and opulence, the poor are getting poorer. Burgeoning muscle power is creating hell for these people and their very existence is on the verge of extinction. We boast of food self-sufficiency and enough food grains in our coffers, but 60% of women and children in the country are malnourished and 50% of them dangerously suffering from pangs of severe and acute malnutrition. Uprooted from home and hearth in rural areas by confiscation of their cultivable and residential land by the expanding urban posh colonies, millions have been forced to lead a life of penury, as squatter populations or slum-dwellers in inhuman conditions. Women and children are at the worst receiving end.

Under these conditions, AIM lifted the gauntlet of hearing, organizing, activating and solacing the small holding landless agricultural labor, unorganized serving people, migrants, slum-dwellers, displaced, physically challenged and generally even the poorest of the poor in urban areas. We planned, executed, and implemented various programmes, activities and events. We also joined hands with other crusading individuals and organizations in this regard.

The details of these programmes and activities are contained in this Annual Report for the year 2003-04. I am happy to present the same to our friends, co-travelers, organizations and other stakeholders. Any reaction or suggestion will be most respectfully received and acknowledged.

Prabhu Lal

Migrant Worker

Violation of Right to Food of Brick Kiln Workers in UP, India

The housing sector in India is among the fastest growing because of the increasing pace of urbanization and policy framework for market institutions. According to available information, nearly 40% of the total population of the country lives below the poverty line and is struggling for its very survival and existence. Another crucial factor is that around 80% of the total workforce is engaged in the unorganized sector and faces the constant threat of exploitation.

After agriculture, housing and allied activities are among the largest employment providers in the unorganized sector and brick kilns are one of them. Thousands of families along with their children are engaged in it for their survival, despite the fact that brick kiln is one of the hazardous industries, especially for children.

A large numbers of brick kilns are situated in the State of Uttar Pradesh [UP] and the number is increasing every day. The sector is among the major employment providers for local and migrant families. The State can be considered as one of the most favorable destinations for labor forces of poor and tribal communities of neighboring States like Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh [MP] and Bihar.

The worst part of the working of these brick kilns is the rapidly deteriorating conditions for the engaged workforce and the increasing exploitation of the migrant families. Poor Scheduled Caste and Tribe families migrate from their native places in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar every year in search of gainful employment opportunities for their survival. A considerable portion of these migrant families are employed in the brick kilns of the State and face exploitation every time.

Normally the workers, especially migrant laborers, have to work for 12-16 hours at these brick kilns but they do not get even the minimum prescribed wages and, therefore, cannot arrange sufficient food for their children and families. The most inhuman part of the process is the involvement of young children in the manufacturing of bricks. These children are compelled to work under hazardous conditions for the survival of the family. Unfortunately, most common facilities like shelter, health, education, social security, etc., are also not made available to them.

Yet year after year, hundreds of these migrant laborers come to Uttar Pradesh in search of employment and a new life.

According to information available, these migrant laborers are employed at the brick kilns for nearly 8-9 months [normally from October to June]. These families have to work 12-16 hours daily under inhuman conditions for a pittance of Rs 200/- to Rs 300/- weekly in the name of ration or subsistence for an entire family.

The condition of the migrant workers can be assessed with the help of two case studies* on the working conditions at two brick kilns -- Ashutosh and Vishal.

These two brick kilns are situated around 30 km from the State capital on the Lucknow-Mehmoodabad Road in Nindura block of Barabanki district. Twenty-four migrant families [comprising 132 members] from different villages of Chhattisgarh are working at these brick kilns. All these families are seasonal migrants and work at the brick kilns from the month of October to June and in the rainy season they visit their native places.

We realized after discussions with them that in spite of the fact that all members [men, women and children above the age 6-7 years] contribute in the process of brick manufacturing, they work on a contract basis and payments are made to them on the basis of number of bricks produced. The total family income is around Rs 200-300 per week or ranges between Rs 800/- and Rs 1200/- per month on the basis of the size of the family after putting in grueling labor of 12 - 16 hours daily.

All these families migrated from their native states as they either did not have any land or employment opportunity. As almost no labor work is available in the rural areas, they hardly get any gainful employment opportunity at their native places. They have to migrate for the survival of their families and get work for only 8-9 months at the brick kilns as these are not functional during the rainy season.

These laborers do not get any ration cards or other benefits provided by the State to its domiciles as they have migrated from another State. They want their children to go to school but that opportunity is also not available. They are working for the survival of the family but it is difficult to even earn the prescribed minimum wages. In case of any severe disease they are supposed to go back as health facilities are not available to them. As these families are migrating here and there in search of survival opportunities, most of the time their citizenship seems to be challenged as they do not get any identity or ration card and are denied entitlement to access government welfare schemes.

There are several constitutional provisions and regulations for the protection of the Fundamental Rights and workers' right but despite these the workforce is continuously exploited and has to struggle for survival.

Under the Indian constitutional and legal framework various Acts have been enacted from time to time but have failed to benefit these deprived communities in the real sense.

The following are the constitutional provisions in India for the protection of Fundamental Rights:

1. Right to life with dignity - Article 21 of Constitution
2. Fundamental Right to Education - 93rd Amendment of Constitution
3. The state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing -

* that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited to their age or strength. [Article 39 (e) - Directive Principles of State Policy].

* that children are given opportunity and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. [Article 39 (f) - Directive Principles of State Policy].

Other than the above Constitutional provisions, there are several Acts and regulations enacted by the Government of India but all these seem to be violated as they are not being implemented properly. Some of these Acts are:

1. Minimum Wages Act.
2. Shop and Establishment Act
3. Inter-State Migrant Workmen Working Condition Act.
4. Factories Act.
5. Contract Act.
6. Child Labor Prohibition Act.

There are a large number of migrant workers at the brick kilns in the State of UP who are compelled to live under inhuman conditions without basic minimum facilities and entitlements. There is an urgent need to address the issue so the rights of thousands of migrant workers and their children can be protected. Some of the suggested steps for securing the rights of these migrant workers may be:

1. Provision of Ration Cards or Mobile Ration Cards for the migrant families so that these poor families can have access to government welfare schemes.
2. Proper implementation of the Constitutional provisions and Acts to ensure the entitlements and rights of the migrant families.
3. Establishment of a State-level Regulatory Body for the timely enforcement of the existing Acts and for the well-being of the migrant workers.
4. Provision of shelter with minimum basic facilities, health and education facilities at the work place or near the work place.

[Contributed by Sanjay K Rai]

Displaced Communities

Denial of BPL [Below Poverty Line] Ration Cards to 456 Displaced Families

Violation of Right to Food in Bahraich [UP]

Background

Bahraich is one of the most backward districts of UP. It has rich natural resources in terms of water and forest. The Ghaghra River is the main source of water in the area. However, the river has been shifting its direction in the middle western part of the district and is now a primary cause of floods and soil erosion in the area.

Since 2000, the Ghaghra has been shifting its course from Sukaipur to Bhauri village in Fakharpur Block of Mahsi Tehsil. Golaganj, Baundi, Silauta, Bhauri and Dariyapur Khurd areas were mainly affected. About 900 families in the year 2000 and 300 families in 2001 were displaced. The main occupation of these families was agriculture, but the shift in the river's course submerged all the land. The soil erosion compelled local residents to shift to safer places, thus forcing them to lose all their traditional and other sources of livelihood.

As there was no land available with local gram panchayats because of distribution of land by panchayats to the landless and Harijans in the last few years, the victims had to get land for their resettlement after paying Rs 5000 per bigha to landholders. But the area is also in the mouth of the Ghaghra. Another 35 families are living on the roadside in Maraucha–Baundi and 47 families are living on land allotted by the administration in Bhirwa village.

The government has provided space for around 170 families in Bhirwa, but people do not prefer it because the land is sandy, there is no forest or pond in the area and also no scope for labor work. Jogapurva (Baundi) is the most dense resettlement area for these

displaced people. There is no sanitary system and people have to go to open fields. There is more pressure on less land. Women are facing crucial problem due to this situation.

Traditionally, poor communities were able to arrange food grains for six months during the paddy season. But now they have lost their land and their livelihood is solely dependent on labor work. Unfortunately labor work is also not available locally and these displaced people are compelled to migrate to cities like Lucknow, Delhi, Ludhiana and Amritsar, etc. But they have to return as gainful employment opportunities are not available even in cities and town areas. The entire scenario has compelled them to struggle for survival. The problem is not limited to food security only but has extended to their livelihood.

Food Problem

Food needs were fulfilled through agriculture before the erosion of the land by the river. The people were also getting vegetables, fruits, fodder, etc, from the land. Subsidiary income came from animal husbandry. People were also getting milk and its byproducts. But with change in source of income from agriculture to labor work, they are now only struggling for fulfilling their foodgrains needs. They also lack intake of other supportive nutrients.

Visthapit Sangharsh Morcha (a people's organization for displaced persons) with support of FIAN-UP conducted a survey in the year 2002 to know the facts about the food problem among displaced people. The findings of the survey of 456 such families are given below-

- The displaced families have no grains. Only a few of them have wheat or rice up to 20 kg.
- Daily need of food-grain per family is around 2 kg to 4 kg.
- Most of the people have no food-grain. They fulfill their needs through purchase of grain and use it for the evening meal and the next morning. Again they go in search of either labor work or loan as a solution to their food problem. Only a few families have food0grains required for 7 to 10 days' consumption. The only way to get food-grain is either through loan or labor work.
- Most of the displaced families had fulfilled their food requirement through loan during the last 15 months.

- The purpose of loan is only for food, medicine and migration.
- The amount of loan ranges from Rs 2000 to Rs 5000.
- Displacement has resulted in most of the women and children suffering from malnutrition.
- The economic and psycho-social conditions of the affected people was worst than in the current year due to suffering of 15 months without fulfilling their minimum needs.
- The average family size of the displaced people is 5.79.
- There was only 2188 kg of wheat, 170 kg of rice and 23 kg of pulses available with 453 families comprising 2626 persons, whereas the daily intake of grain was 1225 kg grain and 80 kg of pulses and vegetables.
- The total loan to these families was Rs 11, 20, 900.00 which was only used for food and medicine.
- The entire loan was taken from moneylenders, at a flat rate of Rs 10-100/month. The annual rate of interest stood at 120%. The yearly interest came to Rs 13, 45,080.00
- People are facing food problem. The survey showed that livelihood has become a crucial problem for these people who are losing hope, too.

BPL Cards

Visthapit Sangharsh Morcha and FIAN-UP team members found that although all the 456 displaced families had APL (Above Poverty Line) cards, they were struggling for survival. The situation was presented before the district level authorities and they were pressured to look into the matter. FIAN International also wrote to the Planning Commission of India for urgent action in this regard. Ultimately the District Administration was forced to change the APL cards into BPL ones on a temporary basis for three months [up to December 2002].

The location of these families is as given below:

S. No	Village	Identified families
1	Jogapurva	163
2	Bhirwa	33
3	Silauta	56
4	Golaganj	93
5	Bhauri	111

Total	456
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The temporary arrangement ended in the month of January 2003, but the administration refused to change their APL cards to BPL or Antyodaya permanently. These families are continuously struggling for their survival.

FIAN-UP has brought the issue to the notice of the local administration, the State Government and Commissioner of Supreme Court on Right to Food, but appropriate action in favor of the deprived displaced families is still awaited.

[Based on primary Information provided by Mr. Dhruv Kumar of FIAN group, Bahraich]

Corruption in Food for Work Scheme

Malfunctioning in Food-for-Work Program In Fatehpur Block, Mau District, UP

One of the main reasons for hunger and malnutrition in rural India is lack of access to land and employment opportunities for rural landless workers. These already marginalized people face an uncertain future usually forgotten in the shade of the high-tech temples in the big cities.

Still, the vast majority of the Indian people (over 65%) lives in rural areas and more than a third below the poverty line, continuously threatened by hunger and malnutrition. The Government has launched the 'Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana', a food-for-work program offering work opportunities mainly in the rural areas. This is a scheme launched by the Central Government and is being implemented through the local self-administration units (village panchayats). The employment remuneration comprises 5 kg of grains and a small amount of money, so that both cash and kind amount to the notified minimum wages. The grain (in this case rice) is usually delivered by the Food Corporation of India to the local panchayat units, which distribute the rice within the scheme.

In Mau District, situated in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, people working under the scheme are entitled to Rs. 23/- and 5 kg of rice per working day. But in Fatehpur Mandav Block of Mau District, for the period April 2002 to March 2003, the workers received only the money, but no rice. On an average, about 100 kg of rice is owed to each worker under the scheme. Considering the low cash payment, the workers and their families are highly dependent on this rice. There is evidence that the rice could not be distributed due to high-level mismanagement and corruption. Already 584.5 tons of rice has been issued to the Local Marketing Inspector, out of which only 247 tons has been delivered to the Gram Panchayats (village administrations). However, even this 247 tons did not reach the people it was meant for: The total amount of missing rice comprises over 500 tons. This situation has become even more delicate in the light of the decision of the Supreme Court

of India of May 2, 2003, that the grain and cash allocations for the whole program should be doubled as they were not sufficient.

The inspector involved apologized on 26th April, 2003, and promised to distribute the missing rice within a week, but nothing has happened till now. Further, sources in the district administration have claimed that the “missing” rice, which was meant for the poor, had been sold in the black market of neighboring States. These officers now face possible difficulties with senior officials for providing the information

(Based on Hotline intervention of FIAN International.)

Exclusion of Tribals from all Welfare Schemes

Situation of Food Right of Kol Community

Malnutrition and starvation can be studied together as under normal circumstances it is malnutrition which leads to starvation and starvation that leads to malnutrition. In the Indian context, it is a well accepted fact that around 40% of the population of the country lives below the official poverty line. Another alarming situation is that nearly 60% of the population is suffering from malnutrition, 48% of children in the early age group and more than 50% of the women are suffering from malnutrition. Maternal mortality rate (MMR) is very high in India with Uttar Pradesh topping the list. The MMR in UP is 706, with around 36,000 pregnant women dying every year. There is no doubt about the fact that malnutrition among women, in general, is one of the key factors responsible for these deaths occurring during pregnancy. The situation is worse in the rural areas as government health services cover a population below 20%.

Malnutrition is not a cause of starvation or early death, it is a combined effect of changing land relations, shrinking opportunities for gainful employment, lack of access to minimum basic services like health, education and appropriate opportunities for livelihood. According to official data, even potable drinking water is not available for more than 50% of the population.

The situation of the resourceless rural poor can be assessed with help of one case study:

Hamlets : Naibasti, Village Panchayat : Devghat

Block : Korao, District : Allahabad, U P India

- There are around 50 households in the village with a total population of 290, out of which 171 are adults and 101 children in the age group of 5 - 10 years.
- There are 15 elders, 6 widows, 2 disabled and 9 pregnant women in the village.

The caste composition of the 50 households of the village is as given below:

Kol	-	42
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Chamar	-	05
Gausain	-	01
Dharikar	-	02
Total	-	50

The village is situated in a rocky area. Agricultural land is unirrigated and villagers are only able to get one crop a year depending on rain. Daily wage earning is the only way of livelihood for most of the families.

Only nine families in the village have 1 - 2 acres of agricultural land, and all others are landless and daily wage earners. The most unfortunate part of it is that these landless families have no work opportunity and normally get only 10 days of work in a month at the rate of Rs 10/ day. Their livelihood is based either on extremely low paid or rarely available daily wage work. Majority of the families somehow survive through collection and sale of firewood from the jungle.

The only source of drinking water is a well in the village. And even that has dirty water.

In spite of the extreme poverty none of the government services are available for the poor villagers. As per information given by the villagers, no one in the village has benefited from the following schemes:

1. Mid-day meal for eligible children
2. Pension to Handicapped
3. Widow Pension
4. Red Card (Antodaya Ration Card)
5. Annapurna Ration Card
6. SGRY (Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana)
7. Maternal Benefit Scheme

The average annual income for a majority of the families is as low as Rs 1500/ annum, but no state welfare facility is available to them.

This is not the story of one village; there are thousands of such villages in the State where people are struggling for survival and means of livelihood.

[Case Study of Village Naibasti of Devghat Panchayat, Korao, Allahabad U P, conducted by Kusum and Kanchuki of AIM, Lucknow]

Situation of Public Distribution System [PDS]

P D S: Discrimination leads to Violation of Right to Food

The timely availability of food-grains in appropriate quantity seems a daydream for the poor vulnerable groups in the State of UP despite the existence of the Public Distribution System (PDS) and interim orders of the Honorable Supreme Court in this regard. Most shameful is that the officials responsible for the implementation of PDS are seemingly unaware about the orders of the Supreme Court and the State's commitment to it.

A survey conducted by the Lok Chetna Samiti, Varanasi, clearly reflects the irregularities in the Public Distribution System. During the survey, 545 people of BPL families of 32 villages of Chirai gawan, Cholapur and Araji lines, of Kashi Vidhyapeeth development block of Varanasi District and Sakalhida and Ramnagar Blocks of Canoli District were contacted and asked a simple set of questions regarding timing of food-grain distribution from the ration shop, rate and quantity of the wheat and rice. The major findings of the survey are:

1. There are a large number of families in the villages without any Ration Card.
2. In a large number of cases B P L families were given the A P L cards and influential A P L families given the benefit of B P L.
3. The license holder normally does not open the shop as per the fixed schedule, but at his will and without any prior information.
4. The ration is not available as per prescribed quantity and rate.
5. The license holder distributes the ration once in four to six months but makes proper entries in the Ration Card.
6. In spite of the directives of the Supreme Court the ration is available to the poor people in part or portion only.

Some of the experiences shared by the villagers during the survey and discussion on PDS are:

Dhanmati Devi of Harijan Basti of Sultanpur in Kashi Vidhyapeeth Block has a Green Ration Card [beneficiary of Annapurna Yojana] and is supposed to get 10 kg of food-

grains free of cost per month for her survival. She informed that she is not getting ration regularly and the shopkeeper is charging money for it. In the month of June the shopkeeper charged Rs. 30 for the ration, claiming that the Government was not paying transportation charges for the food distributed to the green card holders.

Asha Devi [Anganwadi Sahika] in Harijan Basti of Dumari Village having Red Ration Card informed that she got 20 kg of wheat though she is entitled to 23 kg. She did not get rice but the PDS shop dealer took money in advance and then later said that rice was not available. She did not take kerosene but it too was entered in the Ration Card. Also, the dealer did not sign on the card. When asked to sign, he said the quota had yet to come, and that he had purchased this from somewhere else and was distributing it for their benefit. Other members of the community informed that the dealer always kept a balance of four months' ration and distributed it for two months.

The story of Chandoli district is also similar to that of Varanasi. In Panditpurva - Dariapur Village of the district, there are 3 Green Ration Card holders - Sechna Devi, Sitabi and Kumari. They informed that they had received 10 kg ration in the months of January and February 2003, but did not get any ration in the months of March, April and May. In the months of June and July they only got the ration as per old norms as the dealer and members informed them that there was no Government Order regarding increase in quantity.

The story is the same in all the villages where the poor are thus forced to struggle for their survival. The villagers also informed that if they ask the dealer any question he misbehaves with them or beats them up. All the dealers are mostly local mafias and the poor villagers cannot raise their voice against the exploitation.

Generally it was found that the dealer used to give ration once in six months and wrote the quantity and value in the Ration Card. There are Ration Cards where the ration of six months is entered on one single date. The survey in the villages of Raipura and Kamoli was conducted in the month of June but the ration of July was also entered in the cards. The villagers also informed that influential persons normally get ration in appropriate quantity or even more, but the poor always get less than their entitlement.

The most disappointing part of the functioning of the system is that when the team of volunteers contacted the office of the District Supply Officer in June 2003 to collect information about action taken in context of the order of the Supreme Court, the senior clerk was absolutely unaware about it, and was only able to inform about the already adopted practices.

Even the ADM [Supplies] was unaware about the court order or any GO. He informed that unless the State Government sent any order to the district he could not initiate any step.

This clearly reflects that the political and administrative system is indifferent towards protection of the fundamental rights of the poor communities and regarding compliance of the Supreme Court order.

[Information contributed by Dr. Neeti Bhai, Lok Chetna Samiti, Varanasi]

Discrimination with Forest Villagers

6752 Families of Forest Villages Without Ration Card

In some districts of Uttar Pradesh, the existence of people living in forest areas has been denied by the State. And even after almost 55 years of Independence, thousands of families living in forest villages of the State of UP are struggling to prove their existence.

A study conducted in 35 forest villages of four districts [Bahraich, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur and Pilibhit] of UP has clearly shown that in spite of the historical background of their existence and active participation in the freedom struggle, 6752 families of these forest villages are still waiting for recognition as citizens of the country. They are not even considered a part of the village panchayat, hence Ration Cards are not provided to them. Thus their access to any Government welfare scheme has been denied. Their names are not included in the Kutumb (family) Register and, therefore, their address and identity cannot be certified. And without any proof of residence they cannot apply for any Government or non-government job. Their land is now in the hands of the forest department, with the forest contractor continuously harassing and exploiting these poor communities.

It is not only the UP Forest Department or Corporation which is exploiting them, but their rights are also being violated by the political system of the country. The self-interest of the political parties provided them voting rights for the State Assembly and Parliament elections, but their voting rights in the Panchayats and local bodies were denied.

There is no legal or Constitutional definition of forest villages -- settled with the consent of the forest department and administration on land now occupied by the forest department.

There are normally three types of forest villages in UP:

1. Forest Villages

In the 18th Century, the then British Government implemented permanent settlement of land for collection of more and more revenue and landlords [Zamindars] gained control of farmers' holdings, rendering the latter landless and turning a large number of them to agricultural labor. The British made announcements in the villages that those who needed land could use fallow land. A large number of the laborers left their native places and were provided vacant land in the forest areas where they were allowed to construct houses and use the land for agricultural purposes. The British Government also fixed land tax [lagan] @ 37 paisa per bigha (0.5 acre). In return these people were to perform work like:

- Construction of roads in Jungle (Forest).
- Extinguishing any fire in Jungle (Forest).
- Plantation.
- Tree Cutting
- Help British officials in hunting

These villages were settled in the 18th century, but now the Forest Department is trying to destroy these villages.

2. **Forest Villages – Tangia Basti** (Van Tangia Village)

The process of forest development through Tangia process was initiated during 1920 – 23 in Gorakhpur region. The process was a replication of the experiences of forest development in countries like Burma (Myanmar), Uganda, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Thailand, etc.

Under the process, the department provided half-acre land to every adult laborer. They had to develop the land as per prescribed process within a period of five years and after development of that particular forest land they were shifted to other areas. In this way they were periodically displaced and resettled. Even after Independence there was no change in the position of Tangia laborers who are still continuously displaced after every five years.

In the year 1980, the Tangias raised their voice against this exploitation but the forest department declared them illegal encroachers and since then the department has been trying to destroy these villages. There are 17 such villages in Maharajganj and five in Gorakhpur District.

3. **Forest Villages populated by the displaced due to disasters**

A third of the forest villages found during the study are those that are populated by the State or recognized agencies and comprise people displaced because of severe disasters like floods in different areas. There are five such villages in Bahraich, Pilibhit and Lakhimpur Districts.

There are around 150 such villages in UP which can be defined as forest villages but information is available only about 35. The population distribution in these villages was found to be:

Total Families	–	6752
Hindu Families	–	87.4%
Muslim Families	–	12.6%

The caste-wise distribution of these families is –

Scheduled Tribe	– 03.3%
Scheduled Caste	– 63.8%
Backward Caste	– 32.6%
General	– 0.3%

Education Level of These Families

Illiterate	- 55.1%
Primary	- 28.6%
Jr. High School	- 9.7%
High School	- 4.8%
Intermediate	- 2.4%
Graduate & above	- 0.4%

Women Education

Illiterate	- 92.2%
Primary	- 4.3%
Jr. High School	- 2.4%
High School	- 0.8%
Intermediate	- 0.3%
Graduate & above	- 0.0

Government Schemes in Forest Villages

There are no government schemes implemented in all these villages. This is mainly because these forest villages have been settled on land belonging to the Forest Department and do not come under the Panchayati Raj system. These villages are generally devastated by fire every year, but there is no case where the Government has provided any type of compensation to these poor people.

Health Status in the Forest Villages

Health of the people residing in these forest villages is in the hands of quacks as government health facilities are not available here. There is no question of primary health services or vaccination in these villages except the polio vaccination as these villages are covered by the pulse polio campaign.

Health status in these villages is as given below:

Complete Vaccination [up to Measles]	- 4.4%
Partial Vaccination [DPT/Polio]	- 5.3%
Deliveries by Trained Birth Attendant at home	- 0%
Deliveries by trained people	- 1.3%
Infant Mortality Rate	- 166 per 1000 live births
Vaccination of Pregnant women [by Private Doctors]	- 1.6%

Political Status of these Villagers

In all the 34 villages [except Chandia Hazara] it was found that eligible people of 32 villages except Hathiyavahva and Baluvahia of Mithor development block of Maharajganj district were included in the voter list. But they could cast vote only for Assembly and Parliament elections, and were not eligible to exercise their franchise in local bodies' elections.

The most unfortunate part of it is that the community which helped develop the forest since generations has now been declared illegal encroachers by the Forest Department. This despite the huge revenue generated because of the rigorous efforts of these communities. But the Revenue Department has not maintained the records of these poor people.

Consequently there is no official arrangement that can certify their residence or citizenship in the State or in the country. They are denied their Fundamental Rights in spite of historical and documented evidence and their contribution in the State. This has forced these communities to continuously struggle for their survival and existence.

There is an urgent need to address the problems of these people of the forest villages and to ensure rights and entitlements to them for their survival so that they can live like respectable citizens of the country.

Location of Forest Villages Covered in the Study

S. No.	District	Block	Forest Village
1.	Bahraich	Mihirpurva	Bichia
2.			Bichia Bazaar
3.			Bawanipura
4.			Tedi [Kailash Nagar]
5.			Dhakia [Kailash Nagar]
6.			Nai Basti [Tedhia]
7.			Dfadar Gaudhi [Gokulpura]
8.			Murtiha
9.			Kailashpuri
10.			Nishad Nagar
11.			Katarnia Ghat
12.	Maharajganj	Laxmipur	Achalgarh
13.			Bailohidarra
14.			Kanpur Darra
15.			Tilkonia
16.		Michlaul	Campart No. 24
17.		Mithaura	Hathiyahawa
18.			Baluvahia
19.			Campart No. 26-27
20.			Campart No. 28
21.		Maharajganj	Beet
22.			Chetra
23.			Usarhawa
24.		Farenda	Khurampur
25.			Surpar
26.		Shayamdeurva	Daulatpur
27.			Bilasour
28.	Gorakhpur	Campeerganj	Bharibaisi
29.		Charganwa	Tilkonia
30.			Rajahi
31.			Chilbilwa
32.			Ramgarh
33.	Pilibheet	Puranpur	Chandia Hazara*
34.			Rahul Nagar [Majdoor Basti]
35.			Rahul Nagar [Nai Basti]

[* The Village populated by migrants from Bangladesh]

[Written by Sanjay Vijayvergiya based on Primary Research Conducted by Dr. Jitendra Chaturvedi, Bahraich]

Fair Price Shops: In Grip of Monopolists

Primarily the Public Distribution System (PDS) was created to ensure availability of Ration (food-grains) to poor deprived communities on subsidized rates. Several initiatives were taken by the Government of India and the State Government for the smooth functioning of the Fair Price Shops under the Public Distribution System. But even now there are thousands of reported cases regarding malpractices and black-marketing in the PDS.

At one end, millions of people living below the poverty line are struggling for their survival, and at the other, nexus between some businessmen, politicians and Government employees is generating huge profits because of the weaknesses of the system. While the poor are not getting their entitlement, the indifferent functioning of the State administration is helping corrupt practices thrive. The selfish businessmen, aided by some selfish politicians and officials, are also taking advantage of lengthy legal procedures.

The poor are not getting appropriate quantity of food-grains at the appropriate time from the Fair Price Shops in spite of the Constitutional provisions, rules, regulations and huge allocation of food-grains and funds.

The petition on Right to Food is under consideration of the Supreme Court and during the regular hearings the Court has given several interim orders to the Central and State Governments for improvement in the PDS and ensuring availability of ration as per prescribed norms under the Targeted Public Distribution System. In one of the interim orders in November 2001, the Court issued several guidelines on the functioning of the Fair Price Shops. It clearly ordered that the shops under PDS should be situated in every village panchayat (village level local body) and should remain open for 26 days in a month. However, there are several places in the State of Uttar Pradesh where the ruling is not being followed and the PDS is in control of some individuals at the local level.

The Gangoh Block of Saharanpur District of western Uttar Pradesh may be considered a unique example of family controlled PDS where only three families are controlling and managing the functioning of 23 Fair Price Shops of the Block since the last 13 years. One of the families is known as the Ration Mafia in the area. The local administration has not taken any action against the Ration Mafias despite several complaints by the social organizations.

The first case came to light in the year 1992 when some local social and political organizations drew the attention of the District Magistrate of Saharanpur on the allocation of a number of PDS shops to one family. Some action was initiated in this context and the District Supply Officer transferred, but two of the shopkeepers got a stay from the Allahabad High Court in their favor. Since then the nexus between shopkeepers, corrupt officials and politicians has been protecting these Ration Mafias.

According to Mr. Raj Pal Rana, human rights activist and editor of Manavadhikar Gazette of Saharanpur, the details of the Fair Price Shops under the control of the three local families are as below:

Name of the Shopkeeper	Village Panchayat
<p>Jagmohan Sharma s/o Late Damodar Sharma</p> <p>Smt. Santosh w/o Late Damodar Sharma [Mother of Jagmohan Sharma]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zadvan 2. Tabarakpur 3. Fatehpur Dhola 4. Dubhar Kishanpur 5. Rotionpura/Chandpura 6. 75% quota of Titron Nagar Panchayat
<p>Rakesh Kumar s/o Tika Ram</p> <p>Ramesh Kumar s/o Tika Ram</p> <p>[Rakesh Kumar and Ramesh Kumar are real brother]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saliyar 2. Madhopur 3. Titron Dehat 4. Fatehpur 5. Pujana 6. Khanpur afghan 7. Fatehchandpur 8. Barsi 9. Manohara 10. Papdi 11. Berkhedi 12. Bhabsa
<p>Sandeep Kumar</p> <p>Bhullad</p> <p>[Sandeep and Bhullad are son and father]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chaupura 2. Khalidpur 3. Khairsal 4. Gungi/Nurab Khedi 5. Haiderpur

It is not only a case of control of Fair Price Shops by the three families, the crucial aspect is that poor families are not getting food-grains and ration on time and are victim of regular exploitation by these Ration Mafias. If anyone tries to protest against the exploitation the powerful mafias crush their voice.

Even repeated complaints by local activists have failed to make the local administration take action against these black marketers.

These shops are not opened in their respective Panchayats despite the clear order of the Supreme Court in this regard. Generally the license holders distribute ration from their residences and that too only once a month.

The local administration has not been taking any interest either in following up the pending cases in the High Court or in complying with the order of the Supreme Court, resulting in the continuous exploitation of local poor families by the Ration Mafias.

[Information contributed by Mr. Balbir Singh Tomar, Treasurer FIAN - UP]

Starvation Deaths

Starvation: Death of 18 Children in Sonebhadra

Eighteen children died in the last 12 months in Naibasti of Raupgaon village of Sonebhadra District. This may seem unbelievable for some policy makers and bureaucrats as the Prime Minister, the Government of India and the State government have regularly been claiming that appropriate steps are being taken to check hunger and starvation. However, the poor and deprived are continuously suffering from hunger and starvation.

Local human rights groups have regularly been saying that the poor in the entire area are suffering from starvation, but the administration has not taken the matter seriously. It has been busy denying these reports as false. It was in July 2003 when a Hindi newspaper Amar Ujala, Varanasi (UP) edition, published a report on the death of 14 children in the preceding 11 months due to hunger and starvation. Initially the district administration said some cases of Rickets/Sukhandi [a disease caused by continuous hunger] had been reported, but the newspaper report was taken seriously by officials and a detailed enquiry ordered.

The enquiry report by the Deputy CMO of Sonebhadra clearly stated that 13 - 14 children had died in Naibasti of Raupgaon village because they were forced to regularly consume only leaves of Chakwad (a local poisonous grass) and Kukurmutta (a wild poisonous mushroom) as the poor villagers did not have a single gram of food-grain to eat. He further stated that it was most shameful that another 17-18 malnourished children were suffering from starvation and could also die.

Raupgaon is just 8 km from the district headquarters of Robertsganj [Sonebhadra] and Naibasti is a hamlet in the village. All residents of Naibasti belong to the Ghasia tribe and were displaced following exploitation by employees and officials of the Forest Department. On the one hand, children are dying due to starvation, on the other, forest officials are regularly exploiting them in the name of inhuman Government Orders. The State Government has displaced the poor tribes in the name of developmental schemes, but nothing has been done so far for their proper resettlement.

These tribal communities have lost their access to the forest and traditional livelihood practices because of the anti-poor policy framework and nothing has been done for development of an alternative livelihood support system for them.

In its interim order of October 2002, the Supreme Court had said that the Chief Secretary of a respective State was responsible for any starvation death and that such deaths would be considered contempt of the Court. But the State administration's approach on hunger and starvation has been apathetic.

It is not the first time when starvation deaths have been reported in the State of Uttar Pradesh. These shocking reports have been coming at regular intervals, but the State and local administration have been denying the reports on medical ground. There have been cases where all family members committed suicide because of hunger and during the enquiry it was found there was not a single gram of food-grain in their house [Kanpur, April 23, 2003]. However, reports of suicide by poor farmers were considered as death caused by consumption of poison or pesticides instead of hunger compelling them to take the extreme step.

The approach of the State administration can be seen in the affidavit submitted by the State Government in the Supreme Court on September 2001 that there was no question of excess storage and damage of food-grains in Uttar Pradesh or any starvation death except in exceptional cases due to lack of food-grains. It was further mentioned in the affidavit that 67,664 Fair Price Shops were functioning in the villages and urban areas. Through these shops food-grains, sugar and kerosene were being distributed to the Ration Card holders of APL, BPL families and also to beneficiaries of Antyodaya and Annapurna Yojana.

But the question that arises is that is everyone aware about the functioning of the PDS and the process of identification of poor adopted by the local administration. There are thousands of poor families living in the State without any Ration Card and also there are cases of the poor being given APL Ration Cards.

In the case of Naibasti, Rampaging, the poor tribes do not even have any ration card and local authorities are busy in organizing medical check-ups and distribution of medicine instead of first providing food-grains to them. The level of harassment can be gauged by the fact that the local administration is not taking steps for proper settlement of these poor

displaced persons and the Forest Department is threatening them with one more displacement.

It is not a question of providing food-grains to the needy poor but the larger question is to address the problem of livelihood and protect the tribes from continuous exploitation.

Details of the starvation deaths of children in Naibasti, Raupgaon:

S. No.	Name	S. No.	Name
1.	Punnu s/o Ramsabhag	10.	Samru s/o Hansu
2.	Muresi d/o Shivkumar	11.	Jirawati d/o Sunshawar
3.	Vijmal s/o Shivkumar	12.	Kairi d/o Tarku
4.	Lalmohan s/o Bhuvneshwar	13.	Sarita d/o Katwaru
5.	Printa d/o Bhuvneshwar	14.	Vimli d/o Katwaru
6.	Jiaut s/o Rambraksh	15.	Ramkaran s/o Sukalu
7.	Thiman s/o Mangru	16.	Ramgobind s/o Sukalu
8.	Phoolsingh s/o Kalenjar	17.	Kavita d/o Sudama
9.	Deepak s/o Sukkhan	18.	Kuara s/o Santosh

[The write-up is based on a report published in Amar Ujala, Varanasi, August 5, 2003, and information provided by Roma & Ajay of Bhumi Sudhar evam Shram Adhikar Abhiyan Samiti, Rajesh Chaubeyi, VOP, and Dr.Lenin,PVCHR]

FACE TO FACE WITH HUNGER

By P Lal, revised

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are the sorrowful, for they shall find consolation.

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right,
for they shall be satisfied.*

From Bible

More than five decades of experience in planned development has yielded four critical lessons.

First, macro-economic stability is an essential prerequisite for achieving the growth needed for development. Second, growth does not trickle down; development must address human needs directly. Third, no one policy will trigger development; a comprehensive approach is needed. Fourth, institutions matter; sustained development should be rooted in processes that are socially inclusive and responsive to changing circumstances.

As per the World Development Report 99/2000 these insights should be central in all 21st century interventions.

Nowadays, hunger tops any economic, political, social or cultural agenda. Debates, discussions and even the number of cases in Indian courts are piling up. Many prescriptions are also floating, but the effort is to add something to it.

To grasp the problem of hunger, first of all, the basic nature of the problem should be well defined because hunger has two faces -- One is that a person may remain hungry for several reasons and that hunger may be satisfied at the concerned person's will. The other face is full of horror. When free and independent people with normal health and mind suffer hunger there is no escape and it gradually leads to starvation. A death pre-acknowledged by the suffering person and those around. There is absence of opportunities.

Paradoxically, all the actors dealing with the hunger problem do not belong to the above-mentioned categories of hungry persons who have felt the pangs of hunger or have faced the horror of starvation hanging on their head. However, they have human concern and so they intend to come nearer to the subject.

Generally and exclusively, marginal peasants, rural and urban artisans deprived of working opportunities and environment, quasi and fully unemployed and rural landless labourers fall prey to hunger and starvation. Above all, malnutrition can carry them nearer death every moment. This is not a new phenomenon, but has existed since a long time. While deliberating on the subject, it is important to keep in mind that several facts of their life do not come to the surface because of the acute communication gap. All classes superior to marginalized peasants and landless labourers living together in a village since ages do not know that their fellow villagers remain hungry for four Hindu

months of Asharh, Sawan, Bhado and Ashwin (approximately July, August, September and October) ever year.

People may even be shocked to hear their elders say, “the British rule was better than various governments in Independent India.” On enquiry, it was revealed that the landlords in those days, in spite of all their anti-peasant deeds, provided food and habitation to the peasant family throughout life. (There might have been a hidden agenda of exploitation behind this favor) But in their own words, "the government in Independent India has thrown away this responsibility and left the poor to meet their fate." At present, it seems as if this scenario has been taken for granted so that even the newspapers are critically commenting that the authorities have got no interest in implementation of public welfare schemes or any affair related to the lowest strata of society. The sensitivity of media, policy makers and other stakeholders is now centered on statistics of starvation rather the real agony and suffering of people fighting hunger.

Hunger at the Grass-root

Under such circumstances, the past and present experiences of hunger need to be compared with grass-root facts. In this process, a deep look at the life of Mushahar community (though *formally not declared aboriginals, they live an aboriginal lifestyle; surviving on minor forest produce, selling firewood, harvesting, porting cow dung manure, etc., and working as low paid labor for agriculture*) may prove helpful for grasping the theme. This community resides in parts of eastern UP and Bihar. They are a totally landless people, short of any kind of agricultural land, and in major cases of even residential land. In the name of home, they own a small single-room clay hut with dry leaves-grass roof. They depend almost wholly on agricultural labor works. So, during the two seasons of agriculture, Kharif (rain crop) and Rabi (winter crop), they get work and for the rest of the period remain jobless with very few exceptions. Even during the boom period, they get meager wages far from the minimum wages fixed by the government as no mechanism prevails in the country for the implementation of laws relating to it.

The period of their joblessness (July to October) presents a picture of acute hunger. Nobody gives them anything either in kind or in cash as they own no property and, therefore, are never in a position to repay the loan. After spending about three to six

days empty-bellied along with all members of the family does their search for a benevolent lender bear fruit and with utmost bargaining they are able to have a kilogram of rice. A kilogram of rice is not even sufficient for one meal for a laboring family of husband, wife, old father or mother and two or three children. And then again, the same process begins, i.e. getting food for one time after a gap of three to six days. During these tough days, the elders manage to suppress their physical and mental cravings for food, but that is not the same with the innocent children. They cause a hullabaloo, weeping and crying for food. The parents, having nothing at their disposal, try in vain to calm them. They try to scare the children, "sleep at once! Otherwise Bhankau (an imaginary dreadful beast) will come and take you. Just see! The cat, the cat is coming and will bite you," etc. etc. But the hungry children do not bow before these threats. Helpless and perplexed, the parents then even scold and beat the children. Tired with the weeping, the children finally go off to sleep on the thinly covered earth.

During these hard months, the folks assemble in groups in the morning to share their grief. Someone says, "can anyone of you arrange a kg of rice as a loan? My children have been without food for four days." The persons facing him then begin to complain themselves. Their children too have been hungry since five or six days and they are also in search of a benevolent lender, for not too much, but only a kg of rice. If they succeed in finding the desired amount of grain it would satisfy the family for one meal only in a day and that also not fully.

Sometimes they are fortunate to catch fish or non-poisonous water snakes, frogs, cockles, mouse, squirrel or birds like crow, falcons, etc. Since they depend totally on labor and get jobs only on two occasions of harvesting of wheat and paddy, for the remaining four months they remain jobless. And these hardest days of their life recur every year.

This is the real picture of a vast number of populations in India and not a reel story. Scantily clad men, women and children have to face the cold, summer and rain in their huts which do not even have a door. But even in these extremely adverse conditions, their honesty is beyond compare. The paddy stands ripe in the landlords' fields behind their huts, but they do not touch it despite remaining hungry for months.

When these poor peasants do not even get one square meal for months, it is useless to discuss nutrition here! They are faced with the height of malnutrition which can only be gauged through the death rate due to starvation. The death ratio here is 1 in 2 months against 1 every 2 years in the cities.

The inadequate food and resultant malnutrition makes them fall prey to various diseases. Thus, when they die, it is undecided whether the death was due to hunger or due to disease and so a case of starvation death is usually dismissed under a confounded State.

The picture drawn above goes back nearly 40 years. And there has been no change in their present status in these four decades. A Hindi daily 'Hindustan' published from Lucknow reported their terrible condition on 6th November, 2004. On the starvation death of a member of Mushahar community at Doghra village under Dudahi Block of Kushinagar district, the report said, "here Somalia can be witnessed all around" (*Yahan to har ore nazar aata hai Somalia*). Forty-year-old Nigina Mushahar died from hunger and malnutrition and his family members and several other members of the community were treading the same path. The report further said that on seeing the adults and children of the village a picture of the hungry people of Somalia flashed before the eyes.

Some people argue that such a gloomy picture pertains to eastern UP and Bihar only. But that is not true. The above picture extends to all the landless and poor agricultural laborers in the country. The only difference is in region, caste and religion and a marked difference in their socio-cultural life.

The Mushahar community lives a life of isolation and it is no wonder that their language, pronunciation, traditions and deities, etc., drastically differ from that of the general public. They can be seen as a symbol of the landless poor rural people of India. The four harsh months take into their grip all the landless and poor rural people of the country.

Moreover, the advent of new technology has aggravated the situation. Agricultural works are being replaced day by day with various types of automatic devices leaving a huge population without job. Their joblessness and the absence of an alternative compels them to go elsewhere, particularly either in nearby cities in search of job and

work on any meager payment. They are not in a position to raise their voice for a right to food. Hence, they only perform their duty for food with hard work and little income. All members of the family – even women, children and old folk -- are engaged in earning activities.

Although, inequality is not a hidden fact in the Indian social system, in their utterances everyone tries to convey being, if not superior to someone, also not inferior to anyone. Consequently, people try their utmost to conceal their weak points as far as possible. That is why people living in one village are not able to guess the real condition of people living below the poverty line who comprise 40% of the population of the country. Under such complicated and peculiar circumstances, i.e., in the absence of a real picture of the lives of people below poverty line, deliverance of justice becomes almost impossible for these poor fellows.

The callous attitude of people above poverty line can be seen in their views on the condition of those living below poverty line. They feel that the latter are the happiest persons on earth, as with less wealth there is less anxiety. There is also no fear of theft. They work, eat, sleep peacefully. There is nothing to worry about.

But it is not so simple. They also have aspirations. Such erroneous prejudices block the path to serious consideration of their problems. Such ill notions about them push them into becoming an inhuman object, to be treated inhumanly.

And adding insult to injury, various welfare schemes designed for them by the government, are not being implemented by the government itself. The print and electronic media, have both reported such events regularly. Displaced by natural disasters or state policies, the people are left helpless. The Public Distribution System is prey to corrupt practices, the food-grains meant for distribution to the people under 'Food-for-Work' scheme are sold in the market or left to rot, the money allotted for various welfare schemes is gulped by the officials -- such are the daily news items, sometimes appearing as the lead story. Several schemes are fully implemented, but only on paper, not on ground. This can even be seen in schemes for construction of residential colonies for these poor people. Each and every formality is shown in the files, completed very systematically, but there is no such colony in existence.

The present spurt in news about various scams regarding various government schemes have become a routine event. The government's apathy is well established by the fact that huge amounts of money allotted for various welfare schemes for people living below poverty line are surrendered unused every year. The then Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, had very clearly calculated that only 10% of the amount allotted for public welfare schemes reaches the people.

Now, India is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights according to which it has to ascertain and respect the people's rights to adequate food and better living standard. Even the Supreme Court of India justifies it through its various orders under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

And the people discussed here, are the people who have no access even to the temples of justice because of their ignorance, illiteracy and, above all, lack of money for litigation.

Under the circumstances narrated above: When, where and how will they get justice?

Who cares and who suffers?

The conventional percolation theory of development does not seem to work in India. After the new economic reforms the most marginalized and poor have become more poor and marginalized. The race for so-called 'development' has left behind the poor farmers, artisans, daily wage laborers, small businessmen and all who survive on hard labour. The present global development has opened opportunities for multinational companies and 'management' experts to work for newly defined 'economically active people' and not 'waste' money and resources for the 'unproductive population'. The development race has forced the lion and lamb to live together. If they cannot it is their fault. This is the case in some poor states like Bihar, UP and MP. We put here the case of Uttar Pradesh which is getting the fruits of development through percolation of 'planned development'.

IMPACT ON UTTAR PRADESH

The development race has left Uttar Pradesh much behind. It currently lags behind most of the other States of the country in terms of a number of important indicators of well-being and social progress. Exceptionally higher levels of mortality, fertility, malnutrition, illiteracy and social inequality and poverty are characteristic of the State. It is primarily an agricultural State, with a high proportion (just above 80 percent) of its population living in rural areas, and primarily engaged in the agrarian economy. Though urbanization and non-agricultural employment have increased over time, agricultural production and distribution of agrarian assets (particularly cultivable land) remain the most important determinants of the material conditions of the population.

Two recent developments in the State's agrarian history can be regarded as significant turning points. The first came with the reforms of land revenue and property rights that followed India's Independence, generally known as 'Zamindari abolition'. These reforms abolished the role of private intermediaries on the land revenue system, and led to a clearer definition of private property rights and land. The structure of land ownership has remained more or less the same since then, except the consolidation of holdings in the sixties. These early reforms coincided with post-Independence adoption of social and economic development as official goals and public policy. The second development was the spread, in the 1960s and 70s, of modern agricultural practices in western Uttar Pradesh, and its subsequent diffusion to other regions of the State.

Although neither of these two episodes has been particularly dramatic (compared, for instance, with land reforms and agricultural growth in other developing regions, including parts of India), they do define the broad parameters of change in the economic circumstances of the bulk of the population. The land reforms limited the powers of big feudal landlords, and gave ownership rights to a vast majority of tenant farmers who previously did not own land*. The reforms did not, however, eradicate landlessness, nor did they prevent the persistence of massive inequalities of land ownership in the State. Land ownership has changed little in the 50 years since the abolition of Zamindari. **

**Prior to abolition of Zamindari system, legal ownership of land in Uttar Pradesh was vested with 3% to 8% of rural households (Hasan 1989 and Stokes, 1975). After Zamindari abolition the proportion of rural households owning some land ranged from 70% to 90% depending on the precise ownership criterion (H.R.Sharma, 1994, for results of the 1953-54 round of the NSS)*

***Ranked by the ownership of land, the bottom 40% of all rural households in U.P. owned 2.5% of the total area in 1953-54, while the top 10% owned 46% of the area. More or less the same size distribution was observed in 1982 (H.R.Sharma, 1994)*

ACCUMULATION OF ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS.

The economy of Uttar Pradesh has acquired the rather dubious distinction of being sluggish and perhaps even stagnant. This situation has persisted for much of the period of planning, with only a few exceptions, but it appears to have become acute during the

1990s. This is also the period of adoption of new economic policy and economic reforms in India. It may, therefore, be tempting to argue that economic liberalization has had an adverse impact on a poor state like Uttar Pradesh, and thus the blame for the developmental ills of the State can be laid on this one single factor. Careful analysis will, however, show that such a view is one-dimensional and not entirely correct. But even then the major onus of the present state of affairs can be attributed to LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization).

TABLE. 1
AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH OF INCOME: UP AND INDIA, 1951-96
PERIOD **AVERAGE GROWTH RATE** **(% PER YEAR)**

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>		<u>PER CAPITA INCOME</u>	
	<u>U. P.</u>	<u>INDIA</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>INDIA</u>
1951 - 56	2.0	3.6	0.5	1.7
1956 - 61	1.9	4.0	0.3	1.9
1961 - 66	1.6	2.2	(-)0.2	0.0
1966 - 69	0.3	4.0	(-)1.5	1.8
1969 - 74	2.3	3.3	0.4	1.1
1974 - 79	5.7	5.3	3.3	2.9
1981 - 85	3.9	4.9	1.5	2.7
1985 - 90	5.7	5.8	3.3	3.6
1990 - 92	3.1	2.5	1.1	0.4
1992 - 96	2.4	6.2	0.6	4.3

SOURCE: Govt. of U.P., State Planning Commission, Draft Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) and Annual Plan 1997-98 Vol.1

It will be seen that the rate of growth of income both in aggregate and per capita terms has, in general, been low in UP for almost the entire period since 1951, except during the Fifth (1974-79) and Seventh (1985-90) Five-Year Plans when total income grew by 5.7 per cent per year. During all the other periods total income growth ranged between 0.3% and 3.9% and per capita income growth between (-) 1.5 % and 1.5% per year. Growth rate in UP was higher than the National average during only two periods i.e. Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79) and during 1990-92. It is noteworthy that per capita income tended to stagnate till 1974 as the rate of growth did not exceed 0.5% per year during the entire period 1951-1974. On the other hand, there was a decline in per capita income between 1961 and 1969. Though income growth picked up after 1974, the recovery was short-lived. After 1990 there is once again evidence of stagnation in growth of total and per capita income. As pointed out earlier, the latest period is also the period of adoption of a liberalized economic policy in India. It needs to be borne in mind that in the initial stages liberalization had an adverse impact on the rate of growth of the National economy as well, but it picked up subsequently as is evident from the fact that the rate of growth of total and per capita incomes which had slumped to 2.5 % and 0.4% per year, respectively,

during 1990-92 from a high of 5.8 % and 3.6%, respectively, during the Seventh Plan (1975-90), picked up during the Eighth Plan (1992-96) to reach a high of 6.2% and 4.3 % per year, respectively.

In UP no such revival of economic growth has been visible till now. In fact, the rate of growth of income during the first four years of the Eighth Plan (1992-96) was a low 2.4% and of per capita income only 0.6%. These figures are clearly a throwback to the rates of growth prevalent till the Fourth Five-Year Plan which is hardly a flattering achievement, especially when at the National level a growth rate of even 6% per year is not considered satisfactory.

This difference in the rates of growth of the economy at the National and State levels has inevitably resulted in a widening gap in income between the two, as seen in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2
PER CAPITA INCOME: UP AND INDIA 1970-71 TO 1995-96 (At current Prices)

YEAR	PER CAPITA INCOME (RS.)		GAP (4 AS % OF 3)	
	U.P.	INDIA	U.P.	INDIA
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1970 - 71	486	633	147	23.2
1980 - 81	1278	1630	352	21.6
1985 - 86	1999	2730	731	26.8
1990 - 91	3590*	4983	1393	28.0
1995 - 96	5983@	9321@	3338	35.8

Note: * Provisional estimates, @ Quick estimates

Source: Govt. of U.P., State Planning Commission, Draft Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) and Annual Plan 1997-98, Vol. I

It is further evident that the gap in current per capita income between UP and India, which was 23.2% of per capita income at the all-India level in 1970-71, increased to 35.8% in 1996-96. Quite expectedly the largest increase in the gap occurred between 1990-91 and 1995-96.

The second disturbing aspect of the economy of the State is the sectorwise distribution of income. Data on the sectorwise distribution of income in 1980-81 and 1995-96 is juxtaposed with the sectorwise distribution of workers in Table 3 in order to show that while there has been a perceptible shift away from the primary sector to the secondary and tertiary sectors in terms of their contribution to State income, a comparable shift has not occurred in the sectorwise distribution of the work-force.

TABLE 3
SECTORWISE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME* AND WORKFORCE IN U.P.:
1980-81 AND 1995- 96

SECTOR	1980-81		1995-96 (%AGE)	
	INCOME	WORKERS**	INCOME	WORKERS**
PRIMARY	52	75	42	72
SECONDARY	15	10	20	9
TERTIARY	33	15	38	18

* At current prices, ** 1981 census, ***1991 census

Source: Govt. of U.P., State Planning Commission, Draft Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) and Annual Plan 1997-98, Vol. I

The above table shows that during the 15-year period from 1980-81 to 1995-96 the share of the primary sector (agriculture and allied activities) in the State income has come down by 10 percentage points from 52 to 42 and the share of the secondary and tertiary sectors has increased by 5 percentage points each from 15 to 20 and 33 to 38, respectively, while the sectorwise distribution of the workforce has remained more or less unchanged. The primary sector still remains the main source of employment for almost three-fourths of the workers, even though it contributed less than half of the total income. Obviously one cannot expect high levels of income growth for people engaged in primary sector activities. With prevailing inequalities in asset ownership, the small and marginal farmers and the landless will tend to be worse off. A disconcerting feature of the data in Table 3 is that the percentage of workers in the secondary sector declined by one percentage point between 1980-81 and 1995-96, even though the share of this sector in total income increased by 5 percentage points. This is a pointer to the capital-intensive nature of growth in the secondary sector. The Draft Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) of UP observes that the distribution of gains from development has not spread evenly among the three sectors. The growth has been more capital-induced or capital-intensive than labour-intensive, more urban-based than rural-based, and shift in share of income from primary to other sectors has not been accompanied by a corresponding shift in workers.

In view of this growth pattern, one would expect the persistence of high levels of poverty, especially in rural areas. Poverty and unemployment are, after all, closely inter-related. It needs to be mentioned that the unemployment rate in UP is unusually high --estimated at 3.74% in 1987-88. But in the absence of sufficient employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, people, especially in rural areas, have no alternative but to fall back on an already overburdened primary sector. This phenomenon may be called agricultural implosion, the consequence of which is that agricultural wages remain depressed.

Estimates of population below poverty line for various years between 1972-73 and 1987-88 are given in Table 4. Trends in poverty at the all- India level during the same years are also given alongside.

TABLE 4

**PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE: U.P. AND INDIA
1972-73 TO 1987-88**

YEARS	UTTAR PRADESH	INDIA
1972-73	52.8	52.5
1977-78	49.7	48.4
1983-84	45.3	37.4
1987-88	35.1	29.9

Source: Govt. of U.P., State Planning Commission, Draft Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) and Annual Plan 1997-98, Vol. I

The above table reveals a major reduction in the incidence of poverty between 1972-73 and 1987-88 in UP, from 52.8% to 35.1%. However, seen in the context of the National average the achievement is not at all impressive. From almost similar levels in 1972-73 the decline in the percentage of people below the poverty line was much larger at the all - India level, where by 1987-88 the incidence of poverty had come down to 29.9%.

The only so-called consoling feature is the fact that UP seems to be attracting a fair amount of industrial investment in recent years. Data from the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Industry, Govt. of India, shows that during the period August 1991 to March 1998, UP was the third most favored industrial investment destination after Maharashtra and Gujarat among all states and Us in terms of number of proposals, industrial entrepreneur memoranda as well as letter of intent, implementation of IEM, investment and employment (Economic Times, 13th July, 1998). This does not mean actual industrial growth and golden days for poor artisans and workers to get employment. This rather means growth of unorganized sector and production in unorganized sector, cottage-based piece rate production. It further increases the incidence of child labor, unorganized labor force and unhealthy working conditions at wages lower than the minimum rates.

THE IMPACT OF NEW ECONOMIC REFORMS (LPG) ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

In trying to analyze the impact of new economic development in UP let us examine the impact on social development, i.e., education, health status of women and other vulnerable groups. The SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme), IMF and World Bank dictatorial funding conditions have forced the priorities of the State. If the performance of the State in the area of economy is poor, then in areas of social and human development it is nothing less than dismal. As we can see, at present UP occupies a place at the bottom of the pile among other states of the Union in respect of important indicators of social development. The new population policy, health policy and compulsion of further privatization have further reduced attention from social investments. This sector is further likely to get more privatized and deprive the poor people from welfare services.

EDUCATION:

In Uttar Pradesh, only one woman out of four in the 7 + age group was able to read and write in 1991. Further, aggregate literacy figures tend to hide sharp variations in different regions and population groups, implying extremely low achievements for the most disadvantaged groups at a more desegregated level. While the 7 + female literacy rate in Uttar Pradesh as a whole was 25 per cent in 1991, the figure went down to 19 per cent for rural areas; 11 per cent for the Scheduled Castes in rural areas, and 8 per cent for the whole rural population in the most educationally backward district. However, as per the 2001 census, the literacy rate has gone up to 57.36%. The literacy rate for males is 70.23% and for females 42.98%.

It might be added that despite its far-reaching individual and social significance, literacy alone is not a momentous achievement in terms of the amount of learning involved. If one considers more demanding criteria of educational attainment, such as the completion of primary and secondary education, the achievement rates are correspondingly lower. For instance, in 1992-93 only half of all literate men in UP and 40% of literate women had completed the cycle of 8 years of schooling involved in the primary and middle stages. Many children in UP, if they are literate at all, acquire this skill on the basis of a fleeting passage through the education system. It is not just that a lot of adults are illiterate, pulling down the average literacy rate, with most people in the younger age groups being literate illiteracy is endemic, especially in rural areas. UP is nowhere near the realization of the constitutional goal of free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years which was supposed to have been reached by 1960. The following table gives an account of poor performance of educational achievement in the State:

Table: 5: Uttar Pradesh: Educational Achievement Level

Description	Male	Female
Literacy rate, age 7+, 2001 (%) 57.36%	70.23	42.98
Literacy rate, age 7+, 1991 (%)	52	19
Rural	70	50
Urban	56	25
Rural & Urban combined		
Literacy rate, age 7 + 1991 : scheduled castes in rural areas(%)	39	8
Literacy rate, age 10-14, 1987-8(%)		
Rural	68	39
Urban	76	69
Proportion of children aged 12-14 who have never been enrolled in a school, 1986 – 87(%)		
Rural	27	68
Urban	19	39

Proportion of rural children attending school 1987-88(%)		
Age 5 – 9		
Age 10 – 14	45	28
	64	31

Source: Compiled from Nanda (1982,1993), Tyagi (1993), Sengupta (1991) Visaria et al.(1993) based on census and NSS.

It is evident that UP lags behind the desired level of literacy level. In fact, it occupies third place from the bottom -- just above Bihar and Rajasthan -- with 42% of the people and only one-fourth of women being literate in 1991. The disparity between male and female literacy rates is also rather high in UP. Unless this gender bias is corrected there is little prospect of any worthwhile educational or social progress in the State.

The aggregate literacy figure for the State hides a lot of disparity, which exists across the regions and social groups. Data shows that as against the state's female literacy rate (age 7+) of 25% in 1991, female literacy rate in rural areas is only 19%. Among Scheduled Caste women it is as low as 11% and only 8% for Scheduled Tribe women in rural areas. Furthermore, in some of the educationally most backward districts the literacy rate for the whole population is as low as 8%.

Though there is paucity of accurate updated data, wishfully the situation may have improved somewhat during the last 10 years, yet the sad fact is that the State is still nowhere near the goal of universalizing primary education (despite the Chief Minister's so-called 'School Chalo Abhiyan'). According to a UNICEF report, as much as 50% of the children drop out of school before completing primary education. This is worse in case of girls -- 60%+.

Gender Inequality and Female Deprivation:

The persistence of endemic illiteracy is not Uttar Pradesh's only dismal social failure. In fact, the other major North Indian States (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) have fared no better than Uttar Pradesh in this respect. There is another field, however, in which Uttar Pradesh seems to fare worse than most, if not all other Indian States, that is, gender equality.

One basic indicator of the disadvantaged position of women in Uttar Pradesh is the female-male ratio in 1991. The number of women per 1000 men in Uttar Pradesh was as low as 879. A comparison with South Indian States should bring the truth home.

The main cause of Uttar Pradesh's very adverse sex ratio is the considerable female disadvantage in survival from birth until the mid-thirties (Table-3). For the 0-4 age group, the female death rate in Uttar Pradesh is 16 per cent higher than male death rate. The female disadvantage in childhood is especially more, since mortality rates tend to be particularly high in the younger age groups. Further, the link between female mortality in childhood and parental neglect of female children in this region of India has

been well-documented. Uttar Pradesh's low male-female ratio is a tangible reflection of female discrimination.

The effects of female disadvantage in child survival are enhanced by even greater gender disparity in death rates between the ages of 15 and 35. This is in contrast to South India, where in the same age group the gender gap changes in favor of females. Female mortality in this age group in Uttar Pradesh reflects the combined effects of high maternal mortality and high fertility. The average number of births per woman is about twice as high in Uttar Pradesh as in South India, and the risk of maternal death from a particular birth is almost three times as high. Discrimination in infancy and childhood, combined with high levels of fertility and maternal mortality, imply that female life expectancy at birth in Uttar Pradesh is 2.2 years below the corresponding figure for males – in contrast to a three- year advantage of females over males in South India. The general process of modernization and development seems to have done very little, so far, to reduce gender inequality in Uttar Pradesh. Rather advancement in medical technologies has led to an ironic twist that sex determination tests further rub salt into the wound by termination of female fetus.

ECONOMY:

1. The sectorwise structure of UP's economy is characteristic of a typically backward economy. Of the State's total income in 1992-93, 42.1% came from the primary sector, 19.5% from the secondary sector and the rest 38.4% from the tertiary sector. This is indicative of a significantly less developed economy as compared to the Indian average where sectorwise distribution of the National Income in 1992-93 was 35.5% from the primary sector, 23.4% from secondary and 41.1% from the tertiary. What is worse is that per capita income in the primary sector has continuously fallen behind those in other sectors. This shows that millions and millions of the agrarian populace is caught inextricably in the web of poverty.
2. In 1991, 73% of the total workforce in the State was engaged in the primary sector whereas the share of this sector in the State's income was only 44% in that year. Obviously, poverty resides among the agrarian population. Furthermore, during the decade 1981-91 the share of workforce in the primary sector declined marginally by 2.1 percentage points (from 75.1% to 73%), whereas the share of primary sector in the State's income declined by 10.5 percentage points during the same period. This has resulted in relative impoverishment of the agrarian workforce. The average annual income per main worker (at constant prices) increased by a mere 8.2% in a decade (from Rs 3012 in 1981 to Rs 3258 in 1991). In comparison, the average annual income per main worker in the secondary sector increased by 69.1% during the same period (from Rs. 6604 to Rs. 11170). The increase in the tertiary sector too was more substantial (by 17.3% from Rs. 9422 to Rs. 11056). Primary sector, which still employs close to three-quarters of the total workforce, is not only the lowest paid, the average per capita income in this sector is less than a third of that in the other sectors.

3. There are disparities even in this meager income distribution among the agrarian population (agriculture being the overwhelmingly predominant component of the primary sector). This is primarily due to the unequal distribution of land, which is the principal productive asset in this sector. Uttar Pradesh is predominantly a land of poor peasants surviving on marginal and uneconomical holdings of less than 1 hectare which constitute 72.6 % of the total number of holdings (compare with the all-India share of 58.1%). The bottom 70 % of the rural households, consisting mostly of marginal and sub-marginal cultivators, own less than 20 % of the total land under cultivation. In contrast, the top 15% own close to 60% of the total land. The distribution of operational land holding is equally skewed. According to the 37th round of NSS (1982), the bottom 50 % of the rural households in UP have only 12.7% of the total available land, the middle 33 % have 27.6% of land and the top 20% the rest 59.7%. It may be noted that by 1986 a mere 1.1 % of the net area had been declared surplus under the ceiling laws and only 0.9 % had actually been distributed as part of the much talked about land reforms.
4. The state suffers from low level of industrialization. There is low investment in industries, inadequate growth in number of factories, poor absorption of workforce and low productivity. Uttar Pradesh contributes only 11 % of the total investment in the country, 9.1% in total number of factories, 10% in factory workers and 9.7% in the value -added manufacturing sector. Per capita investment in industries was Rs. 1296 in 1989-90 which was much lower in comparison to all major states and national average except Bihar (Rs.1162) and Kerala (Rs.1193). The amount of value added per industrial worker in Uttar Pradesh is Rs. 67300 against the National average of Rs.68600. In Maharashtra Rs. 111600 worth of value is added per industrial worker. Even Orissa and Madhya Pradesh are far ahead in this respect (Rs. 93400 and Rs. 82600, respectively.).
5. Such a state of the economy results in poor quality of employment and most depressingly large-scale unemployment. The share of workers in the state's total population was 32.2 % in 1991, which was much below the National average of 37.5%. Among other things, it means that the problem of unemployment is far more acute in UP. In terms of work participation ratio Andhra Pradesh (45%), Tamil Nadu (43.3 %), Maharashtra (43%), Madhya Pradesh (42.8 %), Karnataka (42.0%) and Gujarat (40.2%) are much ahead of UP. All these six states also have higher per capita income. On the other hand, states like Punjab, Haryana and Kerala, too, which have lower work participation ratio (30.9%, 31.0% and 31.9%, respectively) are far ahead of UP in per capita income. This means that besides unemployment UP also suffers from low wages and acute underemployment. Insufficient employment opportunities and lack of comparatively more remunerative jobs are both present on the employment scene in UP. An ironic and brutal twist to this scene is given by the large-scale incidence of child labor. The carpet industry of Eastern UP and restaurants, shops and housework in the cities are sectors where the problem of child labor is particularly acute.

6. Consequently, per capita income in UP is much below the National average and this gap is continuously increasing. At current prices the per capita state income was Rs 1278 in 1980-81 which increased to Rs 4280 in 1992-93. This rate of growth, however, was slower than the average National rate, so that the gap between per capita State and per capita National income widened from Rs 352 in 1981 to Rs 1969 in 1993. The real growth rate, of course, was much slower. At constant prices the per capita State income increased from Rs 1278 in 1981 to Rs 1612 in 1991. The gap between per capita State and National income increased from Rs 352 in 1981 to Rs 601 in 1991. Obviously the contribution of UP in National Income has continuously declined from 12.7% in 1980-81 to 11.2 % in 1992-93.
7. As a result of poverty, UP has undergone a relative deterioration which is reflected in other human development factors, besides the per capita income figures. For example, the state planning commission of the Government of Uttar Pradesh has estimated on the basis of data collected by NSS 43rd. round (1987-88) that 60 million people in the State are below the poverty line which is as much as 46.8% of the state's population. Of these about 50 million are in the rural areas (47 % of the rural population) and close to 10 million in urban areas (45% of the urban population). As noted earlier, Uttar Pradesh scores lowest in the country on the Human Development Index (0.110). Even Bihar (0.147), Madhya Pradesh (0.196), Orissa (0.224), and Rajasthan (0.246) have fared better. The figures for Kerala (0.775), Punjab (0.744), or Maharashtra (0.665) are incomparably better. Education and health are two important factors of human development. According to the 1991 census, the literacy rate in the state was 41.6 %, which was considerably lower than the National average (52.2%). Only Bihar (38.5%) and Rajasthan (38.55 %) are worse than UP in this regard. The rate of female literacy is truly abysmal (a mere 25.3%), which is much below the national average (39%). The condition of medical and health services is equally deplorable. The availability of allopathic hospitals and dispensaries per lakh of population was a mere 3.3 in 1993-94 which was way below that in other major states such as Gujarat (19), Maharashtra (15) and Kerala (13). The number of beds per lakh of population in allopathic hospitals and dispensaries was about 42 in 1993-94 which was much lower than the National average of 77 and way below states such as Kerala (251), Maharashtra (129), Gujarat (127), Punjab (113), Himachal Pradesh (100) and Tamil Nadu (89).
8. The health scenario and state of service outreach is also depressing and a sense of utter despondency prevails in the outlook and mindset of official machinery. A Government of India publication dejectedly admits that UP cannot achieve many of the HFA goals even in the coming 100 years (Rashtriya Parivar Kalyan Karyakram Uplabdhiya Chunautiya Aur Rannitiyan). The changes in health policy incorporated after the Cairo and Beijing resolutions introduced TFA (target-free approach) meaning thereby that health and family welfare target will be worked out at the micro level , i.e., bottom to top. The approach experimented for two years failed and the program monitoring / evaluation process was reverted to the earlier coercive and pecuniary techniques.

THE OVERALL IMPACT ON SOCIAL INDICES:

Three good summary measures for assessing human and social development are the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gender Related Health Index (GHI) and the Reproductive Health Index (RHI). These indices, as calculated by the Population Foundation of India for major States of India, given in Table 6 reveal the poor state of affairs in UP.

TABLE 6
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX, GENDER RELATED HEALTH INDEX AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INDEX FOR MAJOR STATES OF INDIA: 1995

<u>SL</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>HDI</u>	<u>GHI</u>	<u>RHI</u>
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	41(10)	50(10)	44(10)
2	ASSAM	41(10)	50(10)	39(11)
3	BIHAR	34(16)	44(12)	30(14)
4	GUJARAT	49 (7)	58 (7)	55 (5)
5	HARYANA	50 (6)	54 (9)	46 (9)
6		51 (5)	62 (5)	58 (4)
	HIMACHALPRADESH			
7	KARNATAKA	46 (9)	57 (8)	51 (7)
8	KERALA	63 (1)	89 (1)	80 (1)
9	MADHYA PRADESH	37(14)	38(16)	30(14)
10	MAHARASHTRA	57 (2)	65 (2)	54 (6)
11	ORISSA	38(12)	39(15)	39(11)
12	PUNJAB	55 (3)	63 (4)	59 (3)
13	RAJASTHAN	38(12)	41(13)	31(13)
14	TAMIL NADU	52(4)	64(3)	64 (2)
15	UTTAR PRADESH	36(15)	41(13)	29(16)
16	WEST BENGAL	49(7)	62(5)	48(8)
	INDIA	45	51	42

A figure in parenthesis gives the rank among the 16 major states.

Source: Population Foundation of India, State of Media's Population (1998).

It must be added that the economic profile, which emerges out of the aggregate and / or averaged data, fails to show the variations and structures according to caste, class, gender and other social factors. The break-up of various economic and poverty related indices according to caste, gender, class and other social divisions is not readily available and the analysis has to be supplemented by direct and practical knowledge about the region. To take a few examples, landlessness and marginality of land holdings afflict Davits more than anyone else. Most of the landless laborers are Dalits. Average poverty figures relate to households and thus wash out the gender dimension. Women who are additionally afflicted by 'consumption failure' bear the brunt of poverty more than men in the same income group households. Availability of infrastructural services such as health and education too has gender and caste dimensions besides having class dimension. Even the role and actions of the government show highly skewed priorities with grossly discriminatory impacts. The urban areas and the organized sectors consume most of the health and education budgets of the government. The rural poor, particularly women and Dalits, are victim of deprivation on this score, too.

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