CHAPTER-II

DROUGHTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

The chapter aims at understanding the development, especially rural development with reference to discourse that has been generated around. It includes review of the concepts, planning strategies and policy-frames of rural development in relation to important socio-economic problems of rural India. It provides dynamic planning process starting from community development programmes to ongoing development programmes like modern agricultural development and watershed management and the like. Specific sessions are devoted to discussions on social and economic institutions, agricultural modernization, dissemination of new technology, rural industrialization, rural marketing, developmental administration in the broader context of social correlates and dynamics of planned change as well as problems and prospects of integrated rural development. It also analyses conceptual orientation, sociological theories and approaches to study rural development and agrarian structure, dynamics of agricultural modernization with a broader framework of agriculture and rural development. Among all other methods and strategies, the scientific understanding is important for the academicians as well as the development practitioners to deal with these issues.

2.1. Locating Drought and Development in Kalahandi

Power and knowledge controlled the society through discourse. Interpreting Foucault’s meaning of discourse Ward writes: Discourse can be seen as controlled systems for the production of knowledge. Though regulated, they are completely closed systems and have to allow for change and limited dissent. There might be internal disagreement but
such disagreements are crucial in keeping the discourse up and running. Nevertheless, discourses put a limit on what is sayable at any one time, they define what counts as ‘legitimate’ or ‘legitimate’ statements.

In this section, there will be extensive analysis of discourses on drought. Discourses on drought in Kalahandi broadly refers to the need to reaffirm relief and development packages in the face of an unexpected and unprecedented challenge from nature. The chapter concludes by theorising why ‘drought’ is so often invoked as a symbolic representation and what is the consequent development.

Discourse of development often locates Kalahandi in a particular socio-economic development frame. Such labeling has been so successful in Kalahandi that by now it has become a specimen of backward, unprogressive, drought prone region. It signifies the social construction of drought prone region in geography that conceives numerous negative characters of development. Although such construction is made possible through agricultural production, gradually, it goes beyond production sphere and eventually such reason is built on the plank of prejudice. Agricultural production may rise or fall but such construction remains to be seen for generations in the public sphere. Consequently, people, in general and region, in particular bear such negative connotation and to becomes a subject to be looked down upon.

Drought is a complex phenomenon which bears multiple definitions in Kalahandi. Development institutions redefined the word “drought” which so often interchangeably used for famine and starvation. For instance, any of these three definitions of droughts namely “agricultural drought,” “hydrological drought,” and “meteorological drought” is attributed to Kalahandi, as it may deem fit in the circumstances. However, these definitions adequately do not go well with the existing facts of Kalahandi, unless people mysteriously interpret the meaning to fit the situations. It may be wrong to say that there is no drought or famine (in fact the state hypothesis could be contested) but it is

102 See Chapter-I and V, also see Currie 1993, 1996, Sainath 1996.
amidst plenty, the poorer section of society face famine and drought. No wonder there are reports of starvation and distress experienced by the poor even in the normal years of rainfall and crop productions. Skewed distribution of resources; neglected agriculture; exploitative agrarian relations that retain a majority in poverty; and economic, political and social marginalization make a region more susceptible to dependency, scarcity, and dislocation.

The definition, addressing and management of drought conditions in India are epitome of what is considered to be the 'dominant view' of disasters.\textsuperscript{103} This view is essentially a naturalistic orientation which makes a cause-effect connection between nature and event. Consequently, it stresses the need for public policy to address these disasters in scientific terms with planning and managerial activities that seek to intervene and; providing emergency relief through organization. This view is compounded by a 'bureaucratic ethos' in which scientists and planners concur with the dominant, positivistic views and endorse the policies of the government.\textsuperscript{104}

Over the years, Kalahandi has been defined as an area which is susceptible to droughts and drought related stress. As a result it has successively been declared eligible to be integrated into the various schemes of drought alleviation programmes like DPAP, DDP and the like. This dependence on naturalistic indicators to measure, and identify droughts and drought-areas has several implications. The reliance on naturalistic indicators is hinged primarily on naturalistic cybernetic models in which technological inputs and re-organization of physical variables are considered capable of 'fixing' the problem and producing a functional, adaptive system.\textsuperscript{105} This naturalistic bias not only permits the political and bureaucratic use of drought as an instrument to pass the buck but such naturalistic-cybernetic models also provide the basis for technology-based schemes which are then promulgated to avert conditions such as droughts. Some examples of the technology-based efforts which are made to reverse or avert droughts are replication of

\textsuperscript{103} See Hewitt 1983, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{105} See Watt 1983
'green revaluation technology', in Kalahandi 'the promoting afforestation' and construction of large dams,' and several other programmes to extensively use monsoon rain to cultivate the arid areas.

The focus on studying solely naturalistic causes of droughts diverts attention from the social, political and economic conditions that produce droughts. There are two long-term consequences of the staged-managed drought related development. First, the discourse of development typically associates Kalahandi’s situations with natural causation and diverts attention away from the socio-economic and political structure which at the outset leads to such situations. First, we need to, primarily, focus on land distribution, irrigation, rural credit, health care system and the like. Second, droughts are not merely a natural phenomenon but also are results of larger political and administrative factors as well. Studies have identified the forces of colonialism, capitalism, and ongoing ‘underdevelopment’ processes as accounting for the increasing likening of some regions to droughts.106 Regional disparities in levels of development also accentuate underdevelopment and backwardness of Kalahandi. Concept of regional disparities could be the best case in point as well, where Myrdal attributed ‘spiral of cumulative causation’ which results in positives spread effects in the core area, and negative effective backwash effects in the periphery.107 He further argued that underdevelopment is intrinsically related to development elsewhere through the pervasive effects of negative backwash effects. Many scholars, associated with development, recognised the regional disparities in Orissa and eventually government started recognizing it since the early 1990s.108

There are numerous scholars who encapsulated drought in the larger socio-economic and cultural complex of the society.109 It is profoundly misleading to establish a single cause-effect relationship to prolonged drought and poverty in Kalahandi. The

107 Myrdal’s (1957), Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions.
108 See In Introduction I have Examined the Special Programmes for KBK and WODF. Also see Jayal 1999; Sinha 1971; Tripathy 1980; Mohanty 1993; Pradhan 1985; Santanu 1980; Mishra 1985; Nair 1984; Pathak 1992.
impact of drought, thus, is likely to depend more on the way in which a society is organized than on the natural event itself. This is perhaps most obviously illustrated by the fact that many societies continue to survive and thrive in areas of endemic drought or where there is little or no rainfall, and here affluent states in the Middle East spring readily in mind. Scholars drew public attention to the fact that drought and famine can, and often does, occur where there is no over-all shortage of food. To a considerable extent, scholar like Sen, shifted the focus of attention from a geographic region to a household unit of analysis. This approach went some way in theorizing what now seems obvious: why drought affects different groups in different ways within the same locality.110

The "naturalistic-cybernetic" model overlooks the institutional failure and significant social bases of production. Consequently, it successfully labels two negative features to Kalahandi as 'drought-prone'. First, the areas subject to recurring droughts face problems of productions and consequently connected conditions of starvation. Hence, Kalahandi has been seen as a dependent region which requires and relies on government aid. Secondly, the region is subject to comparative evaluation especially the criteria of agricultural productivity. Since Kalahandi produces less than wet belts (although it could be contested) especially coastal Orissa, it becomes subject to certain prescriptions. Moreover, the comparison underplays the role it plays in social acceptability, economic viability and ecological sustainability. On the basis of agriculture the region and the district is marked as 'low productive', 'primitive agricultural practices', 'backward', and the inhabitants as 'poor and indolent'. The regional disparities, discrimination and prejudice have reached to such an extent that there have been an occasional demand for separate 'Kosal Raj' state.111 "The traditional cropping


111 The demand for separate state, which would cover 11 of the 30 districts of Orissa have remained low key for over 15 years since 1985. It has gained momentum with the formation of some political parties like Kosala Party (K.P.) and Kosala Ekta Manch (KEM). The regional Organisations, such as the Western Orissa Janajagaran Parishad (WOJM), the Orissa Sanskriti Samaj (OSS) and the Western Orissa Liberation Front, have joined the K.P. and KEM to intensify the movement. Under these organisations, the people of western Orissa have responded to the call for the boycott of Utkal Divas, observed on April 1 from 2000. In May, a conference was held at Sambalpur where a deadline of October 15, 2005 was set for the formation
systems that are currently followed in arid and semi-arid regions are not necessarily efficient in terms of utilisation of resources in a given location. These are mostly subsistence-oriented and are need-based."112 Such labeling has negative implications since 'the social definition of marginal places is ultimately lined to the categorisation of objects, practices, ideas, and modes of social interaction as belonging to a “low culture”'113 Such labeling marks the region, the inhabitant, the knowledge system and the socio-cultural practices are 'non-progressive', non-modern’ and ‘backward’.114 The connotative significance of such negative labeling does not remain within the development report or state apparatus, instead it percolates down to the public and community level and finds place in mundane interaction. In this process, the region itself carries prejudice and subject to lookdown upon. The labeling provides legitimacy to the development institutions to alter the ecology as well as agricultural production. “...backed by the reliance on a meteorological definition of drought, then, provides a legitimizing compulsion for the administration to subject the ecology, and especially the agriculture, of these areas to prescriptions of change.”115

2.2. Reconstruction of Kalahandi

The ‘naturalistic-technocratic’ model introduced range of ‘drought-alleviation’ programmes such as DPAP, DDP, WMP, as strategies to prevent drought. These

of the new State. In an interview K.P. Chairman Premal Dubey, told Frontline that Kosal Raj, which finds mention in the Ramayana, was actually what now western Orissa is. He feels that the government's main concern is with the coastal region while the western region has been largely neglected. People of this backward region are victims of acute poverty and deprivation. In 1998, the Orissa government formed the Western Orissa Development Council (WODC) which was not readily accepted by political leaders belonging to the coastal districts. As the WODC does not enjoy full financial autonomy, it cannot undertake development projects. The Council was reconstituted early 1998 but it needs government sanction for every project it plans to undertake. Also see Frontline Vol-18-issue 15, July 21 to August 03, 2001.

114 The technical report of the Government of India (1994) argues about types of drought prone areas that identified as eligible for drought-proofing programmes. In some state, the overall ecological and economic conditions in these rural areas has led to the government’s labeling of these areas as ‘problem villages’ (Rao 1996)

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Programmes have engaged in ranges of activities such as restoring ecological balance, livestock development, soil and moisture conservation, restructuring cropping patterns, and developing irrigation. Increasing productivity science and technology based inputs as an orientation is the central theme of the development discourse. 'Primitive agricultural practices' were considered to be the reasons for the backwardness of the region. Such an agenda prescribes changes in region with the reflection that has been constructed in the development discourse. With a point of reference, it takes 'the physical facts of land and water to be determining influences on agricultural production.'

Overlooking the social production base of agriculture, such an orientation privileges scientific-technical interventions where managers and experts play key roles in introducing new agricultural practices and new land use. Naturalistic-technocratic model mediate the interaction between the state agents and agriculturists and plays an important role. These programmes and policies, which seek to reorder the ecology of the drought-areas and enhance their agricultural productivity, are incorporating the region and its people into a 'development regime'. Such a regime professes 'growth', 'progress', and 'upliftment' of the masses ironically, it continue to encourage and sustain the privileges of the rich. It also establishes different state institutions through this process. Non-modern forms, such as those of the local practices and complexes in Kalahandi, are considered to be the reasons for poverty and scarcity. Productivity is then also linked to providing solutions to problems of poverty, scarcity, and general lack of development. Development reports draw their own priorities and principles which reflect the culture in which they are embedded. Drawing on their cultural norms, the agencies contest the validity, relevance and utility of local agrarian percepts and seek to transform the 'rationalities and technologies' of the local agrarian order.

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119 See Vergopoulos 1978
the cultural percepts through which agriculture is conducted become the subjects of the state.

Development projects such as ‘agricultural modernization’ and ‘increasing productivity’ have been the foundation of countering drought problems in Kalahandi. Most of the assistance received from the centre and the State under KBK, WODC, Biju KBK are spent on increasing productivity by modernizing agriculture. Agencies like DRDA, DPAP, WMP and the Agriculture Research Agency, are some of the institutions actively engaged in such activities. These institutions have been engaged in developing irrigation, managing water, soil and other natural resources and most importantly engaged in agricultural research, training and dissemination of the information. Having received the instruction and training, the service personnel repeat the received instructions at the agricultural field sites. They treat agriculturists as target groups to whom a certain package of knowledge must be disseminated to improve the agriculture and consequently counter droughts. The service personnel emphasize the importance of modern agricultural knowledge and productivity.

Representatives of different state institutions are engaged in ranges of activities in their field of expertise. The Department of Agriculture is engaged in promoting HYV seeds and modern farming, Soil Conservation Department is running the show of planting trees and teaching the scientific method of utilizing soil and water, and Micro Watershed Management in putting some check dams across the gully. All these represent information of the state, generated and disseminated to improve the life conditions of poor. These programmes in Kalahandi better represent the development regime than that of ‘drought alleviation’ work in the rural areas. In fact, goods and services capitalize the power hold of the bureaucrats and political leaders. The claim to develop rural areas has spawned a large and complex bureaucracy, applying the interventionist, top-down and managerial approach. The development regime alters the ecological basis of the region, the local knowledge systems and the core social and cultural norms of the areas.

Development report in general, projected that Kalahandi is a slow-moving society, which still depends on ‘a traditional subsistence economy,’ with its ‘primitive
agricultural practice' and untouched by 'modern economic development.' As per the state classification, the economy of Kalahandi could be ‘modern’ when it cultivates cash crops with use of modern inputs like pesticide, fertilizers and HYV, instead of subsistence agriculture and it would be more so when the state intervention is accepted by the agrarian community in Kalahandi. However, it is not true that the state development programmes like DRDA started in 1975, and subsequently many development programmes followed. There are many more ways in gaining access to ‘modern economy’ than only modernizing the agriculture. Besides, there are several reasons why Kalahandi has remained at such a low state of socio-economic development than giving a simplistic interpretation of only underdeveloped agriculture.

Apart from Kalahandi being a low literacy area with no industrial base, it has been declared a ‘backward area’ by the central government, and the region is considered a perennial scarcity area which absolutely depends on government aids. The labeling and construction of the region as ‘backward’, poverty stricken’ and ‘drought-prone’ by the government undermine the local knowledge systems, the production practices. The evaluation of the region in terms of relative economic criteria makes the ecology and agriculture of the district subject to prescriptions of change. Like the local description of the landscape that associated the region with particular cultural markers, the administrative re-ordering carries corpus of values and ideologies which re-define and re-constitute the physical and cultural dimensions of society. To alter the existing underdevelopment state introduced ‘development programmes’ incidentally involved with the state bureaucracy. It is a mechanism to improve socio-economic conditions of the region. As instrument of the state, several state directed programmes are aimed at changing the ‘backward’ conditions of the district, thereby reordering the ecology and hence the socio-cultural order of the region.

Since underdevelopment and poverty are the symptoms of Kalahandi, development turns out to be an unquestionable central value with respect to which different kind of solution can be articulated. Since ‘development’ has been occupied the

121 See Chapter-V and also see Watershed Documents on Kalahandi.
forefront of the entire state engagement process in bringing readymade, time tested solution to solve those problems, it would be interesting to know what it really does in Kalahandi. Answering the following question may help to have a clear picture of Kalahandi. What does development do in Kalahandi? What are the impacts in Kalahandi due to the development? What is to be done for the sickness, poverty and hunger in Kalahandi and by whom?

We have been associated with the discourse of development so much so that, it became natural and self evidently necessary. No one can dismiss the question as meaningless or irrelevant, because this is what we have been striving, at least for the last 50 years. We may have differences of opinion about the way it is being carried out but the discourse of development no doubt is the centre of attention. This is the central organizing concepts, that cannot be discarded or rejected for it forms the very framework within which argumentation takes place. Development in our time is such an unquestionable central value with respect to which different worldview can be articulated. But the entire systems of government and discourse are evaluated according to their ability to promote it. The impoverished regions of the world are by definition “underdeveloped”, or “less developed”. The ragged poor and the bloated bellies of Kalahandi have the problem of deficient of ‘development’.

There are diverse opinions on development. Although the core linear models of development still remain the intact, there are changes in approach and objectives of the development. From Community Development Project in 1952 to Watershed Management Project in mid 1990s, there are elements of changes. The discourse on development has also been changing accordingly with the changing world. It is time to rethink and relocate the development models adopted especially by the state apparatus.

Development institutions generate their own set of discourses, and the discourses gradually construct Kalahandi as a particular kind of object of knowledge. The information generated and disseminated by the development institutions has powerful influence in the public sphere. Through this the world came to know about the
impoverished region of Kalahandi. The agenda of state interventions is the basic structure of knowledge that gives legitimacy to the bureaucratic state power, which puts forward the economic agenda of the state. This knowledge convinces the observers and the poor that the development is for the welfare of the downtrodden masses. For more than five decades the state initiatives in Kalahandi have not been so successful in its own terms. However, the information generated on Kalahandi as 'poverty stricken,' 'drought prone' and still in the 'primitive stage of development' remains in public sphere for generations. Today Kalahandi is relatively synonymous with drought, poverty, malnutrition. Development failed in its own terms, but the imprint of underdevelopment it leaves is as harmful as drought or poverty.

It touches every sphere of lives, desecrates social relations and makes way for political operation by expanding bureaucratic state power. The institutionalized production of certain kinds of ideas plays an important role in the production of certain sorts of structural change. This is also important to note the specific idea about development generated in practice, and how they are put to use and what they end up doing. In fact, it is true that many of the ideas about Kalahandi generated by development are indeed inappropriate. So it will be necessary from time to time in the discussion to rethink and point this out.

Kalahandi has received a disproportionate volume of aid from the centre. Development assistance has been used for many things, but a large amount of it has gone into rural development, especially on agricultural development. However, the percentage of the utilization of these funds was very low, substantially lower than that of other districts of the state. The KBK (Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput) districts get an average of Rs 100 Crores every year, since 1995 under DPAP scheme to bring the solution through watershed activities. Under RLTAP, Centre has a total outlays of funds of Rs. 6,251.06 which covers a period of 9 years from 1998-99 to 2006-07. There were as many as 200 listed rural development schemes in Kalahandi. At least twelve government

123 See Chapter-I, for other special grants receive by the district.
departments are operating schemes to assist Western Orissa’s development. The Purpose of this aid is supposedly to alleviate poverty, to increase economic output, and to curb migrations. Yet, all observers of Kalahandi’s development agreed on one thing, that, the history of development projects in Kalahandi is one of almost continuous failure to achieve their objectives. However, there are two important conceptual problems with focusing only on the failure of development interventions, however. Firstly, much empirical evidence reveals that despite often “failing” on their own term, development interventions certainly succeed in producing for example, altered social relation, redistributed power, or realigned state-society relations. Secondly, focusing on what went wrong often limits analysis to implementation related catchphrases, such as “social capital,” “public action,” “political will,” or “vested interests.”

DPAP programmes were launched in Kalahandi in 1975 and after severe drought of 1985 of these special programmes were initiated. Apart from the state there are other Non-governmental Organizations which have been engaged in the development process of Kalahandi. For around three decades these programmes have been on operation but without any visible result. Surprisingly, the conventional indicators suggest that there are still wide spread migration. Poverty is still 72 percent in KBK and still there are distress sale of crops and exploitations. Although the revised action plans have relocated the budgetary allocation by putting more money on the plan there is barely any visible sign in revising the implementation levels. Notwithstanding there ‘failures’ there is always someone ready to try again to carry out the legacy of failure. In fact, there is no reason to believe that it happens only in Kalahandi. It is true that Kalahandi has a high concentration of development assistance, but in many states in India as well as Third World countries, one can find the same kind of development institutions. Along with there is them often a common discourse and the same way of defining problems, a common pool of experts and the engagement of the state apparatus. The development

127 Additionally, this approach allow intervention planners to divert responsibility for failure to development implementers (Clay & Schaffer, 1984: 2-3).
industry is apparently a global phenomenon, and there is no reason to think that the
development intervention in Kalahandi, even if an extreme case, is entirely different in
kind. Across the third world countries projects have been planned, implemented, and
justified in very nearly the same way as they are in Kalahandi. The interesting thing about
all these projects is that, with no exception all of them meet the same fate.

Let us evaluate some of the important studies and government report on
Kalahandi. Careful analysis of the government reports, the grassroots realities and the
academic discourse will reveal the genuineness of the existing situation of Kalahandi.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture suggests, 'if poverty removal is one of the
objectives of the government, naturally land problem has to be solved.' Agriculture may
be one of the causative factors for prolonged drought in Kalahandi.128

The Report of the State Enquiry Committee129, headed by Harekrushna Mahtab
described Kalahandi as a vast, inaccessible state with extensive jungles and a large
aboriginal population. 'The system of administration', the Committee reported, is almost
of a primitive nature. The ruler is all in all'. The process of modernization,
industrialization, urbanization and education has not brought much change to the custom­
ridden tribal people.

Panda commission suggested that government had made extensive efforts to
combat poverty and exploitation, but the people are misutilizing. They were generating a
culture of dependency and were happy to rely on government to meet their needs130. Due
to massive efforts of the state government, the land and the people of Kalahandi are now
undergoing a process of dynamic change.

Among all the districts of India Kalahandi has one of the lowest per capita income
and consumer, higher dependence on underdeveloped agriculture, low level of literacy,
extremely low consumption of steel and electricity; inadequate infrastructure and

128 Royal Commission on Agriculture 1926-28.
129 Orissa State Enquiry Committee, 1939, p.159.
130 Panda Commission, 1988
industrialization. The large masses of the people are doused in dire poverty, unemployment and despair.\textsuperscript{131}

Kalahandi district does not lacks in water and natural resources. It is among the good rain receiving districts of Orissa. It is interesting to note that Kalahandi does not have adequate facilities of irrigation despite having a good rainfall and river network.\textsuperscript{132} Agriculture remains dependent on low quality inputs and primarily on rainfall. There cannot be any green revolution without appropriate use of fertilizer and HYV seeds in land. These two are key inputs in improving the agricultural production\textsuperscript{133}. Kalahandi being one of the crops growing districts of western Orissa, the per capita production of food is 331.86 kg that was higher than the national average 203.13 kg in 1989-90.\textsuperscript{134} The greatest irony seems to be that in spite of frequent crop failures Kalahandi has been a food surplus district.

Broadly, studies and documents fall along two lines. Scholars like Pradhan, Currie, Sainath and Mohanty have shown in their respective studies that there is surplus of food production in the district but there is institutional failure and problems of distributive justice. Although there are occasional droughts, the rainfall is moderate and there is abundance of ground and surface water in Kalahandi, they concluded. However, the state is rather opposed to this view, attributing the problems of Kalahandi to droughts which consequently produce poverty and famine.

It is true that the government report does not meet the accepted norms of academic discourse. But the authors of this report cannot simply be dismissed on the ground of ignorance. For instance, the Micro Watershed Documents is being prepared by experts from Soil Conservation, Department of Forest, Agriculture Department, and Watershed Department. But there are many discrepancies and factually incorrect

\textsuperscript{131} Report of the Central Study Team of Koraput and Kalahandi, 1992, pp.2-5.
\textsuperscript{132} Mohanty, M., Odisha Daridra Kahini (in Oriya), 1993, pp.16-18.
information one can find in the document.\textsuperscript{135} It must be recognized that what is being done here is not just simply a result of bad scholarship, but something else entirely, just as Foucault recognized that criminology is not simply a backward social science but a special sort of discourse with a special job to do. What is needed is not so much a correction of the discourse of the ‘development’ industry in Kalahandi (though it is possible to criticize), but to show why it is necessary for ‘development’, discourse to take the form it does. The institutional constraints and imperatives that structure the formation of the ‘development’ discourse is the part of state system. The discontinuity between the government report and academic finding sets the task of understanding the discursive framework and the institutional conditions within which statements such as the above cited ones are no longer bizarre and unacceptable, but comprehensible, and even necessary.

The above arguments substitute the ongoing discourse. First, the development discourse propagated by the state on Kalahandi is distinguishable from academic discourse, and that the difference between the two types of discourse is due to two different sets of rules of formation for discourse, or two different problematic. Secondly, in order to make sense of the domain of discourse that will have been thus picked out- the theoretical orientation and effect. Finally, it remains to be seen how and why this discourse maintains its own distinctive qualities, regardless of fact, function, and mechanism.

The detailed textual analysis of government report, the grassroot realities and the academic discourse is necessary to demonstrate, either the government report is simple distortions of reality or it is a theoretical task to constitute the complex reality of Kalahandnd syndrome.\textsuperscript{136} This is the process, government set up to make technical development intervention. The characteristics of this theoretical construct is that the ‘underdevelopment or scarcity and poverty ridden society’, is an agenda of government to have easy access to agrarian society. Through this, government overcomes the

\textsuperscript{135} See Chapter-V

\textsuperscript{136} See Chapter-V for Details Examinations of Government Report.
institutional and ideological constraints and puts forth its own designed development agenda.

Academic discourse on Kalahandi has of course its own rules of formation and responds to its own ideological and institutional constraints. This does not imply that the two versions are somehow equally true or adequate to any given purpose. However, there is ground to accept the academic judgment that much of development discourse on Kalahandi is widely inaccurate. In fact, that judgment is not itself the point of the ongoing analysis. Instead, I take the incompatibility of development discourse of the state and academic norms as a point of departure for an exploration of the distinctly different way that development discourse is constructed. The point of introducing the idea of 'academic discourse' then is neither to ratify development discourse, nor to arrive at generalizations about discourse produced in academic settings. The point is only to reveal something about the discourse produced by development institutions in Kalahandi.

After independence, the government of India initiated major rural development programmes. Numerous experts have been appointed to formulate and execute the rural development programmes. The reports of these experts are considered authoritative in the development field and cannot be ignored. One can be sure that the government report looks different from the report or studies conducted by the academic scholars. At least the report produced on Kalahandi shows it vividly. If there is incompatibility between these two reports, precisely, I shall argue that both the reports were produced under a different system for different objectives.

Let us sum up the development report prepared by the developmental institutions or state apparatus. Indeed, Kalahandi lacked development and faced bleak economic prospects as it was ill-prepared, when it came under Orissa administration and gained independence as well. It is still basically a traditional subsistence peasant society. Rapid population growth resulting in extreme pressure on the land, deteriorating soil, declining agricultural yields, and frequent visit of drought and famine led to a situation in which the district was unable to produce enough food for its people. Many able-bodied men were
forced from the land in search of means to support their families into neighbouring states. At present from each household at least one member is a migrant workers in Raipur, Hyderabad, even in the places like Mumbai and Delhi. Even today the district continues to receive step motherly treatment from state. There is lack of infrastructure, industries, commerce. The education system failed to address the local conditions and to the development needs of the people. The government revenue is not even enough to carry out the normal function of the bureaucracy. For the development programmes major chunk of the capital budget had to be financed from central government and from foreign assistance. The state seems to have remained resigned to a low-level stagnation of Kalahandi’s rural economy. Apart from its eroding soil, Kalahandi had few other known natural resources that could be developed; and the prevailing system of land tenure was seen to stand in the way of agricultural and industrial progress.

There are a number of points that need to be underlined in the report. Throughout the report Kalahandi is being painted as an aboriginal economy that is a traditional society which is untouched by modern economic development. Kalahandi is not merely poor; it is poor because it has remained at a low stage of social and economic development. It is true that, many able-bodied men were forced from the land in search of means to support their families as also pointed out by the report. But this is treated as a recent response to population pressure on the part of an isolated, ‘traditional subsistence peasant society’.

The report’s picture of primordial isolation and underdevelopment is also challenged by basic and well known facts about the history of agriculture in Kalahandi. Scholars like Pradhan, Curie, Sainath, Mohanty, Sen, have discussed the relative successful subsistence agricultural production in Kalahandi. Some of the arguments regarding exceeding the national average production on agriculture and export has already been cited. The report claims that, kalahandi is a traditional subsistence peasant society, virtually untouched by modern economic development is not merely unusual or controversial; it is unknown in the scholarly literature. Any observer of Kalahandi would
say that the claim seems to be almost the exact reverse of the truth, unless the meanings of words are stretched in extraordinary and mystifying ways.

In fact, the report is silent on some of the important concerns such as the market and price mechanism, credit system, health system, land distribution system, just giving hints that they do not deserve a place on it. The market and economic transaction is done by the influential rich traders and Marwari settlers. The implication seems to be that commerce in the hands of outsiders somehow doesn't count; but from very early on virtually all parts of the country were penetrated by Marwari retailers and traders, whose economic impact was enormous. The same maneuver removes banks from the fields of view, credits agencies are simply ignored.

The important point to be noted is the government’s assumptions that whatever economic changes have or have not happened in Kalahandi are to be explained by reference to the prominent downtrodden preference to sustain with the government subsides.

There are several reasons why Kalahandi has remained at such a low stage of socio-economic development, but attributing all that to agriculture and to the suffering people is insensitivity shown to the masses. In fact, the course of Kalahandi’s economic development was controlled by forces far more powerful than the colonial policy, indolent people or the cruel nature.

Development sees itself entering an aboriginal, primitive agricultural setting; in addition Kalaharidi offers one of the most complicated situations to deal with. The extremity of the case of Kalahandi has the effect of exaggerating many development phenomena. The divide between academic and development discourse, the gap between plan attempted and results achieved, the paucity of economic transformation and the political involvement are more extreme than one might find in a more typical case. But the extraordinary situation of Kalahandi does not in itself make it irrelevant to other agrarian society. The very oddness of the Kalahandi’s setting might make it a privileged
case, allowing us to see in stark outline processes that are likely present in less extreme cases, but are obscured by the haze of plausibility and reasonableness that is so strikingly absent in Kalahandi. To make the existing development situation noticeable, we will analyze the development intervention facilitated by Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) which represents the very typical case of Kalahandi.

The DPAP project has its own limitations but the same can be said for nearly all of the other development projects Kalahandi has seen. Some of the original planners of the project admitted that the project had its share of frustrations and failure. In fact, all development programmes are meeting the same fate. But they disagreed that the programme could not succeed because of false planning or incompetent implementation. Instead they hold the people responsible as there was no enthusiasm among the beneficiaries as the local do not learn how to help themselves. Some of the planners expressed their anger that there might be certain limitation in the formulation and implementation of the programme the locals do not learn how to help themselves. There is unanimity of the planners that development projects like this are on the rise in other districts too that have been planned and implemented in the same way but why does Kalahandi not able to progress?. This reinforces their prejudice about the people of Kalahandi that the locals are indolent, lazy, passive and not at all industrious. They prefer to live with free food and other assistance from the government rather than living a dignified independent life. These voluminous statement needs to be examined in detail. The development apparatus have always treated the local as subject and not a hundred percent people. It obviously legitimizes their claim that the policy makers and planners know more about the needs and requirements of the local than the local themselves. Such statements point out that there are huge communication gap between the bureaucrats and the locals. There is no doubt that the bureaucrats are still unable to understand the people and their problems or they simply ignore them even though they do.

Development indicators like poverty, migrations, distress sale of agricultural products show that development failed to achieve its objectives. It could be possible that important political effects may be realized almost invisibly alongside with that failure.
Then there may be some justification for beginning to speak of a kind of logic or intelligibility to logic that transcends the question of planners' intentions. In terms of this larger unspoken logic, "side effects" may be better seen as "instrument-effect", effects that are at one and the same time instruments of what turns out to be an exercise of power.

For the planners, the question was quite clear: the primary task of the project was to boost agricultural production. The expansion of government could only be derived to that overriding aim. Since the inception, the DRDA and DPAP programme have been criticized not only because of making mark of failure but also for the state of affairs it brought to the society. One can effortlessly recognize how the democracy and bureaucracy work in such a social set up does. As Gail Omvedt put, "money poured into Kalahandi is interpreted as a sign of the dramatic success of democratic politics; its other face is the manifest dependence of Indian democracy on mediatory forces. Too poor, ignorant, and powerless to understand the structural causes of their misery, too severely handicapped to participate. They have been placed on the agenda by others, constituted by others through ostensibly democratic means. They lack not only rights, but also the agency by which to claim them." Although development discourse tends to see the provision of services as the purpose of government, it is clear that the question of power cannot be articulated and evaded so easily. The central issue of the deployment and selection of beneficiaries of the DPAP programmes was the desire of the government to consolidate its power. More than anything, the project's resources and structures were devised to political policing to gain political control over the region. The minister concerned, local MLAs, MPs, and other grass root level political activists were quite directly concerned with questions of political control, largely through their control over "food for work" programme. The best and the first eligible criterion to be the beneficiary of the project is the political affiliation of the individual, and the deserving poor. The

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137 See Furguson 1990.
139 Gail Omvedt, Working for the National Institute of Social Work and Social Sciences, (NISWASS), During her visit to Kalahandi, An Unpublished pamphlet.
140 My interaction with the planners and administrators was a revelation concerning the selection and implementation of the projects. Reminded me not to reveal their name two of the planners informed me that, not even a single plan implemented without political involvement.
political hold of Panchayati raj institutions (PRI) are gaining ground when surplus aids and assistance make way to the rural areas. More and more programmes are being implemented through the PRIs, which is consolidating political power by substituting the bureaucrats.

In this increasing state intervention process there is good number of administrative centres which came up with the development programmes initiative playing a significant role in influencing other aspects of life as well. The state has been extending its power and gaining control over the agrarian community day by day. The catchment area of the project is home not only to the various state officials but also too many of the immigrants. This brings many more difficulties to the local inhabitants; sometimes even conflict arose regarding this. State initiated modern agriculture encourages capital investment, where rich farmers and the settlers like Marwari community exploit the full advantage and strengthen their grip. The most visible of all the project’s effects was the government presence in the region, from agriculture field to mandi. Whether the farmers sell their heard earn products with the reasonable price or not but the rich have been served well.

Another interpretation is also possible. In this viewpoint, the development apparatus in Kalahandi is not a device for eliminating poverty that is incidentally involved with the state bureaucracy; it is becoming a device to produce state power in the rural society. Although incidentally it takes drought and poverty as its point of to enter into agrarian society may have no effect on the poverty, as the experience but does in fact have other concrete effects. Such effect may not be part of the planners’ intention but after interacting with the state as well as numerous societal actors it produces such results which have an intelligibility of its own.

In fact, the image is even more complicated than what it appears to be. By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the development is the means through which the question of poverty is depoliticized in Kalahandi. At the same
time, by making the intentional blueprints for development so highly visible, a
development project can end up performing extremely sensitive political operations
involving the entrenchment and expansion of institutional state power almost invisibly,
under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no one can object. The way it all
works out suggests an analogy with the wondrous machine 'development', which at the
flick of a switch will eliminate all poverty and scarcity of Kalahandi. State assumes that
development is a panacea which will eliminate all problems of Kalahandi at one go. In
Kalahandi, the development apparatus sometimes seems almost capable of pulling nearly
as good as trick. If the instrument effects of a development project end up forming any
kind of strategically coherent or intelligible whole, than it is the care of 'the reproduction
of drought'.

All most all state initiated development programmes in Kalahandi ostensibly
aimed at agricultural improvement and soil conservation in rural Kalahandi for decades.
The initiatives like 'Community empowerment', 'people's participation' sounds so
vague, and the agents of agricultural improvement, came eventually to serve as a kind of
rural police. The peasant failed to come out of the quagmire of state apparatuses and
responded with an anger rising at times to seething hatred. This anger is expressed
through attacks of the objects symbolizing state like cutting of the plantation trees,
contour ridges and dip tanks, at times demonstrating before the collectorate. For failing to
see the benefits of their own subordinations, the peasants were of course characterized as
'backward', and thus all the more in need of controlling interventions.

"Technical interventions were not in themselves socially neutral. And they
became increasingly linked with broader attempts to restructure rural social relationships
and 'capture' the peasantry...Rural resistance, though in specific cases aimed at
particular state initiatives which were seen as technically inadequate, became geared to
opposing the kinds of controls and social disruption which planning seemed to hold in
store." 141 Fewer analysts have recently attempted to formulate a general model for the

involvement of development interventions with the expansion of state power in rural India. There is uniformity in their work to show that technical ‘development’ interventions ostensibly organized around such things as agricultural production, soil erosion, water management, afforestation, etc. have in fact often had ‘instrument-effect’ that would be systematically intelligible as part of two-sided process of depoliticization and expansion of bureaucratic state control.

At every stage, the expansion of state power ‘is justified by the notion of national development.’

With expandable demand for development providing the charter for state expansion, whatever problems found can be solved through new state interventions for dealing with them. The ruling groups’ social reproduction required an ever-expanding number a state apparatuses and development projects. The completion of the development projects would have obviated the need to generate further plans and projects to achieve the ends which their predecessors failed to do. In this sense inefficiency is ‘efficient’ for the expanded reproduction of the ruling group. One result of this is the rapid expansion of a poorly skilled and corrupt lower level bureaucracy incapable of fulfilling even its few professional obligations. By generating a never-ending series of state apparatuses and development projects the ruling group provided employment and, no matter how small, inadvertent or fleeting, an amelioration of the conditions of life and a share of state resources for at least some members of the lower classes. In doing so, the conditions of the social reproduction of the ruling group increasingly penetrated and reshaped the conditions for the reproduction of society as a whole.

“The whole development is, as puts it, a ‘mushy mixture’ of the discursive and the non-discursive, of the intentional plans and the unacknowledged social world with which they are engaged.” The plans, then, as the visible part of a larger mechanism, can neither be dismissed nor can they be taken at their word. If the process through which structural production takes place can be thought of as a machine, it must be said that the

142 Dutkiewicz, P and G.Williams, (1987), “All the King’s Horses and All the King’s Men Couldn’t Put Humpty-Dumpty Together Again.”, IDS Bulletin, 18, 3, p. 43.
planners’ conceptions are not the blueprint for the machine; they are parts of the machine. Plans constructed within a conceptual apparatus do have an effect but in the process of having these effects they generally ‘fail’ to transform the world in their own image. But ‘failure’ here does not mean doing nothing; it means doing something else, and that something else always has its own logic.

I have argued up to now that even a ‘failed’ development project can bring about important structural changes. New structures are not produced in accordance with discursively elaborated plans. So there are incongruence between the plan and the outcomes. Although transformations are brought through development institutions but it has not come as per the discursive and conceptual apparatus. This pairing of facts raises an important theoretical question: if official planning is not relevant to the events that planned interventions give rise to, and if the relation between plan and event is not one of even approximate congruence, then what is the relation between blueprints and outcomes, between conceptual apparatuses and the results of their deployment?

The service personnel not only treat the local agricultural practice with negative connotations as unsystematic, low in productivity but also despise the practitioners as indolent and sluggish. They constantly praised the benefits of modem cultivation and its practitioners diligent and industrious.¹⁴⁵ The problem of Kalahandi is enormous, the District Agricultural Officer informed me, and the adoption of modem agricultural is the viable solution to the problem. Modern agricultural practices are must if Kalahandi is to get rid of lingering droughts and poverty, he strongly suggested. Illiteracy and ignorance, he said, are generating fear among the people, so they rely more on traditional agricultural practices. The people are custom ridden and always afraid of change; the sacred land should not be contaminated with pesticides and fertilizers, he informed. He pointed out that, culture and agricultural practices of the regions is interwoven to such an extent that people simply do not want to give up the traditional agricultural practices. Consequently, prescriptions and suggestion such as this are frequently found in different

They create distinction between local agricultural practices and modern agriculture; the former as unproductive and unprofitable, and the latter as a means to solve all problems. In attempting to introduce changes by which agricultural production can be enhanced and ‘drought proofed’, the government orients local agriculturists to new method of production, and provides package of hybrid seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. The impacts of promoting this package indicate two important points about the ‘drought-mitigation’ programmes. First, the pattern of land use and the cultivation of the commercial crops such as cotton, sunflower, and groundnuts have been exceedingly changing in the villages, as per our village study shows. It would be interesting to know, how small and marginal agriculturists benefited from this initiatives and the food scarcity is being managed in the district. Second, state intervention into the socio-cultural process of rural Kalahandi is increasing, so also are the new socio-cultural practices, made possible by the promotion of new preferences and norms. Contextualized with in the whole ‘development discourse’ in which state intervention is promoted, the percept of modern development is used to dispel the ‘traditional’, ‘low productive’, orientation associated with the local cultural practices. Drawing on the notion of modern agriculture the state is able to focus on production for market in contrast to local practices that first seek to cater to domestic consumption and then production for the market. Increasing the rich and big holders, are producing for market and the small and marginal holder are producing for home consumptions.

The service personnel work on inducing a shift from the ‘local traditional practices’ contrasting with the ‘modern developed practices’ especially ‘technology green revolution.” The ‘modernization of agriculture’ means adherence to particular method aiming at maximum production. The socially entrenched notion of agricultural practices is narrowed to its purely income oriented aspects and the ‘seeing’ dimension of traditional agricultural practice is displaced by a set of prescriptions, introduced by the state agents. In the traditional method of agriculture, the farmers were independent observers of their own land and method of cultivations. But it has been changing with the arrival of the modern agriculture, where a package of information needs to be learned and

146 See for instance Watershed Management Documents.
understood with the help of agriculture extension agents. As Vasavi puts emphatically, “seeing [traditional] agricultural knowledge enabled each agriculturist to be his or her own decision maker and guide. In contrast to this...the modern agriculture promotes an imitative and externally induced set of actions and decisions on the agriculturist. For new initiatives into the modern methods and ideologies...implies relying on the knowledge and advice of the Agricultural Agents or service personnel.”

The integration and referential role brought by the ‘state sponsored modern agriculture’ not only constitutes an externally based form of knowledge but can also initiate changes in the definition of reality. The reordering and rearranging of local agrarian practices are also reflected in the changes that people attempt to make in their personal lives. As service personnel who speak English symbolize modernity and growths, the villagers imitate those values considering that being good at English is associated with advancement and prosperity. Modern agriculture is associated with the idea of being rational and accepting the scientific knowledge by replacing the traditional ones. The village findings show that issues related to actual manuring strategies, crops and product diversity, relations between different communities have been undergoing change. The nature influenced practice of traditional agriculture, and organic farming comprise a variety of practices and views of nature. Organic farming as a source for the development of different kinds of sustainable agriculture thereby reduces the vulnerability of the poor and as well as the environment. The development discourse makes it obvious that modern agriculture is the only available form of engagement to deal with Kalahandi.

Review of the development documents also reveals that state attempts to homogenize the people. State assumes that the people of Kalahandi represent a homogeneous group and all share the same interests and same circumstances. This is vividly found in the Watershed Documents where there is frequent mention of ‘villagers’, ‘farmers’, ‘the people.’ Keeping that in mind, state adopts a uniform strategy to tackle

149 See Chapter-VI
the problems of drought and poverty in Kalahandi. ‘The people’ or ‘the villagers’ are not undifferentiated mass. Rich and poor, workers and dependents, agriculturists and pastoralists, old and young; all confront different problems and need different strategies for dealing with them. In fact, the statistics and consulting experts have generated information which not only reduce all human beings to simple numbers but also fail to address the diversity. Programmes formulated on the basis of numbers only represent the problems of majority and the suffering groups while small numbers are simply overlooked in the government report. Population and occupational composition of my village study shows that there are at least 22 types of occupations and 7 different communities living in the village. Moreover, 56 percent of the villagers derive major portion of their livelihood from off farm activities. When the government report homogenize the villagers and their problems with drought, then the question remains what happen to the rest? It is worth mentioning, the statement made by a basket weaver Tanka Mahar in the village, as he said, “chasi he le, tam ke sarkar lun gote bi de pare, makar/badhi he le ketebele sahaajya karipare, kintu sukbasi manke, sarkar kichi sahajya nai dea, kam be nei dea”, (if you are farmer, you may get a loan, or some compensation for flood/drought, but if you are not you get no help from state).

It is easier for the state to implement a formula that has minimum difference, than addressing the individual cases which is cumbersome. Moreover, the state institutions and the bureaucrats are not ready to go through all that hurdles. Consequently, the state generalizes the scarcity and poverty experienced by different groups in varying magnitudes. When such programmes are implemented, only the better off among the poor get the advantage and many who deserve remain disadvantaged. This brings us to conclude that the development institutions are more interested in implementing the programmes which serve their immediate interest than addressing the problems of different groups. It remains to be believed whether scientific knowledge and rational advice of experts are indeed useful. But, if there is advice to be given, it will not be

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150 After successful attempts made by NGOs like Parivartan, Agragamee and others, targeting individual beneficiaries now government is trying to implement such scheme but still the State policy relatively remains same as uniform ones.
dictating general political strategy or giving a general answer to the questions which
necessarily are applied uniformly but answering specific, localized, tactical questions.

After Panchayati raj, the introduction of Watershed Management came with a
formula of empowerment which is far form real world of the poor. Under these
formulations, there is little point in asking what the established elites should do in order
to empower the ignorant, illiterate village poor. The structural position of the state makes
it clear that the poor villagers would be the last ones to undertake such a project. Even
when the state agents ask the interests of the poor, it is for their own purpose, and these
normally have little to do with advancing the interests of the well-known downtrodden
masses.

After 1985 Kalahandi got widely publicized and therefore donation poured in
from different national and international organisations. In the development discourse the
district of Kalahandi is ‘one of the lowest per capita income and consumer, higher
dependence on underdeveloped agriculture, low level of literacy, extremely low
consumption of steel and electricity; inadequate infrastructure and industrialization, the
people are doused in dire poverty, unemployment’. These are the interesting even after 30
years where the situations relatively remain the same. The donations and aid were
received on genuine problems but they have not been used genuinely to address the
problems (I have examined these issues in different chapters).

If increasing productivity is the universal remedy for Kalahandi, then there are
endless questions waiting for their turn. To make the state agenda clear and simple, we
can pick up the issue of land distribution system. In fact, the state has much more role to
play on it than on agriculture. The Political role of development intervention in Kalahandi
seems silent about the land distribution system. Initially in the name of land distribution
programme, state handed over the abandoned lands which are not suitable for growing
any crops to the landless farmers. This has been done as a face saving solution to protect
the interest of both the state and the rich landlords. In the village land record, of the
village of my study, these are around 30 families without cultivable land. In such
situation the state distributed land is either abandoned by the poor farmers (as not suitable for crops growing) or forcefully occupied by the rich and powerful landlords. Nearly 60 percent of the total rural households possessed only 10 percent of the total cultivable land in 1971\textsuperscript{151}. Among the academicians it is a widely held belief that since landholding plays an important role in politics, even a smooth touch will be enough to shake the entire elite and political structure. So it remains as a ‘political taboo’. Occasional drought and famine offers good excuses for the state institutions by distracting the attention from the core issues such as land reform, agricultural credit and marketing, health and sanitation etc.

There are promises and prophesies of political empowerment of the poor in the development discourse, but the grassroots reality tells a different story. As we have cited above, the people are too poor and severely handicapped to participate and they lack not only rights, but also the agency by which to claim them. The theory that the oppressed classes are to be delivered from their poverty and powerlessness through government agency is a misleading outcome of development discourse. Acting on such a theory, state enters into a complex set up bureaucracy which serves the interest of the dominant group. Local government’s positing of ‘development’ agencies as the active principle charged with the task of empowering the poor may involve a certain lack of fit between the two assumptions.

Development discourse gives a hint that empowering and, a progressive social change come from the state, and is committed in translating it. As planners and policy makers consider working for social change is synonymous with working for governments, indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that preoccupation of governments and government agencies is more often precisely to forestall and frustrate the processes of popular empowerment that so many social scientists in their hearts seek to advance.

Political participation and participation in decision making is the process of empowerment. Political participation in the development process in Kalahandi is not
about empowerment but the power play of the ‘experts’. The image in ‘development discourse’ has been created and recreated as ‘poverty ridden’, ‘less developed’. This also points out that, the people who are engaged in information generation and dissemination do not belong to the suffering people.

Systems of discourse and systems of thought are thus bound up in a complex causal relationship with the stream of planned and unplanned events that constitutes the social world. The challenge is to treat these systems of thought and discourse like any other kind of structured social practice engaged in structural production and reproduction in which they are a component parts. In its operation, the development apparatus is likely to produce unintended outcomes, as Willis (1981) puts: “the most important political effects of a planned intervention may occur unconsciously, behind the backs or against the wills of the ‘planners’ who may seem to be running the show”. This turns out to be one of the most important problems of the development intervention in Kalahandi. The complexity, intentionality and desirability of the outcome of the planning are not known even to the planners. The development project in Kalahandi has produced and reproduced the unacknowledged and unintended structure. However, those unintended ‘side effects’ gradually, in the objective, form the knowledge of Kalahandi.

Utilising this method, Ferguson maintained that the unintended consequences produced by development interventions are rooted in false assumptions that simplify political process and decontextualise how power and politics are exercised within specific communities-results of what Ferguson has termed “the anti-political machine” of development.

2.3. Discourse on Institutionalization and Standardization

In the following discussion reflects those important issues mentioned in the forgone pages. I attempt to revisit and expand on them with more pragmatic approach to explaining the exercise of state power through development institutions. Following

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153 See Willis 1981.
proposals are the specific concerns-(1) analysing the causal relationship connecting these assumptions to the production of unintended consequences for local communities; (2) finding the assumption about the standardization and depoliticization of development interventions; (3) proposing to analyse state power and rank and file of power in different levels. What I have shown in the forgoing section is the discourse generated by the state on Kalahandi. It also successfully labelled Kalahandi as a region which is 'drought prone' with 'primitive agricultural practices.' Development documents also overlook the occupational diversity and consequently, the distress and scarcity suffered by practitioner of non-farm employment. Since 'drought' is problem of agricultural productivity, the immediate need of the government is to salvage the crops and compensate. There is no point in asking how successful the state is in salvaging the seeds or the farmers that could be calculated through the moneylenders account.154 But the important question which remains to be answered is, what it does to the people who are engaged in making basket, selling minor eatables and providing services and the other off-farm occupation practitioners?

From the above discussion, it is clear that, there is presence of state institutions which is maintaining this order. The developers (planners/policy makers) may not be much concerned about development but one can instantly find the presence of state institutions in the villages. In the following discussion, I have examined, what is most important about a development project is not so much of what it fails to do but of what it does. It may be that its real importance in the end lies in its side effects. Foucault, speaking of the prison, suggests that dwelling on the failure of the prison may be asking the wrong question. Perhaps, he suggests.

For the planners, the question was quite clear: the primary task of the project was to boost agricultural production; the expansion of government could only be secondary to that overriding aim. Development may not reach to the poor but definitely it helps to develop the developers. The power of the state in Kalahandi, could be well recognised where there is 63 percent of illiteracy and 60 percent of population is below poverty lines.

154 See Chapter-VI
However, the question of power cannot be articulated or evaded so easily. In fact, goods and services capitalize the power hold of the bureaucrats and political leaders. The central issue of the deployment and selection of beneficiaries of the DPAP, Food for Work programmes was the desire of the government to consolidate its power.\textsuperscript{155}

Rural development in the last few decades can be generalized as a process of institutionalization. This process has occurred through three methods. First, the establishment of state institutions in the rural areas, in the process of which state power is extended to village and exerts increasing influence on the routine life of farmers. The second is legal penetration, where state laws are established in place of local norms and conventions. The third is imported standardized policy in which farmers are grouped together according to certain standards.

With the development of institution and formal laws state institutions have entered into rural areas. State institutions legitimized their policies and laws on ground for rural development. However, legitimacy is not completely reasonable to all, and the institutions are not necessarily or sufficiently capable of dealing with various problems of the peasant society.

Before the arrival of the modern state, rural society existed in a complex blend of different norms and local knowledge. For the development institutions, these complex norms and local knowledge function as obstacles for state administration. Consequently the state streamlines rural society by means of standardization and oversimplification.\textsuperscript{156} The penetration of development institutions into rural society is a process of replacing its

\textsuperscript{155} My interaction with the planners and administrators was a revelation concerning the selection and implementation of the programmes. More than anything, the project's resources and structures were devised to political policing to gain political control over the region. Two of the planners asked me to conceal their name in any official report. The minister concern, local MLAs, MPs, and other grass root level political activities were quite directly concerned with questions of political control, largely through their control over "food for work" programme. The best and the first criteria to get the tender or to execute the programmes was the political affiliation of the individual or institutions, so is the selection of the beneficiaries. The political hold of Panchayatiraj institutions are gaining ground when more aids and assistance making way to the rural areas. All the more the development programmes reinforcing the power of PRIs and so did the power struggle

diversity with standardization. Although such standardization is often justified through legitimate state intervention, yet it is not very successful because it is imported and replicated through standard official discourse. More often than not, it runs contrary to the logic that governs the agrarian society. In spite of these contradictions, the state power prevails to formulate an official discourse. Policy based on such simplistic assumption and mechanical solution runs into severe disagreement with daily affairs of peasant society.

With the above example it is clear that the state law and the development discourses generated by the state institutions are becoming part of rural lives. This example shows that when villagers seek legitimacy for their action they also need the help of official discourse. In this top-down decision making process reform could be possible with the openness of the system. Under this unequal relationship, official discourse can be reinterpreted. Groups of different interests hope to justify their acts by citing laws and policies. High-level administrators endeavour to specify laws and policies, and in doing so they make them sound more complicated. However, no matter how specific they can be made, these laws and policies still maintain unified characteristics since they are applied nationwide as universal rules. Therefore when they are quoted by different groups of interest in conflict, both sides will interpret them differently to support their argument.

2.4. Official Discourse Disconnected to Farmers’ Daily Life

With the oversimplification and generalization, the development discourse overlooks the practical aspects of peasant society. The origin and development of the discourse is outside farmers’ lives and is therefore far from handling their daily problems. While life for farmers is complex, official discourse is more often than not a standardization and simplification. Since the discourse is based on an object interest, it is far from addressing the daily affairs of the peasants.

There were lands in the village, before the arrival of cash crops, which were gochar (pasture) practically used as a common grazing fields. All this changed in the
early 1990s, when the village landlord found that cotton could be grown in the land and earned good money. But soon he found himself in a conflict of interest with other villagers who used to collect firewood from the area and graze their animal. Some village youths succeeded in persuading local authorities to bring an end to the illegal encroachment by the Gountia. However, the demand was rejected by the Gountia and finally the dispute was brought to court by the villagers. The village youth complain in Tahasil (office of land revenue) and began to fight for the common property but there was no document to present for proof of ownership of these lands, since it is commonly owned by the villagers. The youths claimed that no one has the right to turn the public land into private use without state permission. They also pointed out that afforestation as well as protection of forest is a major policy of the state that does not allow any violation. Moreover the villagers have been using the land collectively for cultivation for century.

There had been a long standing dispute between the ST (kond) and the Gountia, as the latter tries to exclusively own Patghar bandh (pond near sacred grove), where the Kond have been worshiping their ancestor. Through wealth and influence, the Gountia (now president of the village watershed) mobilized the local authorities to solve the long standing problem through watershed management. The verdict went against them which they term as sins not as illegal in their world view.

This example shows the implementation of law requires legal evidence which was often lacking in conventions of peasant society. Disputes over ownership of resources which frequently occur in rural areas do not originate in a modern society. Without the interference of local government, such disputes can only be solved by force. The use of force to solve disputes often has one of two results: either the weaker side gives up or the two sides, being well-matched in strength, are deadlocked for years and finally reach a compromise through negotiation. Yet this balance of strength is often temporary, and disputes arise again when the balance is lost. The introduction of legal proceedings may be considered a third way to solve disputes, but it is never omnipotent. The system of law designed from outside often fails when confronting issues of unclear ownership in rural

157 See Chapter-V
society. Lack of information and the need for documents, which state officials make difficult to obtain, limit poor people's access to state-provided services.

The government's interference is certainly a means of temporarily calming the situation, but the disputes cannot be solved for good. Even if a verdict is issued over the pond dispute, those villagers will be entangled with other complicated issues that cannot be solved by a simple legal verdict, let alone the fact that there is always a clear verdict on every dispute. With respect to the complexity of rural affairs, the official institution is too simplified to deal with the complications of social reality. In an attempt to maintain clarity and consolidation of laws and institutions, their complexity and flexibility are replaced by simplification and rigidity.

To deal with the complexity of rural life, numerous methods and practices have evolved that are specific and effective in the rural society. In the development language they may not be systematic and lucrative in complete economic terms but they play very important roles in rural life. Standardization of problems and their solutions runs across all rural development documents that failed to deal with the fragmented and diverse issues. In fact, there is no easy solution to almost every issue which is interlocked with other issues in rural society. It frequently happens that relying only on policies cannot solve the rural problems but only generates new ones. When state laws and institution enter rural society, these traditional concepts and norms lose their legitimacy, so their functionality is further reduced by an external institution.

2.5. Excessive Institutionalization in Discourse

Again there are gaps between the development discourse and the implementation level. The state institutions frequently refer to the phrase, "everyone is equal before the law." There are repeated mentions of 'equal participation', 'empowerment of weaker sections', 'decentralization and devaluation of power', in the development discourse. Since these are standardized concept and method of development, they can be applied universally. Hence the poor and the weaker sections could be better protected under formal systems. Yet, what we often see is that under these universal and inflexible systems the weak are
being deprived instead of being protected. At times the poor themselves protest against the informal rules or social norms that are deeply imbedded in society and that 'rules in use' override formal rules. But, either it is formal or informal, they remain the subjects. These rules-in-use are prejudiced against the poor. Laws for minimum wage, maximum hours of work might just as well not be written; they are constantly ignored if the worker is poor.

Since development is becoming more and more a matter of specialized competence and knowledge the poor and powerless village, remain in the mercy of experts. In the development process the experts and technocrats display their skill where the villagers have little knowledge to participate in this process and remain to be an object of goal and objective set by others. Therefore these systems generate a relationship of the powerful versus the weak. This relationship is determined mainly by three factors: professionalism, the positioning of status, and economic means.

Development again refers to familiarity with formal systems, the more familiar you are with the system, the more powerful you become. Such familiarity gives two kinds of power: one can easily figure out rules and channels that are in his favour; he can also interpret these rules in his interests. Numerous people in the village do not use state institutions be they credit institutions, government hospitals or government loans and schemes since they have little knowledge about the system. Lack of information about the development projects and institution is an adversary for them. But many rich villagers consolidate their socio-economic positions through many available development channels. The rich in general are better educated and to a large extent acquainted with the development apparatus. While confronting a competitor who is better equipped with special knowledge, farmers are always in a disadvantageous position. Compared to experienced administrators or experts, ordinary farmers also cannot speak professional legal language. So, specialized knowledge breeds power to the disadvantage of the weak. Social status exerts great influence in the functioning of development institutions. In many cases development institutions maintain statuesque instead of any change. In this

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sense, when farmers rise up against power, they are also against the formal systems. In the case study of watershed, we will see how the poor and downtrodden were overlooked by the implementing agencies, who also exercise state power. The systems were all designed by the establishment in such a way to reduce the farmer's power of expression.

Wealth not only exerts influence on the villagers, but on state/development institutions as well. The instances mentioned above make it clear that on the one hand, the design of the development and projects are such that the wealthy can easily influence it; on the other hand, wealth often controls the functioning of lower level officials. Because of projects, in general, the contractor and the service providers are more often than not the wealthier, and what awaits the poor is exploitation and unemployment. The local elite and local leaders act as effective gate-keepers to government-provided assistance, either diverting resources to their own use, or further increasing their power over the poor by becoming the resource distributors.

Again in the state system the power of wealth can be witnessed in other ways. In any dispute, the cost for going into legal proceedings is high, so most often legal support is sought by rich people. Ordinary farmers without power or money run the risk of bringing their families to ruin when they try to rely on formal systems while rich people make use of those systems with virtually no risk at all. Poverty is not only low income and no assets. It is a condition of exclusion from the institutions and organizations of modern life. Law courts, banks, education, health services, roads, water, electricity, even respect, are not available to the poor. For instance, it is harder for them to get small authorization letter to open a bank account, and they are often forced to pay bribes.159

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159 In 2003 during my pilot study, when the Market Regulated Committee, asked the cotton growing farmers to open a bank account, as the money would be pay on account. When they tried to do it, they were told they needed to file a lengthy application, with recommendation by respectable persons or an account holders, to open an account. Neither an illiterate person nor one with no connections would have been able to do that.
Seemingly just systems might not be so in the ground. State and development institutions seem to be fair because it is open to all but only the one who is aware, makes the highest offer can be the winner. Behind this apparent fairness is exploitation and discrimination. For example, only those who are in power, and who have more resources at their disposal can get bank loans, use credit society and other state institutions. But in the village Paria we could see, 90 percent of the villagers do not use state institutions such as bank and credit institutions. The great majority of farmers attempt to gain access to such institutions but they are actually excluded from the system as they lack resources and information. No wonder they see this as unjust. Disputes arising in the process of ownership change of common properties are due to the fact that this seemingly just procedure leads to serious challenge to justice in rural society.

Behind many disputes are similar motivations. Yet the powerless seldom rise up directly against this status quo because it has become part of the official discourse. But the change of ownership may endanger the interest of the majority by means of reducing their welfare, bringing about unemployment, or giving away collective assets. The most important thing is to stop the transfer of public land to exclusive private use and for that, it is necessary to know the state system. For the villagers had been using the common resource without exclusively owning, that is a convention, there is no document at least with the villagers (in office record it may be a pasture land). The unwritten agreement is easily exploited by the rich and powerful be they encroachment of pasture land or water bodies like munda and kata.

When the living logic of farmers is not in accordance with official discourse, farmers' acts become illegitimate, and they have to resort to what James Scott calls the "routine resistances" or "the weapon of the weak". Although deeply resentful, farmers lack channels for open expression, so for the time being they accept the arrangement by formal system. Yet they voice their complaint or act in a non-cooperative way to express them.

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More frequently, the farmers fail to gain their objective through legitimate intervention of state. Since they are not familiar with the state to protest their disapproval, their expression could be termed as unconventional and illegitimate. As mentioned earlier, the majority of villagers considered it unfair to let common property be used exclusively by the Gountia so they destroy the cotton crops at night or break the dam and release the water. When the government does not come to their rescue they converted into the village level issue.

Inconsistency between document prepared by the development institutions and its implementation may be universal, but it has its unique characteristics in rural India in a period of transition. Firstly, the official discourse is also in constant change, enabling it to have some flexibility. This also adds to difficulties for farmers. Such changes increase the risks of farmers' expression and decrease their familiarity with official discourse. Secondly, as a main focus in India's modern development; the state stresses the importance of building legal system and other formal systems. Therefore, official discourse exerts an increasing impact on routine rural life, especially when it is connected with outside world where farmers' conventional logic sometimes has to give way to official discourse. Situated in between the two different systems, farmers have to live in a world which is quite distanced from the discourse they express, and this distance is typical of rural society in India.

The conventional model of development that has been implemented over the year has in numerous instances failed to address the problems of backward region like Kalahandi. A uniform model adopted by the government failed to see the intricacies and complexes that is region specific and embedded with whole socio-economic process. It is necessary to understand the cultural specificity of production, economic viability of the poor and ecological sustainability of the region.

When we began working at the discourse level, we realized that development discourse created at the international level has increasingly been playing a crucial role in influencing the discourse, popular rhetoric, policies, and practice of development in
many developing countries. The role played by international financial institutions in leading this discourse was also remarkable. Proliferation of new theories, concepts, and formulations with a lot of radical jargon required deeper analysis and critical comprehension. The logic and explanations of the expert of International Organization may sound good but when the policies interact with the local socio-economic conditions and political structure they fail to prevail over the locally imbedded practices. Seminar, workshop and other intellectual deliberation were organised for local participations and empowerment but practically no ‘local’ are present when basically the model is developed. Kalahandi is the most backward district in Orissa as per the economic development indicators. Consequently, State has put the district in the priority one category of the industrialization. The government of Orissa has signed numbers of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to industrialize the state. However, it brings little benefits to the poor, as per the past experience of Bedant Aluminum or Niyama Giri. But the question is, are steel and alumina the only industries which can give economical development to the State? It is not only development indicators but also human development indicators i.e Health, Education, Communication, safe drinking water, and Employment. Despite having plenty of surface and ground water 80 percent of cultivable land is rainfed.

There are rich and poor regions, wet and arid agricultural zones, rainfed agricultural and irrigation area. Development has to operate with all these realities and interact with many complexes which the standard formula may not be suitable to replicate else where. It needs to be context specific and localized. One of the things we continuously hear is that India has had ‘green revolution’, which has allowed it to be a surplus food producer, exporter, and the like. But that may be successful in some region but probably not sustainable for whole of India. It is now widely recognised that ‘green revolution’ technology is not suitable for arid and semi-arid region. Hence the need to develop localized methods based on agro-climatic zone would be more suitable. The miracle technology introduced by the green revolution might be contributed for self sufficiency but geo-economic set up of Kalahandi is not viable for the green revaluation technology. After decades of its outward show it has been brought to Kalahandi which
the government claims 'a drought prone area'. Without canal water, irrigation system and proper inputs, technology by itself might not be viable and sustainable.