Chapter 4

Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Policies: Stories from Two Villages in Orissa

In this chapter we get a look at the implementation of poverty alleviation policies at local level in Orissa. Two villages were selected for intensive field work for this purpose. The data collected during the field work regarding the actual programmes, physical targets achieved, and the resources spent on different programmes in the area, is examined with reference to the present condition of the poor. The status of different opportunities created by the government and the real gain of the poor in taking advantage of these are the main focus of this chapter. This does lead us to have a deeper understanding of the policies and processes of implementation of the programmes. Proper implementation of policies refers to the actual performance of the state. The success or failure of any policy depends upon so many factors like well designed and the right policy; efficiency of the implementing machinery and the circumstances under which implementation takes place. For effective implementation the policy must be guided by a vision and the vision should get reflected in the design of the policies. The implementation process of poverty alleviation policies; role of local politics and social forces in this process and the poor; and many such issues are investigated in the two villages selected for field study.

Two villages, namely, Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida (Block-Laikera, District-Jharsuguda, Orissa) were selected for field work. One of the villages is relatively a developed village and the other one is by broad development indicators a backward one. The findings in these two villages are compared to get a picture of the impact of
social forces and the participation of the poor in implementation process, over the outcome of the policies. The focus of this chapter is on the policies related to Wage Employment, Public Distribution System, Primary Education and Primary Health Care. Data was collected pertaining to the implementation of these programmes during the field work.

Methodology

For detailed investigation of the implementation of policies at the local level, two villages were selected for field work. Participatory method along with interview method was followed for this purpose. Semi-structured and both close ended and open ended questionnaires were used for the interview. Formal and informal interactions were held with the villagers, Panchayat members, government officials, who were responsible for implementation of the concerned policies. Under construction development projects, primary schools, primary and district level hospitals, Public Distribution System retail shops, Civil Supply office, office of the district collector, office of District Rural Development Agency, office of the District Inspector of school, Block office, Panchayat office etc. were visited time and again for collection of data and on the spot assessment of the actual condition of implementation of related policies. Official records were checked for information and figures regarding different programmes.

The field work was conducted between 7th of May 2003 to 10th of July 2003. As the two villages selected for field study are near to the native village of the researcher, hence several trips made on different occasions by the researcher to this area helped in better understanding of the problems. The researcher personally knows many of the poor and other villagers along with the Panchayat officials and the Block
officials. It helped in getting information from these people. Their information was
cross checked by personal verification from other sources by asking others; checking
their houses and assets in detail. House visit was a must for the interview. Intensive
interaction with people from various walks of life helped in getting a clear picture of
poverty situation and the local politics, economy and the social relation and other
related factors. The researcher, as stated above, belongs to this area and knows the
language spoken by the people. He has also lived in this area since childhood for
almost 20 years and is well acquainted with the problems, life style of the people and
the government action in this area. It all helped to understand the concerned issues of
the study in a better way. Though, a certain amount of bias and prejudice is natural to
creep in, a lot of conscious efforts have been made to keep the findings of the study
objective and value neutral.

Profile of the Villages

The two villages Bhatlaida and Sandhuriam, chosen for field investigation,
belong to Laikera Block of Jharsuguda district in Orissa. This is one of the most
backward regions in Orissa. Bhatlaida is situated on the main road connecting
Jharsuguda district head quarter and the town of Kuchinda. One has to travel to the
east of Jharsuguda towards Kolabira village to reach Bhatlaida. To reach Sandhuriam
one has to leave the main road going towards Kuchinda and has to take a left turn
either from Bhatlaida or few kilometers after that. This road leads towards Bamra
town. After going traveling about 12 kilometers one has to take another left turn to
reach Sandhuriam which is situated under a small hill called Usha Kothi.
According to the 1991 census of India the relevant figures for the two villages are as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Population above the age group of 0-6 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
<td>2186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
<th>Scheduled Caste Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduled Tribe Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Workers**
(Percentage calculated excluding the population of the age group of 0-6 years)

- Sandhuriam 53.7%
- Bhatlaida 38%

**Agricultural Workers**
(Percentage calculated excluding the population of the age group of 0-6 years)

- Sandhuriam 22.5%
- Bhatlaida 16%

**Number of BPL families** (1997 BPL survey, Government of Orissa)

- Bhatlaida 375 families
- Sandhuriam 96 families

(Source: *DRDA, Jharsuguda, unpublished records*)

The selection process of the two villages for field work, were based on the fact that one of the villages, Bhatlaida, is comparatively a developed village whereas Sandhuriam is a backward village. Most of the people living in Sandhuriam are poor. But
Bhatlaida has a substantial number of rich people. The village Bhatlaida belongs to Bhatlaida Gram Panchayat and Sandhuriam belongs to Niktimal Gram Panchayat. Both the Gram Panchayats belong to Laikera Block of the Jharsuguda district in Orissa. Bhatlaida is well connected by road. It is situated on the main road connecting the district headquarters of Jharsuguda and the town of Kuchinda. Hence it is easy to get bus transport in this route to reach nearby towns. It is also easy to market the agricultural products in the nearby towns through road transports. Sandhuriam is situated in a very remote area. It is not well connected by road or any other means. It is difficult to reach the main road from Sandhuriam connecting the near by towns or the district head quarters.

Part of the land in Bhatlaida is irrigated by watershed development projects where as land in Sandhuriam is not at all irrigated and solely dependent on rain water. Only paddy is cultivated in this village. Very few people cultivate cash crops or vegetables, only when they have their own boring well. Due to partial irrigation in Bhatlaida, other then paddy cultivation some cash crops are also done in the off seasons. It provides additional employment to the people along with larger produce.

Being the Panchayat headquarters of Bhatlaida Gram Panchayat, Bhatlaida has certain facilities that Sandhuriam does not have. As stated earlier, Bhatlaida is well connected with roads. It has a primary school (up to class 7). There is a high school and a college set up at the initiative of the villagers. The school is managed by the villagers. The government gives some financial aids and certain amount of salaries to the teachers of the high school. But the expenditure of the college is completely managed by the villagers. On the other hand, Sandhuriam has a primary school (up to class 7). Till 1997 the school had only classes up to grade 5 and the addition has been very recent.
Social Composition

The caste composition in the two villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida are almost like other villages in western Orissa. The Scheduled Castes in the villages of Sandhuriam include the castes of Ganda, Ghasia, Khujria, Chamar, Luhura and Keunt. The Scheduled Tribes include the Kisan, Kol, Khadia, and Gond. The other backward castes include Aghria, Teli, Gaur, Sundhi, and Mali. The general castes include Brahman and Rajput. Along with these castes and tribes Bhatlaida is inhabited by some other castes as well. They include the other backward castes of Odia and the tribes of Saunra and Kandha. The pattern of power relation is surrounded both by caste hierarchy and landed property. The concept of purity and pollution is obeyed by the people in these villages. Aghria, Teli and Gond are the dominant castes/tribes in this area because of their place in the hierarchy of the caste system linked to their access to land and business, trading activities. The society in this part of Orissa\(^1\) is highly stratified on the basis of caste hierarchy. Social relations are determined on caste lines. The concept of Bhal lok (upper caste) and chhot lok (lower caste) are associated with the social position of the people according to the caste they are born in. like most part of India the lower caste bear the burden of indignity foisted by upper caste in social interaction.

The term Jaet is used for both tribe and caste in this area. Some of the landed tribes, living in this area like the Gond, are considered to be in the higher position in the caste hierarchy. Because of the Zamindari of the ancestors of Gond tribe, they enjoy a preeminent social position in this area. This proves the assumptions that land

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\(^1\) This is the western part of Orissa. The Block Laikera is about 90 kms away from the town of Sambalpur. The districts of Kalahandi and Nuanpara, infamous for drought and starvation deaths, are the two adjacent districts to Sambalpur.
holding and economic status plays a major role in determining where a particular caste lies in the hierarchy.

Some of the Scheduled Castes like Ghasia, Chamar, Ganda etc. are considered as the untouchable castes. The people belonging to these castes face the problem of untouchability. This further divorces them from the resources and opportunities of the social mainstream. However some Scheduled Castes such as Keut, Dhoba, Khujria etc. are considered as the touchable castes. Because of this consideration they do not face the problem of untouchability.

Residences of different castes and tribes are located mostly in clusters which are called Para. It is noticed that in most of the villages the Para of the untouchable castes is situated at one end of the village which is furthest from the main road. The location is not always a clean and healthy one due to various practices of the people. The odd location of their Para deprives them from the opportunity of opening any shop. Even if they open any shop near the main road, higher caste people don't usually buy from them. Thus, it becomes difficult for the untouchables to carry on such business ventures.

Languages

Sambalpuri, a dialect of Orissa; is spoken by all the inhabitants of this region. The tribals have their own languages. But when they need to communicate with others, they talk in Sambalpuri. However, in schools, the medium of instruction is Oriya. Students read and write in Oriya. But they do not speak in Oriya as the community language is Sambalpuri. English is taught as the second language from class IV onwards. Hindi is taught from class VI onwards.
Land Holdings

Land holdings data of the district Jharsuguda for the year 1990-91\(^2\) shows that in the rural areas 789 households belonging to all social groups hold land below 0.02 hectares. Out of these households, 202 belong to SC category and 350 belong to ST category.

The data regarding the large land holdings (more than 10 hectares) in the rural area of the district shows that 1460 households belonging to all social groups are in this category. Out of this only 25 are SC and 185 are ST.

The above figures show that most of the SCs and STs are either landless or hold very small quantity of land. The major chunk of land is owned by other castes.

Land records for different revenue villages of the whole Block of Laikera show that mostly the Aghria (OBC), Teli (OBC), Kisan (ST) and Gond (ST) are the main land holders in this area. All people holding more than 40 acres of land belong to these castes/tribes. There is not even a single SC person who belongs to this landed elite category. Though some people belonging to Kisan and Gond tribes have large land holdings (as per the official records of the revenue Inspector), but in reality, major parts of their land is sold to the Aghria castes people. These people work as labour in their own land. The alienation of land is a result of long time debt bondage and lack of other sources of income. In the pre-independence period and just after the independence, majority of the landlords of this area belonged to Gond tribe. Some people belonging to Kisan tribe also had large chunks of land with them.

\(^2\) Statistical Hand Book 1993, (Jhartsuguda district).
The *Aghria* caste people migrated to western Orissa from outside the district.\(^3\) Taking advantage of the innocence and difficulties of the tribals they bought land from them at cheaper rates. This process went on until the government made it illegal to buy land from the SC/ST through legislation. Even after this, the process of land alienation from the tribals continued in this area. Most of the *Aghria* caste people are very rich according to the local standard and some even can be considered as capitalist farmers. Hardly anybody belonging to Aghria caste is landless or poor. Their educational standard is the highest in this area. But they are included in the OBC list of the state and the central government. So they are eligible for such benefits meant for the OBCs. Most of the benefits meant for OBCs, go to them as they are the most influential in this region.

**Political Settings**

Like other parts of Orissa, in this area as well there exists a three-tier Panchayati Raj system. There is Gram Panchayat at the village level; Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level.\(^4\) The head of the Gram Panchayat is called Sarpanch who is directly elected by the people. Gram Panchayat, consisting about five to ten villages, is divided into several wards. Ward members are directly elected by the people. The Panchayat Samiti is the middle layer in the Panchayati Raj System. The head of the Panchayat Samiti is called the Chairperson, who is indirectly elected by the directly elected members of different Panchayats. At the district level, there is Zilla Parishad. The head of the Zilla Parishad is called the President, who is indirectly elected by the Zilla Parishad members who are directly

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\(^4\) Gram Panchayat Amendment Acts 1991, Government of Orissa, had provided one third of the seats in Panchayats reserved for women and reservation for SC and ST as per their population in the concerned area. This provision was made before the Central Government passed the 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment Act of the Constitution of India in 1992.
elected on the basis of adult suffrage from every block. The Zila Parishad has not yet become an effective tier of decentralization in Orissa context.⁵

The villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida come under Laikera assembly constituency. This constituency was represented by the Congress since early 70s, but in the recent times, it is represented by the BJP. Now Deogarh Parliament seat (both the villages come under this constituency) is also represented by the BJP.

Which ever party is representing this area, nothing substantial has been done for the betterment of the poor in particular and for the development of this area in general. The public service delivery system has not been able to provide the basic services to the people effectively. In this context the state has not been able to intervene successfully to combat poverty in this area. For a better understanding of the situation, now let's look at the implementation of the policies regarding Wage Employment, Public Distribution System, Primary Education and Primary Health Care in these two villages to find out the reality of the implementation of these policies and there out come.

**Wage Employment Programmes**

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, implemented two major programmes for wage employment in rural areas. One of the programmes namely Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was meant only for wage employment. The other programme was meant for creation of infrastructure at the village level, namely Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY). The main aim of these programmes was to provide additional employment opportunities to the poor living below the poverty

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As the poor face the problem of employment opportunities during the agricultural off season, the projects in these schemes were mainly taken up when there is a scarcity of employment. The programmes mainly deal with providing manual work for the poor. It was supposed that these programmes would help in alleviating rural poverty by lessening their vulnerability. The objectives of the Programmes are to provide additional employment in the rural areas along with food security, creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure in the rural areas.  

Later on the wage employment programmes were merged together and a new wage employment programme called Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) was announced in August 2001. This programme is supposed to take care of food security, additional wage employment and village infrastructure.

The programme (SGRY) was launched with an annual outlay of ten thousand crore rupees. In this programme the central government decided to provide 50 lakh tonnes of food grains to the state governments and Union Territory Administration every year completely free of cost which would amount to five thousand crore rupees at economic cost. In this programme the aim was to create 100 man days of wage employment every year and special emphasis was to be given to provide wage employment to women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and parents of children withdrawn from hazardous occupations.

Presently, SGRY is being implemented in two streams. The first stream is being implemented at the District level and intermediate level Panchayats. 50% of the total fund is provided to these levels. The second stream of the programme is being

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
implemented at the village Panchayat level. Rest 50% of the fund is provided to this level through the District Rural Development Agencies or the Zilla Parishad.

In SGRY payment of wages is made both in cash and kind (food grains). Each laborer is to get minimum of 5 Kg of food grains and rest amount in cash for each days’ work. It is up to the state government to decide whether to give more amounts of food grains as part of the wages. The price of the food grain is calculated by the state or Union Territory Administration, at either Below Poverty Line (BPL) rate or Above Poverty Line (APL) rate.

The Annual Action Plan in this programme is prepared by the Panchayati Raj Institutions independently. The Annual Action Plan for the district level is prepared by the Zilla Parishad. The Panchayat Samiti prepares the Action Plan for the works to be taken up at Samiti Level. And the Gram Panchayats prepare their Annual Action Plan for the works at Panchayat level. The Action Plan is prepared in the Gram Sabha and approved by it.

In SGRY the main focus is on the works which are more labour intensive and can create wage employment, durable assets and infrastructure. The works may include construction of village infrastructure and link roads, primary school buildings, dispensaries, Panchayat Ghars, marketing infrastructure, promoting of traditional water resources, afforestation, watershed development etc.

There are certain kinds of works which are prohibited in SGRY. They include buildings for religious places, monuments, welcome gates, big bridges, big buildings, buildings for higher secondary schools and colleges etc. The programme aims at providing community assets which can contribute for additional income to the poor,
and will provide developmental opportunities to the people. The amount provided in this programme is also not so high.

One of the main features of this programme is the ban on contractors. No contractors are permitted to engage in the execution of the works in this scheme and no middle men are employed. It is supposed that the full benefit of the work should reach to the workers. It is the labour leaders selected in the Gram Sabha, who are supposed to supervise the work. The villagers select the labour leaders from the village. That person looks after the whole work under the monitoring of the Panchayat.

Regarding the employment generation programmes V.S. Byas says that because of the concentration on assets that require more capital (such as construction projects like Panchayat Ghar, housing etc.), the primary objective of employment generation is neglected. These works benefits the rich more than the poor. Works like soil conservation, minor irrigation, watershed development and aforestation are neglected. These works create more employment presently and create opportunities for employment in the future as well.⁹

Participation of the poor in the wage employment programmes has been encouraging at all times. The earlier programme of wage employment –Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) had shown this trend. But it is not free from shortcomings. On the basis of the first concurrent evaluation on Jawahar Rozgar Yojna, conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development, through independent research institutions during January-December 1992, M.Neelakanthan provides an insight into the major findings. Neelakanthan says that participation by SC/ST or landless laborers in JRY in most of

the states seems to be encouraging. In Orissa the share of the SC/ST in JRY
employment is 62.32%. In states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil
Nadu women were paid less than men. In state like Kerala unskilled workers were
paid more than minimum wages as otherwise workers are not available. In Orissa a
JRY worker got 12.32 days of employment on an average during the reference month.
It is also noticed that non-poor family workers are selected for providing employment
in the works taken up for execution. The JRY manual was not available in about one-
third of the surveyed Panchayats. The programme had not been able to provide the
targeted 100 days of wage employment to the poor.

Another much talked about wage employment programme is the Employment
Guarantee Scheme (EGS) initiated in Maharashtra in the early 1970s. The EGS is a
mainstream employment programme, fully sponsored by the state government of
Maharashtra. It guarantees gainful employment locally to all adults above 18 years of
age, residing in rural areas and few municipal councils. The wage income from EGS
is to serve as supplementary income during the period when agricultural work is not
available and in this way provide food security and minimize other effects (such as
distress sale of assets) of severe fluctuations in income, thereby mitigating the evil
effects of poverty, rather than alleviating it. In this form, it works as a relief
programme. Any way the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme is a better
designed scheme with better co-ordination of the administration, Panchayats,
politicians and the beneficiaries. Despite so many shortcomings identified by many
scholars who conducted studies on this pograms, certain positive effects of EGS on
the rural economy of Maharashtra have come to light. This programme has helped in

and Political Weekly, 3 December 1994.
11 Krishnaraj, Maithreyi, Divya Pandey and Aruna Kanchi, ‘Does EGS require restructuring for poverty
alleviation and gender equality?’, Economic and Political Weekly, 17 April, 2004, p.1599.
mitigation of unemployment and underemployment at the aggregate level. It has also helped in increase in average income of the poor. The other benefits caused by EGS include attainment of food security; improvement of diet, clothing, housing of participants; spread of education especially amongst poor children; self-sufficiency in fodder and firewood as a result of forest conservation and development under EGS; positive agricultural growth via increase in production, productivity and diversification due to soil and moisture conservation works under EGS; mitigation of seasonal migration and mobilization of the poor, especially women.\footnote{Ibid., p.1597.}

### Implementation of Wage Employment Programme in the Villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida

The villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida belong to Laikera Block. Table 1 gives an account of the amount of money that has been released to Laikera Block for wage employment programmes by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Jharsuguda in the last 3 years. By the time field work was done i.e.between 2000 to 2003.

#### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount of Money released</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>Rs. 72, 13, 000/-</td>
<td>(JGSY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 16, 15, 000/-</td>
<td>(EAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Rs. 18, 33, 000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 44, 70, 000/-</td>
<td>EAS &amp; SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>Rs. 44, 73, 000/-</td>
<td>SGRY – II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 44, 69, 000/-</td>
<td>SGRY-I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Unpublished Official Records, DRDA, Jharsuguda*
The above data shows that the financial assistance provided to Laikera block is almost constant in last three years. Only the old programmes are replaced by new ones with new strategies, otherwise there is no substantial change in the amount provided.

Table 2

Rice Grain supplied to Laikera Block in Wage Employment Programmes by DRDA, Jharsuguda in last 3 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>436 Metric tonnes</td>
<td>Food for work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>189 Metric tonnes, 193 Metric tonnes</td>
<td>SGRY &amp; EAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>474 Metric tonnes, 479 Metric tonnes</td>
<td>SGRY-I, SGRY-II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above data indicates that in 2001-2002 the amount of rice supplied has decreased whereas it once again increases in the next year for the implementation of the new programme i.e. SGRY.

Now let’s look at the expenditure in Bhatlaida and Sandhuriam in the wage employment programmes in the last 3 years i.e. from 2000 to 2003.

Table 3

Work done in Sandhuriam and its adjacent areas in years 2000-2003 by the Panchayat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the work</th>
<th>Amount spent</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Year 2000-2001) Sandhurian Chaupal Completion</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam to Mudrajore road</td>
<td>Rs. 25,000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam to boundary</td>
<td>Rs. 37,500/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

Works done in Sandhuriam and its adjacent areas in years 2000-2003 by the Block office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the work</th>
<th>Amount spent</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2000-2001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Anganwadi Centre</td>
<td>Rs. 30,000/-</td>
<td>EAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of road</td>
<td>Rs. 20,000/-</td>
<td>Labour Incentive Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2001-2002)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of Road to Bhurridumri</td>
<td>Rs. 34,000/-</td>
<td>Food for work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2002-2003)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Road</td>
<td>Rs. 60,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 100,00/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – *Unpublished Laikera Block Office Record.*

These data shows that except one year i.e. 2001-2002, in other years substantial amount have been spent in Sandhuriam and its adjacent areas. But field investigation shows that nothing substantial has been done for creation of man days for the wage laborers and building of rural infrastructure.
Table 5 shows the amount given for the work done in Bhatlaida by the Panchayat.

**Table 5**

Work done in Bhatlaida and its adjacent areas in years 2000-2003 by the Panchayat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the work</th>
<th>Amount spent</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2000-2001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida- Bhuliadihi road</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School building</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Construction of chaupal building</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing steps</td>
<td>Rs. 40,000/-</td>
<td>JGSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2001-2002)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culvert Construction</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaupal Completion</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School building repairing</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus stand construction</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2002-2003)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaupal Completion</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of School</td>
<td>Rs. 30,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of School (Part II)</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culvert Construction</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pond improvement</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road repairing</td>
<td>Rs. 30,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Unpublished Bhatlaida Gram Panchayat Records.*
Table 6

Work done in Bhatlaida and its adjacent areas in years 2000-2003 by the Block office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the work</th>
<th>Amount spent</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2000-2001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of road to Bhadimal</td>
<td>Rs. 300,000/-</td>
<td>Rural Connectivity programme (RCP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road to Bhatlaida G.P. office</td>
<td>Rs. 100,000/-</td>
<td>RCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Primary School building</td>
<td>Rs. 100,000/-</td>
<td>EAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of AWC</td>
<td>Rs. 63,000/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club house construction</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of road</td>
<td>Rs. 10,000/-</td>
<td>Calamity Relief Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of road to Pandkimal</td>
<td>Rs. 8,000/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement village road</td>
<td>Rs. 15,000/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2001-2002)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of road to Kulabisa</td>
<td>Rs. 34,000/-</td>
<td>Food for work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of road to Pandkimal</td>
<td>Rs. 21,000/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Year 2002-2003)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of AWC</td>
<td>Rs. 50,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of School Building</td>
<td>Rs. 90,000/-</td>
<td>OBB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Mahila Samiti building</td>
<td>Rs. 73,897/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of road</td>
<td>Rs. 100,000/-</td>
<td>SGRY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Unpublished Laikera Block Office records.*

It can be easily observed that Bhatlaida has received more money than Sandhuriam. But the visit to the sites shows that many of these works are still
incomplete. But comparatively the status is better than Sandhuriam. It is noticed that Bhatlaida got funds in so many programmes which Sandhuriam did not get.

The analysis of the process of actual implementation of these programmes in the villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida focuses on the participation of the poor in these programmes.

Socio-Economic and Educational Background of the People Working as Labour in Wage Employment Programmes

It is not the case that all the poor in this area are working as labour in the government sponsored wage employment programmes. Some poor prefer to work under the village rich farmers, though the number of days of work under these farmers is very less in the season. The preference for the later is due to the nature of work and the circumstances in which it is done. Some labors don’t like hard manual work under scorching heat. The government works usually involves unskilled labor mainly in construction of roads, ponds etc. which requires much more stamina. Those who are not used to such type of work think it is better to do less tedious work even with lesser payment. Digging earth or such type of work as livelihood socially identifies poverty ridden family. Many people look down upon these types of manual labour. Some people feel proud of not making a living out of such work. It reflects the mind set in the society which considers manual labour as a low level of work, demeaning the social status of the person involved. Low value is attached to manual labor as a means of livelihood. On the other hand the participants in these programmes are called as unskilled labours and they are paid very low amount of wages notwithstanding the minimum wages law. These are the contributing factors for many poor hesitating to participate in these programmes.
The tribals left with no other option for survival in villages, work in agricultural fields; collecting wood; work in construction of bridges, roads, brickyard etc. They are well exposed to physically straining activities. Even the tribal women are well acquainted with hard physical labour.

During the field work it is noticed that the tribals are not aware of the official wage. They are also unaware of the official process to lodge any complaint if minimum wages are not paid to them. Hence they are considered by the contractors as the best source of manpower to be engaged in these programmes without any risk of exposure. As per the guidelines the programmes are open for all the people living below the poverty line. But the contractors select some people as per their wish and ask them to come for work. These are often negotiated depending on the necessity of the workers. Those who are aware or forthright about their wages are often not called to work and are left to fend for themselves. In case they come, then they are discouraged by the contractors and sent back home. Though contractors' participation is banned in these programmes, yet they work in the guise of labour leader.

The Scheduled Caste population of both Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida villages do not give priority to these programmes. If they are left with no choice then only they go for this option to earn their livelihood. However the Ghasia caste people participate in these programmes. They are the poorest Scheduled Castes in this area. The work needs hard labor under scorching heat which many times lead to exhaustion and ill health of the labor. Even the wage is very low and official minimum wage is not paid. Sometimes the contractor, who himself is a goon or backed by goons, do not pay for the work at all. If approached time and again the contractor threatens the

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13 As told by the respondents of Bhatlaida and Sandhuriam during the field work.
laborers of dire consequences. These factors discourage the Scheduled Caste poor from working in these programmes.

Other groups which hesitate to work in these programmes are the artisans, and the educated unemployed young men of poor families. The artisans find these works very less paying and very straining which may result in health problem. The issue of dignity and self respect is involved in case of any educated youth from poor families. They look down upon the manual labour and are often not participate in these programmes.

Food Security

A large number of poor in India don’t get minimum daily requirement of food for consumption. In this regard, Utsa Patnaik writes,

A larger segment of the rural masses in India with a much lower food grains absorption than the average, have been already reduced to the nutritional status of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). On the basis of the NSS data on calorie intake for 1999-2000, I estimate that about 40% of the rural population was at the low absorption level of the SSA average. It is not for any lack of effort by the Indian Government that the situation is not worse. If the present incorrect policies of official denial of the widening ambit of hunger, failure to undertake expansionary development policies, and the official promotion of export oriented corporate agriculture continue to be followed, it may well be only a matter of another five years or so before we see the descent of the whole of rural India to the present average SSA nutritional status. 14

Ensuring food security for the poor is the main aim of “Food for Work” programme. This programme is implemented to provide wage employment to the poor and food grain instead of wages. 15 This saves the poor from chronic hunger and starvation. Food grains are provided at a subsidized rate. The overflowing food grains in the godowns of the Food Corporation of India are also utilized for the benefit of the

15 SGRY ensures food security. The Annual Report 2004-2005 of the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India states that under SGRY 50 lakh tones of food grains is being provided every year to the State Governments and Union Territories. The payment of food grain is directly made by the Ministry to the Food Corporation of India (FCI).
poor. Food for work programme includes the programmes like Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), Sampoorn Grameen Rojgar Yozna (SGRY) etc.

In both the villages of Sandhuriam and Bhallaida, the poor who used to work in the wage employment programmes expressed their happiness that they are getting food grain in wage which they need the most. Though the rice grain provided is of not so good quality, yet the poor think it is better to have food than starve.\textsuperscript{16} The rice is consumed in a time period of one month or sold to meet the expenses of household. When this rice is finished the poor once again turn back to the open market. Public Distribution System shops sell the food grain in the black market. Often they do not provide rice to the poor on the pretext that it is not supplied to them. Often the PDS shop make available to grain at the time of harvest when they find it difficult to sell the rice at the black market. At this time the PDS price is usually higher than the market price. Thus the poor often buy rice at this time from the open market. When the market price rises, the PDS shops create an artificial shortage and try to push up the price. In both the occasions the poor are forced to buy rice from the market and are the victims of black marketing, corruption and Government apathy.

Some poor people complained of getting rice grain which gave filthy smell. Earlier the laborers used to spend money on liquor. When rice grain is provided as wage, expenditure on liquor was controlled as the wives of the labor who consumed alcohol, did not let them take rice to pay for liquor.\textsuperscript{17} But it is still prevalent that many laborers sell off the rice to drink and put their families in a vulnerable situation.

\textsuperscript{16} During the field work rice grain provided in the wage employment programmes, was checked and it was noticed that the rice grain provided was not of so bad quality.
\textsuperscript{17} As stated by some women during the field work.
Bur rice is not always provided for wages. Violation of the guidelines continues in one form or the other. The contractors in Sandhuriam have stopped giving rice to the laborers. In Bhatlaida sometimes it is given, sometimes not. Only cash payment is done to avoid the difficulties associated with transportation of rice. Sometimes the rice is not supplied to the contractors by the concerned authorities. But in Bhatlaida sometimes the poor demand cash payment after getting rice for few days. It is because some of them have their own patch of land and produce rice in it. They can’t sell the rice they get as wage for it would need some entrepreneurial skills and time.

**Minimum Daily Wage**

The minimum daily wage for an unskilled labour in the wage employment programme is Rs. 50/- per day. In Orissa it consists of 7 kg of rice amounting to Rs. 39.55 at the rate of Rs. 5.65 per kg. and Rs. 10.45 in cash. 19

In road construction work in this area the payment is not calculated on the basis of the number of days some one has worked. Instead the amount is calculated on the basis of the completion of a certain amount of work. The work target in small units is decided and the amount to be paid on its completion by the labor is fixed by the contractors. This calculation is prepared by the contractors according their wish. But the provisions of the wage employment require the payment to be made on the basis of the number of days one has worked as per the minimum daily wages fixed by the Government. To show that this provision is abided by, the muster rolls are forged and false entries with thumb impressions (supposed to be that of the Labourers) are prepared to show to the inspecting officials. So on paper the number of mandays created and daily wages paid to the laborers are shown, but in reality some other system

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18 As told by some respondents during field work.
19 Information from Laikera Block office.
is followed for the payment which is too low in comparison to the minimum daily wages.\textsuperscript{20} Everybody including the officials, the District Collector, the Project Director of the DRDA knows about this state of affairs but the officials are least interested in talking any actions. The overseer who certifies the work, other officials and Panchayat members get their commissions from the contractors and the bills are passed.\textsuperscript{21}

The system followed by the contractors in measurement of the earth dug is locally called \textit{Chauka} system. Earth is dug in a rectangular space. The width, length and depth of that space are measured and a fixed amount is paid accordingly. The amount differs depending upon the type of soil that exists. For rocky soil or in steep slope more amounts is paid. The amount is fixed after bargaining with the labourers. But the poor labourers lacking any information of wage rates and full of compulsions are always at the receiving end. If we calculate the amount in \textit{Chauka} system according to the days of work involved, it amounts to Rs. 35.00 to Rs. 40.00 per day. Some times the contractors don’t pay the labourers at all. Sometimes they leave the work halfway. Huge amount of recovery is pending against such contractors. But the Block officials are not taking any action against them to recover that amount.

In the works related to construction of school buildings etc., daily wages are paid but the amount is much less than the official minimum daily wage. The unskilled labourers are paid Rs. 30/- instead of Rs 50/- per day. Even women workers are paid Rs. 5/- less than men.\textsuperscript{22}

During the field work it came to light that not even the labourers or Panchayat members knew the rate of minimum daily wage. Very few educated people knew the

\textsuperscript{20} As told by some contractors and confirmed by the inspecting officials, during the field work.
\textsuperscript{21} One of the contractors is a relative of the researcher. He told that he got his bills and estimates approved in the Block office by bribing the officials.
\textsuperscript{22} As told by the labors during field works.
rate, but they were so indifferent to the conditions of labourers that they did not even bother to inform them. The officials do not inform the poor regarding the minimum daily wage though they come for inspection of the work. In Bhatlaida a young man of ST community who has passed the +2 Examinations and is now working in the wage employment programme stated that he did not know that the government has fixed any minimum daily wage. The main problem is the labor did not have any access to newspaper, T.V. or radio. Lack of information plays a major role in making the poor disadvantage from benefiting out of developmental projects. It was the bureaucrats who were most reluctant to part with information to the poor beneficiaries.

The Wage Employment programmes have been started to provide 100 days of wage employment in off reason to the poor in a year. In Sandhuriam the poor get about 15-35 days of work in a year where as in Bhatlaida the poor get between 20-50 days of work in a year. The number of days depends upon the number of projects undertaken; how far these are completed and how much work is done in reality yet to be answered.

Hence the labourers can’t depend solely on these government sponsored programmes. Bhatlaida is well connected by road with the district headquarters of Jharsuguda and Kuchinda. The poor from Bhatlaida go to these towns by bus in search of work on a daily basis. But Sandhuriam is situated in a remote area and lacks proper road communication and transport facility. So the poor of this village are hardly able to go to other towns in search of work. The poor artisans and women are out of these programmes. The nature of job undertaken in these programmes has nothing to relate with the works of the artisans. On the other hand, widows, divorcees and other poor women can’t participate in these programmes due to preference of

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23 As told by the labors during the field work and calculated by the researcher.
male labors in road construction work. It is only in building or culvert construction works, that the women get some employment.

**Public Distribution System**

The Public Distribution System (PDS) has evolved as a major instrument of the Government’s economic policy for ensuring availability of food grains to the public at affordable prices as well as for meeting food security of the poor. But at the same time PDS has been widely criticized for its failure to serve the population below the poverty line. Its urban bias, negligible coverage in the States with the highest concentration of the rural poor has been the basis of the system. More over there is a lack of transparency and accountability in the arrangements for delivery. However efforts have been made by the Government to streamline the PDS by issuing special cards to families Below Poverty Line (BPL). Food grains are sold to BPL families at specially subsidized prices with effect from June 1997. Under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), the states are required to formulate and implement foolproof arrangements for identification of the poor, for delivery of food grains to fair price shops and for its distribution. The distribution has to be done in a transparent and accountable manner. The end retail price is fixed by the States/UTs after taking into account the margins for wholesalers/retailers, transportation charges, levies, local taxes etc.\(^\text{24}\)

In Orissa by the end of 2001-2002, essential commodities were distributed through a network of 23,693 retail outlets, 177 of maitri shops and 110 mobile vans in inaccessible and difficult areas.\(^\text{25}\) The Economic Survey of the Government of Orissa


states that the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on the poor was implemented in 143 ITDP and DDAP Blocks w.e.f. 01.06.1997. Under TPDS all the rural families below the poverty line having annual income not exceeding Rs. 11,000 and enlisted in the BPL list in all the 143 ITDP and DPAP blocks were supplied with 16 kg. of common rice per family per month at the specially subsidised price of Rs. 5.00 per kg. from April 2000 to July 2000 and at Rs. 4.75 per kg. from August, 2000 onwards. In the remaining 171 non-ITDP blocks, all rural families below the poverty line having annual income not exceeding Rs. 6,000 and enlisted in the BPL list were supplied with 16 kg. of common rice per family per month at the rate of Rs. 6.50 per kg. from April, 2000 to July, 2000; at Rs. 6.25 per kg. from August 2000 to 13th February 2001 and at Rs. 6.30 per kg. from 14th February, 2001 onwards. Besides all families (ration card holders) below the poverty line in urban areas were supplied with 18 kg. of common rice per family per month at a subsidized rate of Rs. 6.50 per kg. from 01.04.2000. For sale of subsidized rice in the 143 ITDP and DPAP blocks under the targeted PDS, Government have eliminated private retailers and engaged (i) Gram Panchayats, (ii) Rural Consumers Co-operative Stores, (iii) Service Co-operative societies, (iv) Model Fair Price Shops run by Orissa Civil Supply Corporation Ltd. and (v) Registered Mahila Mandals. 26

Under Annapurna Scheme, 10 kg. of rice per month per beneficiary is supplied free of cost to the 64,800 senior citizens who are eligible for old age pension under National/State Old Age Pension Scheme but not covered so far. In this scheme the old persons over the age of 60 are selected by the Gram Sabha as the beneficiaries. The basis for being a beneficiary in this programme is not the family but the individual.

26 Ibid., p. 18/8
Under Antyodaya Anna Yojna 5,05,500 numbers of poorest of the poor families in the State are supplied with 25 kg. Of rice per family per month at Rs. 3.00 per kg. since Septembers, 2001 with an expenditure of Rs. 63.00 lakh per month towards transportation charges etc. Recently the amount of rice has been increased to 35 kg. per month per family.  

For effective targeting of food grains through PDS, the PDS manual states that:

1. State Government shall ensure that no eligible applicant is denied a ration card under the Public Distribution System.

2. The ration card holder shall be entitled to draw essential commodities from a fair price shop on weekly basis.

3. State Government shall issue distinctive ration cards to APL, BPL and Antyodaya families.

4. The designated authority shall issue a ration card within one month of the date of receipt of the application after necessary checks and verification.

5. State Government shall conduct periodically checking of ration cards to weed out ineligible and bogus ration cards and bogus units in ration cards.  

Public Distribution System (PDS) in Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida

Analyzing the actual functioning of the PDS in the villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida, we find many insights into the problems of distribution. In PDS, BPL card holders get subsidized rice grains. A survey was conducted in 1997 by the State Government to identify the families living below poverty line. Those families whose monthly expenditure did not exceed Rs. 250/- were included in the BPL categories. Number of family members was not taken into consideration for this purpose. The

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27 Ibid., p. 18/8
whole survey was full of faults and was manipulated by the influential rich of the locality. Following is the number of BPL families in these villages.

**Number BPL families (1997 survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Number of BPL families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
<td>375 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
<td>96 families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: *DRDA, Jharsuguda, unpublished records*)

In Orissa a BPL family gets 25 kg. of rice per month at the rate of Rs. 6.30 per kg. The poorest of the poor families selected by the Gram Sabha were included in Antyodaya Anna Yojna. These families may get 35 kg. of rice per month at the rate of Rs. 3/- per kg. Number of Antyodaya families is as follows:

**Number of Antyodaya families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Number of Antyodaya families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandhuriam</td>
<td>5 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatlaida</td>
<td>7 families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: *Panchayat records of Bhatlaida and Niktimal Gram Panchayats, 2003*)

Field visit to these families revealed that most of the families belong to non-SC and non-ST categories. Though so many SC and ST families are living in abject poverty, they are not selected by the Gram Sabha for Antyodaya Anna Yojna. This shows the caste bias of Gram Sabha. Even sometimes gram Sabhas are not held and decisions are taken by some influential Panchayat members or villagers. They forge signatures of the villagers and fulfill the formalities of a Gram Sabha.

Public Distribution System has become the victim of mismanagement and black marketers in this area. Though the limit and extent of its failure differs in these two villages, but overall it has helped the bureaucrats, the rich, businessmen and politicians more than the starving poor. Now-a-days the PDS retailer in Sandhuriam hardly opens
the shop. In Bhatlaida occasionally it opens but the BPL card holders don't buy rice from that shop because the price is higher than the open market price. The price of BPL rice is Rs. 6.30 per kg. Whereas the same quality of rice is available in the open market at the rate of Rs. 6.00 per kg. Open market price for rice keeps on fluctuating. When the price goes up, BPL card holders turn to the PDS shop but it remains closed. In the monsoon season price of rice in the open market generally goes up, but the PDS shops are not opened and the poor find it very difficult to arrange their food. Even the poor cannot buy 25 kg. of rice at a time, for lack of purchasing power. The PDS shop has to remain open on all working days from 8 am to 12 noon and 4 pm to 8 pm. These shop owners are not government employees and work on commission basis.\textsuperscript{29} They open their shop only for 2 or 3 days in a month. In order to discourage the consumers they open the shop only for 2 or 3 hours during those days.

Another setback to the distribution of PDS rice is that of food grain provided in wage employment programmes. The new strategies of wage employment programmes adopted the idea of providing food grain for wages. Those poor people who work in these programmes get food grains and hence do not require the PDS quota of rice. The situation results in either black marketing of PDS rice or the dealers not lifting the quota at all. It continues in the monsoon season as well when rice grain is required by the poor from the PDS shops.

\textbf{Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY)}

As stated earlier Antyodaya Card holders get 35 kg. of rice at the rate of Rs. 3.00 per kg. Such families get a separate Antyodaya card. The PDS shops distribute rice grain in AAY. Initially the PDS retailers provided rice to such families but later

\textsuperscript{29} Information from Block Office, Laikera.
on it stopped. When asked, the poor got the answer that rice supply has been stopped by the government. In Bhatlaida, on repeated demands the retailer provided rice grain to one or two families for two/three months. As the PDS shop owners are working on commission basis they find it profitable to sell huge amount of rice in open market. In AAY less amount of rice is required as the number of beneficiaries is small. So the rice is sold in the black market at the place of its storage and the shopkeepers need not worry for the transportation.

According to the provisions of PDS, if the PDS shop owner does not supply food grains to the card holders and if the shop is not opened regularly then their dealership is liable to be cancelled. But the question is, who would take action against such people. The competition to get dealership requires huge amount of bribes and regular commission to be paid to the concerned authorities such as the Civil Supply Inspector, marketing Inspector and the politicians, and, thus any complaint regarding malfunctioning of PDS in a village, is not entertained by the officials. The political pressure in favour of the dealers is so high that the Block Development Officer (BDO) of Laikera Block is reluctant to take any action against the defaulters. Thus right to food becomes a distant reality in this area. One can easily notice the malnourished children and hungry people in the streets of the villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatliada.

**Primary Education**

Education contributes significantly towards poverty eradication. It gives access to right to information. Quality education helps in preparing more qualified, more conscious and more active work force to accelerate the development of the nation. In any country like India educating the poor, women and people in socially disadvantageous position, is the best investment.
In spite of the expansion of the school system in the last five decades, the goal of Universal Elementary Education has not been achieved to complete satisfaction. Even though there has been an improvement in the participation of girls, children belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, religious and linguistic minorities, and other backward castes in the school system over the last fifty years, social and gender gaps continue to be a feature of India’s educational indicators. This has a negative impact in the quest for social justice and sustainable economic well-being. Orissa is an educationally backward state in India. Orissa’s literacy rate is 63.6% against the national rate of 65%. Female literacy rate is 51% as against 76% among males.\textsuperscript{30} There is 58% drop-out at the primary level.\textsuperscript{31}

In Orissa many programmes related to primary education have been and are being implemented. They include Early Childhood Education (ECE), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarbasikhya Abhijan, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) etc.

A large number of interventions have been made on the elementary education sector in the recent years. Varied programmes like Operation Blackboard, Teachers’ Education, Non Formal Education, Mahila Samakhya, National Programme for Nutritional Support for Primary Education, District Primary Education Programme etc. have been undertaken.\textsuperscript{32}

Operation Blackboard has enabled the creation of minimum facilities by providing classrooms, teachers and teaching-learning equipment. The problem of

\textsuperscript{31} ibid. p.177
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Annual Report 2004-2005}, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, p.9
physical infrastructure was addressed under the scheme with varying degrees of success across regions. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme provides for improvement of school facilities and for sufficient number of teachers. The Teacher Education Scheme was expanded with the establishment of district institutes of education and training. The scheme has been revised to ensure quality in teacher training institutions. The National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education is a vital supplement to the diet of primary school children as well as an incentive for enrolment of poorer children. It covers all children in Government-aided Primary Schools of the country. Decentralized planning is the emphasis of District Primary Education Programme. The DPEP district indicates that decentralized planning contributes towards a more meaningful community involvement with an improvement in enrolment. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is working towards achieving the goal of Universalisation of elementary education through a time-bound integrated approach, in partnership with States. SSA, which promises to change the face of elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010.  

**Early Childhood Education (ECE)**

This programme is being implemented in Orissa since 1982 with the assistance of by UNICEF. The main objective of this programme is to motivate the children of 3-6 years age group towards primary education. It is a step towards achieving the aim of universalisation of Elementary Education. In this programme pre-primary stage education is provided to the kids. Anganwadis, Balwadis and crèche centres are opened for this purpose.

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**Elementary Education**

As a component of “Basic Minimum Service” the programme of “universalisation of elementary education” has been given much emphasis by the government. The aim of universalisation of Elementary Education covers 3 aspects (i) universal access and enrolment (ii) universal retention of children up to 14 years of age (iii) substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential level of learning.  

According to the central guidelines, the state needs to provide access to primary schools within a distance of 1 kilometer and to upper primary schools within 3 kilometers from habitations having a population of 300 or more and 500 or more respectively. During 2001-02, 42,824 primary schools were functioning in Orissa with 47.69 lakh enrollment and 1.16 lakh teachers. There was one primary school for every 3.6 sq. km. area. The teachers pupil ratio during 2001-2002 was 1:41.

**Mid Day Meal Programme in Primary Schools**

To increase retention of children and reduce the drop out rates in primary school, Government of Orissa started mid-day meal programme from July 1995 throughout the state. During 2001-2002, 44.23 lakh children were brought under the programme of which cooked meal was provided to 14.50 lakh children and the balance 29.73 lakh children were provided with dry ration.

**District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)**

DPEP is a centrally sponsored programme with a fund sharing pattern of 85:15 between the centre and the State. DPEP was launched in 1996-97. The objectives of

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34 *Economic Survey, 2002-2003*, Govt. of Orissa, pg. 55
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
DPEP is to universalize access, retention and quality in primary education. Presently eight districts, namely, Bolangir, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Baragarh, Keonjhar and Sambalpur are covered under the Scheme.37

Programmes undertaken in this scheme include construction of new school buildings, teachers training on activity and joyful teaching methods etc. DPEP is being extended to 8 more districts in near futures.

Sarbasikhya Abhijan

As per the recommendation of the State Education Minister’s conference held in October 1998 the Sarbasikhya Abhijan (SSA) was evolved to pursue universal elementary education in a mission mode.38 As per the SSA approach, village education plans are to be prepared in consultation with the panchayati Raj Institutions. And that plan will be the basis of district elementary education plans. There will be a focus on districts having low female literacy among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other children in difficult circumstances.

The SSA shall accord highest priority to community monitoring, transparency in programme planning and implementation of capacity building at all levels and adoption of a mission approach by the mainstream education Department functionaries to achieve universal elementary education in a given time frame.39

The main goals of SSA include:


37 Ibid.
39 ibid
All children in 6-14 years age group complete five years of primary education by 2007.

- All children in 6-14 years age groups complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

- Universal retention by 2010.

**Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY)**

Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) was launched during 2000-2001. The aim was to achieve human development at the village level. PMGY envisages Additional Central Assistance (ACA) for basic minimum services in certain priority areas. The scheme has six components, namely, elementary education, primary health, rural shelter, rural drinking water, nutrition and rural electrification.

Funds for elementary education sector under PMGY is utilized to further the goal of universalisation of elementary education, 33% of the fund made available to the states is to be utilized for construction of new school buildings or additional classrooms (including provision of toilets and drinking water), 17% on the construction of toilets and provision of drinking water in the existing schools up to elementary stage, and 50% on any items related to elementary education covered under on going centrally sponsored or state schemes, except on creation of posts and payment of salaries. 40

**Primary Education in Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida**

If we compare the situation prevailing in this area some years ago with that of present time, it is noticed that primary educational facilities are improving day by day.

40 ibid., p. 73.
Earlier the children had to travel to other villages to attend school. But now-a-days almost all sizeable villages have primary schools and bigger hamlets have non-formal education centres. However the quality of education and incentives for the students, particularly for the girl students, are questionable in the sense that they are not properly provided for.

**Infrastructure and Functioning of the Schools**

Primary schools are under the control of both the block and district level officers dealing with education i.e. the District Inspector of Schools and a School Inspector at the Block office. Books are provided free of cost to the school for the students by the Block Office. The District Inspector of schools is the authority at the district level that controls, inspects and manages the activities of the schools through periodical inspections. He/she also monitors the supply of materials, decides transfers and appointments of teachers, and is responsible for despatching circulars as per the instructions of the government. From time to time financial grants and different kinds of kits are provided to the schools by the office of the DI at the district level. The amount of financial assistance that has been provided to each primary schools of Jharsuguda district in the academic year 2002-2003, are as under:

- School improvement grant Rs. 2000/- per school.
- Repairing and maintenance Rs. 5000/- per school

(Source: Official records of DI office, Jharsuguda)

In 2002 each upper primary school (upto standard VII) received the following items from the office of the DI.

- 3 tables
- 2 almirahs
- maps
• 1 globe  
• Volley ball with net  
• 83 books for library  
• Dictionary (one)  
• Atlas  
• 5 chairs  
• Skipping rope  
• General knowledge book  
• Encyclopedia

(Source-unpublished official records (2002) of DI Office, Jharsuguda)

Other than this assistance the Upper Primary Schools get Rs. 11000/- each in 2002-2003 for decoration and minimum repairing of the school. As far as assistance from the Gram Panchayat is concerned it is supposed to help the schools for the purchase of equipment for games and sports. From the above list of things provided it can be noticed that the equipments provided to the primary schools are not enough for the betterment of the school. Science kit was not provided to the schools. Even these things were provided in a gap of almost five years. By the time these things were provided, the schools were having almost nothing of these sorts of things. The construction and repairing of the school buildings were constantly neglected. Many of the schools have no toilet or urinal facility. This creates many problems to both the teachers and the students, specially the girls students.

Mid-day meal in primary school is a very good programme for the poor students to minimize drop-out rates of students. It also provides nutritional supports

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41 Information provided by the School Inspector (SI), Block Office, Laikera.
to the poor students. In the school of Sandhuriam, mid day meal was stopped as the government stopped giving the salary for the cook. As an alternative, 3 kg. of raw rice per student per month was provided. In Bhatlaida mid-day meal is still continuing. The teachers manage to pay for the cook out of the amount they get for the food. Other than mid-day meal there are certain other incentives provided to the students from poor families. In Primary schools, girl students of BPL families are provided with dresses. Text books are provided free of cost to all the students up to class V.

The Panchayats in Orissa have very little to do with the functioning of the schools. The Panchayat can only take up the construction of a boundary wall or building for a primary school but it can't interfere in the functioning of the school. Looking at the dismal performance of the primary schools, it is argued that these should be handed over to the Panchayats. It is assumed that Panchayats can effectively control the teachers and can do a better job for the improvement of primary educational facilities with direct involvement in the school development projects. But the problem is, the fear of primary education falling into partisan politics of the locality and incapable handling of activities due to lack of professional know how on the part of the Panchayat members. Now-a-days a village education committee is formed in each village which is consulted by the teachers in different matters relating to the functioning of the schools.

Status of Primary Education on Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida

In Sandhuriam there is a primary school that imparts education up to V standard and has only two teachers. Two educated young men of the village voluntarily teach in the school to help the already appointed two teachers so as to serve the students and their own village. Repeated requests to the authorities for
appointment of more teachers have brought no results. A child labour school is situated at the nearby village which is 5 kms. away from Sandhuriam.

In Bhatlaida there is an upper primary school up to standard VII. There is a high school and a college for +2 standard of Arts stream, run by the villagers. There is one child labour school. A private English medium school is also being run. In Bhatlaida upper primary school, there are six teachers for seven classes i.e. up to standard VII.

The School at Sandhuriam has no playground and the school building with earthen roof is in a near collapsing condition. However, one room concrete building constructed as an additional room for the school is used as the office of the school. In Bhatlaida the school runs in a concrete building and is apparently well equipped with a well maintained urinal. Though it also does not have a playground attached to the building, but a playground is used by the school, which is situated about 500 meters away from the school. In both the schools there are tube wells. The tube well at Bhatlaida U.P. School is in a very good condition while in Sandhuriam needs repairing.

The size of the villages also plays the major role in their development process. While the smaller village of Sandhuriam can hardly muster enough electoral pressure on local representative to make them pay attention, the Bhatalida village, giving its size, exerts pressure on all levels of politicians and parties to derive the benefits of the development.

In Sandhuriam the teachers remain absent in the school for many days in a month. But in Bhatlaida they are conscious of the public and hardly remain absent.

The educational attainment of the villagers in Bhatlaida is quite higher than Sandhuriam. There are so many young graduates in Bhatlaida, but in Sandhuriam drop out rate is very high after primary education. The poor students can’t afford to
go outside for their higher study, nor are they able to compete with others for the scarce seats available.

Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida have one Anganwadi centre each. Anganwadi centres are made for pre-school learning for the kids. Free food is provided to the kids once a day during the working days of the Anganwadi centre.42

**Incentive Schemes in Primary Schools**

So many incentive schemes are being implemented in the primary schools for the students in general and students belonging to SC and ST community in particular as said earlier. But a closer observation of the actual implementation of these schemes shows that fulfilling the formalities only have been the main aim of the authorities. The meager amount of stipend provided to the SC and ST students of class VI and VII are provided at the end of the academic year resulting in non-academic spending by the students. Same is the case with the dresses for girl students of BPL families in primary schools. The girls keep on waiting for the dress and red tapism in bureaucracy fails to give timely respite to them. As it is well known girls are discouraged to go school and are motivated to help the parents in domestic work. In Sandhuriam poor families used to send their daughters for work in the paddy fields whereas boys are mostly sent to school. In Bhatlaida these incidents are not widely prevailing as in Sandhuriam except in the case of ST communities.

Mid-day meals in primary schools are a very good scheme to attract students from poor families to schools and to reduce the drop out rate. But the govt. has stopped the provision of cooked food in some schools of the state. In the primary

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42 As observed by the researcher during the field work.
school of Sandhuriam 3 kg. rice grain is provided to each student on monthly basis. This definitely can’t be a substitute for cooked food for the hungry kids.

So far the distribution of free text books are concerned, earlier they were provided to the students after half of the session got over. Full set of books were also not provided. In the academic year 2003-2004, Government of Orissa could manage to provide the books well in advance in the beginning of the academic session i.e. in July only.

Child Labour School

Child labour schools are established as a part of National Child Labour Programme. In the district of Jharsugada a child labor school has a maximum strength of 50 students. These schools are up to Vth standard and a child labour of 6-14 years of age can get enrolled in these schools. In Sandhuriam, there is no child labor school. Though there is one in the nearby village at a distance of 4 kilometers from Sandhuriam. In summer, the students from Sandhuriam need to walk that distance bare foot under the scorching heat.

In child labour schools, high quality meals are provided once in a day in all working days. The meals include rice, dal and vegetable curry. Meat and eggs are provided thrice a week. Along with the dress the students are provided with Rs. 100/- stipend per month. In comparison to other primary schools, the incentives in child labour schools are very high. But like the other programmes, there are problems of misappropriation of funds, mismanagement and low quality of education. The quality of the meals also is deteriorating day by day. Teaching in these schools has become just a formality with only one teacher and one assistant per school.
What after School?

What after school is an issue we need to look at? After completion of primary education very few students from poor families go for higher studies. It depends upon how encouraging the parents are and how serious the students are to pursue their studies. Unless the parents and the students are determined to go ahead, it is almost impossible to get them back to school. It needs to be understood that primary education is not at all wastage; rather it is helpful in many ways. It has been noticed that the new generation of literate in the poor families lead a better standard of life than their parents. Comparatively they could easily tackle poverty and try to explore more and more avenues and also they could even venture into entrepreneurship. Overall what is observed is these young men prefer more remunerative jobs available and possible in the local area. They engage themselves in politics and act as the electoral manipulator for political leaders. This way most of them avoid manual labour i.e. working in others’ paddy fields or in govt. sponsored wage employment programmes. But when there are no such jobs available in plenty, some of them are left with no other option than to go for manual work in the paddy fields of the rich farmers or helping them in other manual works such as construction of houses, digging wells, taking care of the cattle etc.

Other than the opportunities of remunerative occupation, primary education helps them for getting to know the information regarding different issues ranging from health, education, Panchayats, block office, religion, politics, science, technology to international affairs. This makes them aware of the issues concerned and the rich can’t avoid them easily. They are considered as the poor who can’t be cheated easily. They are the literate poor and it is supposed that they know the law of the land, their own rights and the official process of the state machinery.
They can communicate effectively to the police, in the court, to the Tahasildar and to the Collector. Hence, they are considered as a potential threat for the dominant rich of the area. They can’t be easily sidelined. As a result their participation in Panchayat activities such as Gram Sabha, Palli Sabha and in other activities such as village club, forest conservation committee, village puja committee etc. increases. However it depends upon their interest in these activities and also availability of time and effectiveness of participation. Anyway the literate poor are observed sending their children to school regularly and are ready to educate them at any cost. Education has helped the youth to be organized to press for their demands. In both Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida the young mass have formed youth clubs. Young men from all communities are members in these clubs. They meet regularly and discuss issues like, organizing tournaments, puja, festivals etc. However, issues of village development are hardly discussed in the meetings of these clubs.

Education has opened new avenues of employment for the poor in Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida. But this does not imply that there is no unemployment problem in these villages. Very few of the educated poor have got the opportunity of remunerative jobs. Otherwise down sizing of public sector, absence of factories and market mechanism etc. has led to the problem of unemployment for the educated mass.

Self employment with government assistance has not become effective in an area where business sector has not developed properly and presently monopolized by a particular section of the society.

Primary Health Care

The poor may try to be detached from the shackle of poverty, but without the support for them to reach out to a reliable health service and quality education there is
remote possibility for them to be emancipated. According to a study of the World Bank the poor are disproportionately more prone to be attacked by disease, especially communicable disease, than the rich. There is more possibility of their children to die before the age of two years. There is less possibility for the poor to be educated and they lack the facilities to remain clean. They usually use polluted sources of water. So there is greater possibility of death due to diseases and also there is possibility of untimely death. The rural poor meet the emergency expenditure on healthcare by taking loans, selling their assets at very low prices or by reducing the consumption of food or any other important item. Providing better health care facility to the poor helps in poverty reduction. It helps them to increase their number of working days and also helps to save money out of their incomes. In India, constitutionally both the Centre and the states are responsible for providing health care facility to the people. The Central Government formulates health policies in consultations with the states.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India takes concerted measures to combat communicable, non-communicable and other major diseases. For this purpose, several National Programmes are directly run by the Ministry which can have a bearing in the reduction of mortality and morbidity and also have a salutary effect on efforts to improve the quality of life of the common man. These programmes also reinforce the delivery of primary, secondary and tertiary health care through out the country.

The Government of Orissa, along with the central government, is implementing different programmes for providing health services to the people. The Economic Survey 2002-2003 published by the Government of Orissa, states that the

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focus in the health sector has been to improve access to health-care for all with particular reference to the under privileged segments of the population. The govt. report again states that this aim is being achieved through consolidation and operationalisation of the primary, secondary and tertiary health-care infrastructure and effective implementation of National Programmes for combating major public health problems. Communicable and nutrition related diseases continue to be the major problems in the State of Orissa. The report mentions that the main objectives for the health sector programmes are as follows:-

1. To provide adequate and qualitative preventive and curative health care to the people of the State.

2. To improve maternal and child health and in particular to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

3. To ensure equity in health care to all, particularly to disadvantaged groups like scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, backward classes and women.

4. To provide affordable quality health care to the people of the State through allopathic, homeopathic and Ayurvedic systems of medicine etc.

5. To impart training to doctors, nurses and other paramedical staff to meet the need of health care in the State.

6. To ensure greater access to primary health care by providing medical institutions as close to the people as possible or through mobile health units, particularly in the under served and undeveloped districts.

7. To improve hospital services at secondary and tertiary level both in terms of infrastructure and personnel.

8. To improve the maintenance of buildings by introducing reforms in the system.

9. To improve health care in vulnerable districts of the State.  

So far Allopathic medical institutions are concerned, by the year 2001, 180 hospitals, 158 Community Health Centres, 183 Primary Health Centres (PHC), 14

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Mobile Health Units and some other new PHCs were being run by the State Health Department.46

During 2001, five Ayurvedic hospitals and 519 Ayurvedic dispensaries were providing services in the State. Two private Ayurvedic hospitals were also functioning.

In case of Homeopathic hospitals, during 2001, four Government homeopathic hospitals and 460 homeopathic dispensaries were providing services in the State.

The State Government has started a new scheme “Pancha Byadhi Chikitsa” from July, 2001 which provides guaranteed free treatment including free medicine for five common communicable diseases viz. malaria, leprosy, diarrhea, acute respiratory infections and scabies. These five diseases constitute approximately 70% of the patient load in the primary health institutions and affect a large number of poor people.47

With the objectives to improve the health care delivery in selected primary and secondary hospitals in the State and to increase efficiency in the allocation and use of health resources, Orissa Health Systems Development Project (OHSDP) had started from September 1998 for a period of five years. The World Bank is assisting in the implementation of this project.

As per the National Health Policy, a number of centrally sponsored Plan schemes are being implemented in the state to ensure better health care service at the primary and secondary level. They include the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), National Filaria Control Programme (NFCP), National Iodine

46 Ibid., p. 15/5
47 Ibid., p. 15/10
Deficiency Disorders Control Programme, National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP), National Anti Malaria Programme (NAMP) and some other programmes.

The family Welfare Programme is being implemented as a part of the National Population Control Programme in the State. Under the family welfare programme, the strategy has been to motivate eligible couples to limit the family size by adopting various family planning methods.

Universal Immunization Programme is being implemented in the State with the objective of reducing infant mortality and maternal mortality rates. Under the programme, children below 6 years of age are inoculated for prevention of contagious diseases like T.B., diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles etc.

Under the centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) the State Government has installed many tube wells and sanitary wells. Deep wells are being installed in some select villages potable water supply in the rural areas.

Under Rural Sanitation Programme a centrally sponsored pilot project “Total Sanitation Compaing (TSC)” is being implemented in the pilot districts of Sundargarh, Ganjam, Balasore, Bhadrak, Khurda, Cuttack, Nayagarh and Jajpur with a project cost of Rs. 144.05 crores.

The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is being implemented in the State in 296 Blocks and in 12 urban areas. The scheme offers a package of health care services covering supplementary nutrition, immunization, pre-school education, health
check-up, referral services and health education to children within the age group of 0-6 years. There are 31,855 Anganwadi centres under these ICDS projects in the state.

**Primary Health Care Facilities for Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida**

Health Care facilities provided by the Government in this area are in a very bad state. Private hospitals or doctors are in high demand as the government health centres have failed to provide the basic facilities to the people. The poor are the victims of this callous attitude. The government is well aware of this situation but nothing substantial has been done except providing some funds for construction of hospital buildings and providing some new facilities such as an improved laboratory.

Sandhuriam is covered under the Community Health Centre (CHC) of Mudrajore. Bhatlaida is covered under Bhadimal Primary Health Centre (PHC). Bhadimal PHC is at a distance of 2 kilometres from Bhatlaida and Mudrajore CHC is at a distance of 5 kilometers from Sandhuriam. There should be two doctors in each of these health centres, but one post in each place is lying vacant. There are no advance laboratory facilities in the health centre of Bhadimal but there is a proposal for its establishment in Mudrajore.

The district hospital situated at the district headquarters of Jharsuguda is the intermediary agency which supplies medicine and other equipments to the CHCs and PHCs. The Chief District Medical Officer has the power and authority to monitor the functioning of the PHCs and CHCs. Negligence of the authority has left these grass root level health centres almost defunct and people who suffer the most are poor who can’t afford to go to the district level hospitals.

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48 Ibid., p. 15/19.
In 2002-2003 medicines of the following amount has been provided for this area.

- Mudrajore PHC (going to be CHC) Rs. 1,39,000/-
- Bhadimal PHC Rs. 16,000/-

(Source: Official records, Office of the Chief Medical Officer, Jharsuguda)

In 2002-2003 following type of medicines have been provided to the health centres.

- General Anesthesia
- Local Anesthesia
- Anti-Allergy
- Anti-bacterial
- Anti-Leprosy
- Anti Tuberculosis
- Anti-fungal drugs
- Drugs acting on blood
- Cardiovascular drugs
- Disinfectants
- Anti-Septics
- Drugs for diabetics
- Gastrointestinal drugs
- Hormone and other immunological
- Mussel Relaxant
- Ear drops
- Drugs action on respiratory docts
- Vitamins
- Saline
- Surgical items

(Source: Official Records, Office of the Chief Medical officer, Jharsuguda)
Though all these medicines are stated to be supplied to the health centres, many of them are not available in these hospitals. The staff of the health centres observed that the quantity of medicine is so less that they get exhausted as soon as they arrive.

Absence of doctors and staff, non-availability of free medicines, negligence of the patients, improper diagnosis of the diseases have been the main features of the government health care facilities that are provided to the people in this area. The poor mainly depend upon the government hospitals; hence they are the hardest hit section of the population. The poor depend upon the mercy of the doctors and the hospital staff but they can’t lodge any complaint. Even if they initiate such measure there is minimum hope of any action. The rich usually go to the district level private hospitals where modern services with proper care and medicine are provided, albeit at a higher cost. It can be said that the rich have rejected the government health services and hence hardly care for what is happening there.

Absence of doctors keeps the patients waiting for long time, and as a result, sometimes negligence by the doctors and other staff let the disease become more severe. But the health care services in the PHCs are good enough to cure patients with viral fever, scabies, malaria etc. In certain types of emergency such as accident cases, delivery of babies etc. the CHC of Mudrajore and PHC of Bhadimal are extremely responsive so as to successfully handle the cases.

So far free medicine is concerned, only some vitamin tablets and drugs for viral fever or malaria etc. are provided in these health centres. Rest of the medicines is needed to be purchased by the people from the chemist. The poor of this area either borrow money from the rich farmers or mortgage their property to arrange the expenditure on treatment. Sometimes they sell their properties. At very low prices to
meet the expenditure. If the earning members of the family fall ill then the entire family comes to a near ruin situation. The poor mostly depend upon wage labour and ill health compels them to work for less number of days.

In Sandhuriam the situation is worse than it is in Bhatlaida. In Sandhurian the children of poor families are severely malnourished and prone to many kinds of diseases. Women suffer from anemia.49 Infant mortality rate is higher in Sandhuriam than Bhatlaida.50

Sanitation

There is an acute problem of sanitation in this area. Bhatlaida being a village of congested houses and highly populated dwellings, suffer more as far as sanitation is concerned. In both the villages almost all villagers defecate in the open. In rainy season the excreta is washed into the ponds where they take bath. Animals are also washed in the same pond. In the harvesting season, left with no open land, people attain their nature’s call on the roads. In Bhatlaida water patches are created in front of the house round the year, because there is no drainage facility. However, after the monsoon, Sandhuriam is free from all sorts of problem due to the open space available around the village.

Water borne diseases have been reduced to some extent in both the villages as tube wells were installed in some places to provide safe drinking water. Some villagers residing away from tube wells use the water of open well. A hospital staff is assigned the duty of applying bleaching powder in these wells. But he very seldom visits the villages. The rich arrange their own bleaching powder but the poor are left out with the water of well and use the same water for drinking purpose too.

49 As per the National Family Health Survey (2001) 51.8 per cent of women (15-49 years of age) in India are with anemia whereas this figure for Orissa is 63.0 per cent.
50 As per the NFHS (2001) Data Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) for India is 67.9 per 1000 live births whereas this figure is 81.0 for Orissa.
Mother and Child Care and Vaccination

Mother and child care programmes are running better than other primary health care services provided by the PHCs in this area. Though nothing substantial has been done to provide nutritious food to mother and child, but regular check ups of the pregnant women and vaccination of the children goes on. The Lady Health Visitors (LHV) appointed in the PHCs and CHCs visit the field and attends the problems of the mother and child. The Government is now providing Rs. 500/- to the pregnant woman of BPL families for the first and second child and additional Rs. 500/- for girl child. The only problem that sometimes occurs is that the money is provided very late which is spent on some other heads than what it is meant for.

Conclusion

During the field work it is clearly observed that the policies for poverty alleviation are not enough to pull the poor out of poverty. It is needed to be accompanied with rights such as right to information, so that the implementing agencies would be more accountable. There is a near absence of providing any information to the poor regarding any programmes. It is observed that there is no monitoring of the implementation of these programmes. Numerous policies for the poor with haphazard implementation have failed to deliver their best in the villages of Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida in particular and in Orissa in general. Low rate of enrolment of children in schools with high rate of drop out; chronic hunger and high prevalence of morbidity have become very common features of the poor in this area. Unemployment for most of the days of the year, has severely affected the asset less poor. Caste monopoly of business activities with caste biased social relations and discriminatory implementation of policies have led to caste poverty lingering for generations together. Education has a significant role to play in breaking this vicious
circle. In the educationally backward state of Orissa where enrollment rate in rural areas is 71% in total, 79% for males, 63% for females and gender disparity is 19%, quality primary education is required to be urgently provided urgently to all children in general and children from SC and ST community in particular.

Right to food campaign is now popularized all over the world. In India the performance of PDS in this regard is not satisfactory. The functioning of PDS in Sandhuriam and Bhatlaida is almost similar to that in some other parts of India. In Jharkhand the PDS is more or less non-functional. According to a recent analysis of National Sample Survey data, only 20% of the grain released through PDS in Jharkhand reached the intended households. The rest was sold in black market. Jos E. Mooij who studied the functioning of PDS in Karnataka and Kerala says that in Karnataka the subsidy given by the Centre and State Government on these food grains is in fact an income transfer to the private wheat merchants and all other middlemen involved in these illegal sales. However, Jos E. Mooij found that functioning of PDS is better in Kerala. It accounts for 30% of the required foodgrains and makes a definite impact.

Mooij explains that in Kerala there is public awareness combined with the existence of local organization. This situation makes that people can exercise an effective check and control on the functioning of the food distribution system.

Bob Currie who studied Politics of Hunger Alleviation in Kalahandi, states that government has often adopted a range of alternative strategies before it has acted to improve quality of welfare support. The result has been widening implementation

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54 Ibid, pp. 124
gap between public expectation and government delivery and, indirectly, erosion in legitimacy of government authority.  

The implementation of different programmes in this area has benefited the middle men who are coming in the path of service providing mechanisms of the state. The bureaucracy has not been able to act to do welfare to the poor. The programmes have not been able to create any substantial opportunity or to enhance the capability of the poor.

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