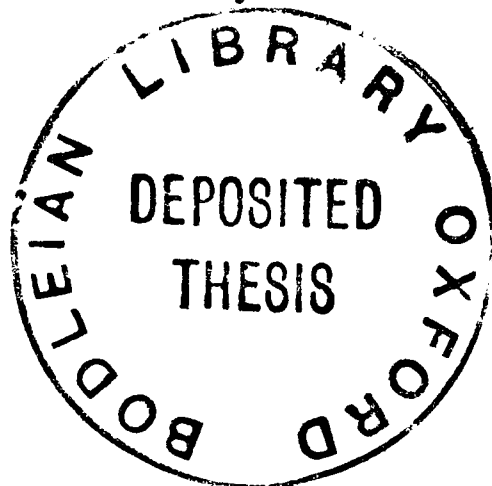


**The Politics of Social Protection in Rural India:
A case study of two Villages in Maharashtra**

by

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Abstract

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Social protection should ideally create a framework of 'welfare rights' for the vulnerable individuals and households. The state, through a set of policies of *promotive* and *protective* measures, sets out to achieve this. However, gaining these welfare rights in a decentralised democratic framework could be a function of the bargaining power that each individual, household and social group may possess. Therefore the micro-level interactions involving claimant, bureaucrat and local elites constitute the key policy process. Study of the process itself can reveal why some households gain formal social protection and other fail. This study argues that the local practices and informal rules underlying these public policy processes are purposively guided by the private interests of the local elites.

At the heart of this dissertation is a comparative case-study of two villages in the Indian state of Maharashtra, based on eight months ethnographic fieldwork. Bottom-up evaluation of two social protection programmes, public works (promotive) and social assistance (protective) programmes shows that 60 per cent of eligible persons are excluded from welfare rights. The mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion in these programmes are studied. The study reveals that both *eligibility* and *entitlement* to 'welfare rights' are contested within the power structure of the local community. The social identity of the claimant, and the ability to build a relationship with the local leaders or labour market managers act as key routes to access welfare rights. The precedence of informal rules at the stage of implementation of social protection programmes reproduced the existing social and economic power structures. As a result, the welfare rights of individuals and households are affected by the competing forces in the non-state sectors. These non-state actors, through their network, were able to weaken the administration and fair allocation of welfare benefits.

Through this analysis the thesis contributes to the understanding of the local state, and decision-making practices over welfare rights in a decentralised context.

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Glossary

- Acre - 0.4047 hectare of land
- Anganwadi – woman and child health care centre in the village
- Anganwadi sevika – A female person in charge of Anganwadi
- Arrack – locally distilled alcoholic spirit
- Brahmin – high caste or priestly caste
- Crore – 10,000,000
- Dhoti – cloth worn by men over lower part of body
- Ghadi – Regular Farm Worker
- Goonda – gang person (they may resort to physical assault to achieve their purpose, often doing violent activities for someone else in exchange of money.
- Gram sevak – Village level worker (government official)
- Jubba - a traditional cloth worn by men over the upper part of body
- Kharif – monsoon agricultural season (June-October)
- Khatic – Muslim SC caste
- Kshatriya – second highest caste or warrior caste
- Kurta – a traditional cloth worn by men over the upper part of body
- Lakh – 100,000
- Mahar – Hindu SC caste
- Mahang – Hindu SC caste
- Mali – Hindu backward caste
- Marwari – Trading high caste who are migrants from Rajasthan to different parts of India
- Morcha – a demonstration intended as a show of force
- Munim – manager cum clerk;
- Mukadam – labour organiser
- Panchayat raj/Gram Panchayat – Village self government
- Panchayat Samiti – Committee/council of elected representatives co-ordinating activities in all the Gram Panchayats in a *tehsil* area.
- Pardi – A scheduled tribe
- Rabi – Dry or winter agricultural season (December –May)
- Surpanch – Elected village council president
- Talatti – Village revenue officer
- Tamboli – Muslim OBC caste
- Tehsil – block (sub district)
- Tehsildar – administrative officer in charge of a tehsil
- Upsurpanch – Elected deputy village council president
- Zilla - District

Abbreviations

- BJP – Bharatiya Janatha Party
- BPL – Below Poverty Line
- BSP – Bahujan Samajvadi Party
- CDP - Community Development Programmes
- CIMB – Continued Income Maintenance Benefit
- CoI – Census of India
- EGS – Employment Guarantee Scheme
- FHH – Female Headed Household
- FGD – Focussed Group Discussion
- GoM – Government of Maharashtra
- GoI – Government of India
- HDI – Human Development Index
- IAS – Indian Administrative Service
- IE – Income Enhancement
- IGBMY – Indira Gandhi Boomiheen Shethmazoor Mahila Yojana
- IM- Income Maintenance
- JE - Junior Engineer
- LIC – Life Insurance Corporation of India
- MLA - Member of Legislative Assembly
- MP - Member of Parliament
- NSAP – National Social Assistance Programme
- NCP – Nationalist Congress Party
- NFBS – National Family Benefit Scheme
- NMBS – National Maternity Benefit Scheme
- NOAPS – National Old Age Pension Scheme
- OAP – Old Age Pension Scheme
- OBC – Other Backward Class (they have reservations, but lesser than SC)
- PDS - Public Distribution System
- PWP - Public Works Programme
- RFW – Regular Farm Worker
- SC – Scheduled Caste (lower caste designated eligible for reservation in public sector jobs)
- SGNY – Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana (a welfare scheme of the GoM)
- SHG – Self-help group
- SP – Social protection
- SSC – Social Security Committee appointed by guardian minister at *tehsil* level.
- ST - Scheduled Tribe

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Chapter 1

Introduction

At 09.00 am, on the 26 January 2004, I was in Saralgaon village to attend the Republic Day celebrations. As it was the fourth month of fieldwork, the villagers had invited me to the programme. The programme had attracted a crowd of about 500 villagers cutting across age and social groups. The elite of the community sat on chairs; other adult men sat on the floor. Women and the elderly were onlookers in close proximity. At the centre of the event were the village school children in their uniform, sitting down in rows. More than the speeches and other programmes of the day, one group action-song that was performed by these children captured my attention:¹

“*[chorus I]* A hut on the pavement, and a flickering lamp.

‘Listen to what the village carpenter says:

He says he is ready to give a tricycle (made for the handicapped) to the old woman’.

[chorus II] ‘But, why would the old woman need it’? *[chorus I]*

‘Listen to what the village ironsmith says:

He says he is ready to make a knife for the old woman to use in the harvest season’.

[chorus II] ‘But, why would the old woman need it’? *[chorus I]*

‘Listen to what the village tailor says:

He says he is ready to make a new frock for the old woman’.

[chorus II] ‘But, why would the old woman need it’? *[chorus I]*

‘Listen to what our villagers are saying:

They say they are ready to elect the elderly woman to be village council president’.

[chorus II] ‘But, why would the old woman need to be president’? *[chorus I]*

‘Listen to what the village school teacher says:

The grandson of the old woman asks the teacher to give a slate to his grandmother since she brings him to school. If she has a slate she can sit in the class.’

[chorus II] ‘But, why would the old woman need to go to school’?

[chorus I] A hut on the pavement, and a flickering lamp”.

Each line of the song, and the applause that the young singers received underlines and summarises this dissertation. Beyond the tables and figures of this dissertation, this song

¹ The song was later copied down from the schoolteacher who had taught it to the children. The teacher did not know the authorship of the song. This is a translation by me with the help of the research assistant.

reiterates how the 'flickering life' of an elderly poor person (a hut on the road indicates not having a house of one's own) was observed by the wider community. The conspicuous absence of 'food' in the list of items mentioned in the song indicates an unrealistic assumption that each household would have sufficient food and the household would feed the old person first. How other 'cash worthy' items are offered to the elderly person indicates the precarious existence of a vulnerable person - at the mercy of others. The very fact that such shared perceptions were celebrated through this popular medium indicates the existence of a 'social fact' (in the Durkhemian sense). This social fact is gender biased. The absence of the elderly woman's husband in the song reveals widespread widowhood in old age. Though the village community (chorus) suggests that the elderly woman needs nothing, the household member (her grandson) experiences her usefulness, indicating the contribution of elderly women to the care economy. The key message of the song is the judgement by various members of the community and social institutions of the social worth of a vulnerable person. This public attribution of social worth is a deeply political process (Strecker, 2006). Such differential assessments of social worth may affect the way 'welfare rights' are claimed and used. The processes of contesting both the *eligibility* and *entitlement* to 'welfare rights', and the mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion from social protection by the state for such marginal citizens is the key focus of this dissertation.

1.1 Vulnerability and the response of the state

The 'vulnerability' of any individual is a result of a combination of factors, such as changes in individual characteristics (including biological degradation), resources, social networks, and wider aspects of economic, political and cultural structures (Schroder-Butterfill and Marianti, 2006). This complexity of factors point to both the social processes that construct vulnerability, and the inability of vulnerable person to cope with these changing circumstances. Attempts to cope with this vulnerability are primarily through a variety of household strategies, negotiations with other members of the social group and community,

and labour market participation. However, these informal strategies by a vulnerable individual do not ensure a 'right' to be protected. This welfare right to social protection can only be guaranteed through state institutions (Harriss-White, 1999c).

There are two issues involved in the state's response to the vulnerability of the individuals. First, the state has to actively seek the means to promote the livelihood of its citizens, so that they do not become vulnerable in the first place. However, many people may drop out of this *promotive* framework of the state. Therefore, a second type of social protection, namely *protective*, becomes necessary. But, the capability of the state institutions to ensure these 'welfare rights' can be influenced by factors other than the nature of vulnerability by the citizens. Often, the informal institutions and the way these institutions perceive the social worth of its different citizens may be the key determinants of exclusion and inclusion. As Dreze and Sen (1989: 107) conclude, the practices of the state could fall a long way short of these welfare objectives:

“The extent of economic distress experienced by different individuals is, to a great extent, a matter of common knowledge within a given rural community. An apparent solution to the selection problem would take the form of making the selection process rely on local institutions to allocate public support according to individual needs. Would this method work in practice? The leaders of a village community undoubtedly have a lot of information relevant for appropriate selection. But in addition to the informational issue, there is also the question as to whether the community leaders have strong enough motivation – or incentives – to give adequately preferential treatment to vulnerable groups. Much will undoubtedly depend on the nature and functioning of political institutions at the local level, and in particular on the power that the poor and the deprived have in the rural community. Where the poor are also powerless – as is frequently the case – the reliance on local institutions to allocate relief is problematic, and can end up being at best indiscriminate and at worst blatantly iniquitous”.

Therefore, though the legal guarantee of a 'welfare right' that the state may be promising, in a step forward it is the practices at the local level that may be more relevant to the vulnerable persons. These practices of the state institutions at the local level are most likely to be influenced by the informal strategies of vulnerable persons. As we will see in the various examples presented in this dissertation, the informal strategies of vulnerable persons move along a continuum of protective and promotive measures (which individuals and households may adopt, apart from any state intervention). Therefore, access to 'welfare rights' from the

state may be structured not only by the nature of the state institutions, but also through the micro social exchanges of bargaining, negotiation and power dynamics in the context of these informal strategies.

This process-oriented policy evaluation is lacking in much current research. In this policy process “party politics and bureaucratic politics are meshed with the politics of social institutions and material interests” (Harriss-White, 2004a: 196 following Schaffer, 1984). Therefore, the political configuration of the local community is the chief explanatory variable for the process deficits that in turn determine exclusion and inclusion. The leaders in these political communities often act as ‘gatekeepers’ to access, because they are placed at the critical points where *the state* (from where people may gain ‘welfare rights’) and *society* (where people may use the informal strategies) interact. Often, the performance of the state is judged apart from the informal strategies the people adopt (Kabeer, 1994a). A process evaluation of how informal strategies are connected with formal benefits of the state allow us to gain an understanding of the social construction of the local state and practice-based understanding of welfare rights and citizenship.

1.2 Research questions

1) Is there differential (unfair) allocation of social protection benefits at the local level? If so, what is the pattern of this differential allocation?

The thesis is that there are large numbers of eligible persons excluded from social protection benefits. Such differential allocation may be a function of the potential beneficiary’s relationship with the local elite, and in turn, with the elite’s ability to intercede with officials. People who do not have these links may be excluded from welfare benefits. The argument is extended to examine whether the influence of local elites is limited solely to resources allocated by the state through political institutions, or whether the influence of local elites also spreads to the market and institutions of civil society.

2) What are the mechanisms used by the elites for such differential allocation and do they enhance their power and legitimacy?

The thesis here emerges from the previous research question. If there is differential allocation, it is important to identify the mechanisms. The thesis is that the elites, through their networks, exert enough influence on the local political institutions, the market and NGOs, to enable the elite to formulate formal and informal rules in those organisations, helping them to expand or retain their influence and power through differential allocation. The power of the state bureaucracy over social security provision has diminished considerably as a result of political decentralisation, and this space may have been taken over by the competing and bargaining roles of local political leaders.

3) What are the protective and promotive effects on people's lives through this differential allocation?

This research question suggests two theses. First, differential allocation will have important implications for intra-household allocation, and in turn on the care economy of the household. Second, the way access to the state's social protection is structured may be connected with the way claimants relate to various informal agents (e.g. shopkeeper, labour organiser) in the community.

1.3 Data Sources

Bottom-up evaluations of two social protection programmes, namely income maintenance (protective) and public works programmes (promotive) were conducted in the state of Maharashtra, India, to examine empirically the research questions raised. The implementation processes of these programmes were studied in two selected case study villages. These villages and their administrative units (*tehsil* and district) form the arenas where the informal strategies of the welfare claimants and the political configuration of local

community, shaping the allocation patterns by the state, were studied. Ethnographic data collected through eight months' fieldwork using the tools of observation, in-depth interview (with local leaders, bureaucrats and claimants), secondary sources, and a formal survey of 310 households forms the basis of the arguments in this dissertation.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

This section presents the way the above research questions were addressed in this study, and how the findings are presented.

After this introduction, the second chapter deals with various theoretical concepts used throughout the study. Three important aspects dealt with in this Chapter are: 1) the origin and concept of social protection, particularly in the context of India. A detailed review of the distinction between promotive and protective aspects is followed by a description of the various formal and informal agencies that provides these two types of social protection. This agency-wise description is useful to understand how the informal strategies of the people may affect the formal provision from the state. 2) The multi-layered nature of the politics of social protection is next reviewed. By creating a typology of the studies on the politics of social protection, this section argues that the way 'power' and 'welfare rights' are connected need to be studied using the actual 'practices' as a focus rather than the legal framework. This is the basis for the process evaluation using a framework developed by Giddens and Bourdieu to look at the interaction of the various actors involved in the process. 3) As these interactions take place in a social context, this context needs to be understood. The third section reviews the nature of state and politics in India, with special reference to the local state and the local elites.

Chapter three details the methodologies used in this study. Both the nature of process evaluations and the case study approach to policy are explained. After giving the reasons for the choice of the case study villages, the contexts of these villages are presented in this

chapter. A detailed description of the data collection tools and analytical tools used to reach the conclusions of the study are also presented.

Chapter four begins by introducing the two social protection programmes studied in this research. The key aim of this chapter is to present data on the extent of exclusion of eligible persons from welfare rights. By presenting the quantitative evidence to answer the first research question, the chapter argues that there is a need to look beyond the *outcome measures* to find reasons for the exclusion of the eligible claimants and the inclusion of ineligible claimants.

As explained in section 1.1 the policy process could be mediated through the political configuration in a given community. Therefore, the power structure of the two villages is described in chapter five. To understand the micro-politics of the villages, the wider political, social and economic structures of the region have to be explained. Then the characteristics of each case study village, its elite members and their networks are presented. The cleavages in the community reveal the possible mediating factors that may precipitate exclusion and inclusion, which are examined in the later chapters.

Chapters Six and Seven directly address the second research question. First, chapter six undertakes the process evaluations of the two social protection programmes. The detailed processes of applying for benefit, decision-making and delivery of benefits, are minutely described showing how different applicants, with particular links, act differently at various stages to obtain benefits. These process evaluations provide insights into why the exclusion of poor people may have taken place and the quantitative outcome (presented in chapter four) may have occurred. These evaluations also point to the key role of local elites in the implementation.

The impact on the power and legitimacy of these elites of differential allocation are examined in chapter seven. The legitimacy of the elites can be understood more clearly when compared with the legitimacy of the bureaucrats involved. The negotiations between them reveal the coercive power of the local elites over bureaucrats. To prove the vital importance of the elites in allocating public resources, two types of evidence are presented. First, by

comparing pairs of cases (individuals), it is shown that the ability to gain the welfare benefit is heavily influenced by the individual's relationship with the elites. Second, by using a probability model, using the survey data from the fieldwork, generalisations beyond these individual cases can be made. Some discussions in this chapter spill over into the second part of the third research question. As the elites take a leading role in the village's 'market' institutions, exclusion or inclusion are also determined by the way the claimants participate in these institutions. i.e. how the informal sources of social protection may affect the state's allocation practices.

The final substantive chapter (eight) deals with the first part of the third research question on intra-household allocation. Here, the focus is the particular difficulty that each individual faces, depending on their vulnerability. Besides the contribution of the claimants to the care economy, the differential responses the claimants may experience depending on whether they are receiving benefit, the use of the benefit within the household, and finally, the nature of implications for citizenship are explored here. The implications of this differential allocation at the local level, due to micro-politics, are shown to have significance for the meaning of citizenship and the welfare state in this context.

The concluding chapter summarises the results, draws conclusions, reports issues relevant to policy implications and theoretical models, and suggests areas for future research.

Chapter 2

Towards a politics of social protection in rural India

"Politics is who gets what, when and how." - Harold Lasswell

This chapter has two aims. First, by undertaking a review of the current debates on social protection (SP), it seeks to clarify the concept. Second, the political context for the implementation of SP policy is explained with particular reference to India. These historical and conceptual reviews provide the theoretical perspectives from which the rest of the chapters can be understood.

The chapter is structured into three sections. The first section deals with definitional issues and the nature of the concept of SP, and various agencies that provide SP. The second section examines the question 'what is the political nature of social protection' and seeks an appropriate framework to study this question. The third section by analysing the state and politics in India intends to clarify how far this framework is relevant to India. The key argument running through three sections is that the state's capacity to allocate resources for SP is determined by the interaction between the state and non-state agencies, with the local elites acting as leaders of multiple agencies that have significant power to influence the allocation patterns of the state.

2.1 Social protection: Brief historical survey of its origin

The origin of social protection is not a single story. The first type of story draws on the origins of the welfare state in Northern and Western Europe. The development of social insurance programmes in the late 19th century to provide for people with no capacity to earn in the increasingly industrialised market societies is considered to be one of the beginnings of the welfare state (Pierson, 1998). Here, efforts by the state to advance capitalist modes of production made it necessary to introduce measures of 'de-commodification', i.e., citizens

were to be provided with rights to maintain themselves without depending on the market (Polanyi, 1944). Historically, Esping-Andersen (1990) points out the transformation of the Speenhamland system (in Britain) of income security in the pre-industrial society, into the Poor Laws of 1834 as the watershed for the policy of SP.

Industrialisation alone does not satisfactorily explain how states began to provide SP. Pierson (2004) has shown that when regions are more closely examined and the distinction between early industrialisation and late industrialisation brought into the picture, there is a need of other variables to explain the emergence and expansion of the welfare state. Hage *et al* (1989) emphasised modernisation and de Swaan (1988) pointed out the role of political organisations and bureaucracy as explanatory variables. Additionally, each country in Europe had its own history of welfare state expansion. For example, one key reason for welfare state expansion in Scandinavian countries was the mobilisation of peasants in rural areas in association with urban workers (Esping-Andersen, 1985). As the reasons for welfare state expansion have been different in different countries, the extent of expenditure has also been different. Though the welfare expenditure of European countries was very small in the early years, after World War II there was considerable expansion (Pierson, 2004) and today one of the measures for the assessment of the welfare state is the level of such expenditure. This reason for the expansion of social security, and welfare state in general requires detailed historical assessment.

The Atlantic Charter (1941) that was signed jointly between the United States of America and the United Kingdom, with a vision of a post-war global society is an important milestone in the development of the welfare state in the United Kingdom, and Europe in general. The sixth principle of the Charter enlisted 'freedom from want' as one the key aims of post-war nation building. This principle was inspired by the work of William Beveridge, working on a comprehensive plan for social security at that time. The Beveridge report published in 1942 contained three key principles: The first principle emphasised that social insurance should not be determined by sectional interests. The service should be comprehensive. The second principle stated in addition that social insurance was only one of

the ways (by attacking ‘Want’) to ensure progress in the country. There were important social illnesses to be alleviated. Others were ‘Ignorance’, ‘idleness’, ‘disease’ and ‘squalor’. The third principle aimed at the way social insurance was to be achieved, that is through active co-operation between the state and individuals (Timmins, 2001). The way that these Beveridgean principles were to be translated with social security policy had its own politics (see Deakin [1987] for details on the circumstances surrounding the Beveridge report; See Harris [1997] for a biography of Beveridge). These social security policies also influenced Indian social security systems as welfare provisions for employees in the British Raj followed the British model. Though these policies were not relevant to the agrarian sector, which this dissertation is focuses on, the argument is sometimes made that since the employees in the formal sector enjoy various welfare rights, such rights should be available for the employees in the informal sector as well. In any case, the Beveridgean principles, listed above, are important concerns for any welfare state today.

The second storyline is grounded in the concept of the ‘developmental state’ in East Asia. Chalmers Johnson (1981) in his work on East Asian economies distinguishes two types of states on the basis of their development orientation: a) states that plan the economy with an ideological/rational aim, and with clear targets of socio-economic goals for the private sector and b) the states that merely regulate the other sectors (providing a framework for private sector by allowing them to pursue their own goals).¹ According to Johnson (1995) these two strategies by the state were successful in the countries like Japan where the elite bureaucracy achieved national objectives. Wade (1990) further developed Johnson’s ideas into the theory of ‘governing the markets’. The governing principles of these states were to subordinate social policies to economic policies (Holliday, 2000), and to regulate the markets to ensure people were provided for (Gough, 2001). In these developmental states, the politico-

¹ Leftwich (2000) makes a historical survey of the genesis of the idea of ‘developmental state’ and traces its root to Marx. See also the argument by Wade (1990) and Robinson and White (1998) that the ‘developmental state’ is not purely an East Asian invention.

bureaucratic elites, who enjoyed an ‘embedded autonomy’² (Evans, 1995), used their power to achieve a high growth rate and better social indicators. These East Asian states focussed on health care and educational expansion rather than income maintenance through SP since the wider goal of these states was economic development through trade (Pierson, 2004).³ Therefore, these social indicators helped the citizens to be state-centric and market-centric rather than society-centric. In other words the state assumed that societal values (e.g. Confucianism) are useful to encourage households to provide for the weak and dependent, and the state is not required to complement these efforts. These state-led programmes had the effect of weakening civil society through state intervention.

East Asian economic growth and changes in welfare systems provide important lessons from which India could learn. Currently, the Indian economy is growing very fast (about 9% in 2005). Increased economic openness in East Asian countries brought about a severe financial crisis in 1997-98. It can not be predicted whether India’s economic success may be overshadowed by a similar crisis in future. However, Gough (2001) has shown that changes to the welfare system among East Asian countries have been different despite the financial crisis that swept through countries. Though poverty rose in all these countries and demand for labour decreased drastically, the government response among these countries varied significantly. For example, in Korea the unemployment insurance expenditure drastically increased to four per cent of GDP. In similar way in Malaysia and Philippines welfare assistance depended on the contribution of emigrants and the households could cushion the crisis from it. On the other hand, in Thailand and Indonesia with substantial rural population, there was shift from formal sector to informal and agricultural sector during the financial crisis. While Indonesia responded with local policy response and introducing safety net programme, Thailand began a series of NGO and community-based programmes. These

² The term ‘embedded autonomy’ is defined as “the autonomy of the well developed bureaucracies that has been embedded in a dense web of ties with both non-state and other state actors (internal and external) who collectively help to define, re-define and implement developmental objectives” (Leftwich, 2000: 162).

³ A Korean household spends 10 per cent of its income on education and five per cent on health care compared to 1.4 and 1.3 respectively in UK (Gough, 2001: 174).

different responses at the time of financial crisis showed that social policy is not simply subordinated to economic policy or economic growth.

These two models of the 'developmental state' and 'welfare state' are not mutually exclusive. For example, Japan and Korea, the 'birth-countries' of the 'developmental state' were comparatively advanced 'welfare states' as well. What is striking in both conceptual categories is the emphasis on the role of the state to prescribe a model for development. Weiss (1998: 162) has captured the contrasting experience of state intervention in both these models, as 'developmental functions' in a 'welfare state', and welfare functions in a 'developmental state' being attributed to society (such as respect for elders or religious values or solidarity principles). These social policy designs based on societal values are also important in Indian context. For example, care for the elderly parents is still considered as an important provision. The existence of widespread non-governmental organisations or charity institutions could also be attributed to the influence of religion and Gandhian ideologies, particularly prevalent among the middle class.

Drawing on both these two models how can we define 'social protection'?

2.1.1 Social protection in developing countries: conceptual clarification

Following the path taken by many industrialised countries, some developing countries, too, provided social insurance schemes for their industrial workers. These schemes included various programmes of medical care, as well as sickness, maternity, unemployment, employment injury, invalidity, old age and survivor benefits. However, these were available only to a small per cent of the population (in the case of India approximately eight percent [Dev et al., 2001]) who were already privileged since they already had a job providing a regular wage. Besides, this population lived mostly in urban areas (Midgley, 1984). The vast majority of the population who worked in agriculture and the informal sector were left outside these social security measures.

Often, it was assumed that the traditional agrarian relationships and households would provide for those with the need for SP. But, in recent times this assumption has been proved wrong, due to various changes in economy and society. For example, let us take the case of the care of the elderly. Traditionally, it was considered that elderly persons lived in three-generation households and informally the needs of the elderly persons were met since the value of respect for the elderly persons dominated household relationships. But, this has changed rapidly in recent times through changing values as a result of wide-spread education and use of new technology, and the effect on the reduction of the authority of elderly persons (Caldwell, 1982). Further, socio-economic changes through urbanisation and migration leading to a reduction in the importance of the family as unit of production (Malhotra and Kabeer, 2002), has resulted in the reduction of importance given to elderly persons who are heads/senior members of these units. Therefore, in the context of a situation where SP is not met through informal arrangements, the restriction of SP provision to industrial workers only, following the model of developed countries, could increase inequality (Goswami, 2002).⁴

In such a diverging context, how can the concept of social security be defined and practised in developing countries? There is a need to recognise the huge informal economy prevalent in the developing countries while designing any SP policies. This introduces a new set of problems apart from the social security discourse in industrialised countries. The chief problem identified here is the structural issue associated with poverty, and its mass nature. For example, while social security measures of poverty alleviation are required to cover only a small percent of population in industrialised countries, a huge population, close to seventy percent or more, may require such services in developing countries. This is due to the structural nature of poverty⁵ rather than any individual inability to obtain resources (Osmani, 1991). Therefore, when defining social security in the context of developing countries, the

⁴ The opposite argument is that when state provides social protection in areas where informal arrangements are high, the informal arrangements may weaken.

⁵ For example, the issues of unemployment and ill health are associated with underemployment and lack of hygiene and education rather than mere lack of skills or nutritional inadequacy (Osmani, 1991).

issues at stake are different. The oft used term in such a context is social protection.⁶ A variety of programmes are being promoted by multi-lateral agencies for this purpose. Some of these include cash transfers for keeping the children in the schools and for their health care (commonly known as ‘conditional cash transfer’), child and family allowance, pension for old age and disability, cash for work, fee waiver for health and education, food based transfers, community funds (see Barrientos and Holmes, 2006 for a complete review of these programmes. In the next section we will examine the relevance of the application of these programmes in Indian context.

2.1.2 Types of social protection: promotive and protective

To tackle the problem of the inapplicability of the concept of social security as applied to many industrialised countries, and to develop the concept of social security in a meaningful way for developing countries, Dreze and Sen (1991) suggested the distinction between ‘protective’ and ‘promotive’ aspects of social security.⁷ While *protection* is “the task of preventing a decline in living standards or the basic conditions of living” (Dreze and Sen, 1991: 1), *promotion* is about the enhancement of general living standards and the expansion of basic capabilities (e.g. education).

These two concepts of protective social security and promotive social security need some explanation,⁸ because of the interrelated nature of these seemingly distinct concepts

⁶ There is an emerging consensus on the term ‘social protection’ compared with often interchangeably used terms such as social security (referring to the protective programmes in advanced economies), ‘safety net’ (referring to temporary relief in income/food crises), social insurance (referring to the contributory benefit dimension of protective programmes). See Barrientos and Shepherd, 2003. Theoretically, the choice to study social protection programmes covers two aspects of poverty reduction. According to the capability approach towards poverty, Sen (1999) spells out five instruments of freedom. They are a) political freedom, b) economic facilities, c) social opportunities, d) transparency guarantee and e) protective security. Elements of economic facilities and protective social security can be primarily covered in this study. Other elements will be covered as processes to attain these two modes of freedom. However, they also need to be studied as primary categories. However, to focus the research better, I limit myself to the domains of economic facilities and protective social security.

⁷ Dreze and Sen (1991) have cautioned us not to understand the terms ‘protection’ and ‘promotion’ in an ideological manner or as a paternalistic approach to poor people. The agency which provides is not the main point of reference, rather the objective of the programme is the main focus.

⁸ At this juncture it is useful to bear in mind a further classification made by Guhan (1994). Besides, promotive and protective social security, Guhan points out the ‘preventive’ element in social security. The reference in ‘preventive social security’ is to all welfare programmes such as education, health,

when observed from a poverty reduction perspective. The distinction is illustrated by Harriss-White (1993): “protective social security has as its aim the prevention of contingent poverty, promotive security has as its aim the maintenance or increase of incomes and other capabilities in order to reduce poverty which is not contingent but structural”. The need for protective measures arises because of the failure of promotive measures. Education, employment, nutrition and health, which are targeted at vulnerable sections of the population, come into the category of promotive social security aimed at improving the general standard of living. Such promotive measures could be indirect resource transfers (abolition of school or medical consultation fees) or direct investment in assets for poor people or investment to increase the skills and capabilities of poor people (Midgley, 1984). Protective social security becomes necessary to support people who are not able to improve their general standard of living despite the promotive measures.

However, Dreze and Sen (1991) limit the concept of protective social security to adverse circumstances such as famine (see also Guhan’s [1993] criticism that situations like famine are not appropriate for social security). Guhan (1993) has widened its application by arguing the need to provide protective social security in the case of various other forms of deprivation, as may happen in old age: “Promotional measures are thinly spread and loosely targeted with impact being in the long term and difficult to measure. Protective measures, on the other hand, seek to provide guarantees or enforceable entitlements to those affected by

nutrition, employment, water supplies and housing. These do not aim at a particular section of the population who may be poor. Though the provision of these services is universal, their availability may not be universal. For example, take the case of the veterinary service in an agrarian village. When an epidemic is spread among the cattle of a village, the government veterinary doctor may be available only to the privileged households (on the basis of wealth or political power), resulting in an asset loss for the poorer sections. The same phenomenon can be observed in the use of services such as water supply, education or health. Access is not universal. Ideally (looking from a re-distributive point of view), as poor households are not able to always use the private veterinary services (due to high fees), the government veterinary service should have been first made available to poorer households. But, in reality, government investment in terms of infrastructure or salary for veterinary personnel disproportionately benefits the richer classes of society. The re-distributive efficacy of preventive social security has to be studied in the context of taxation policies and various other economic variables. However, I do not intend to use this category of preventive social security. My particular interest is how targeted social security schemes are allocated/provided. An opposite view, to provide all welfare services universally, that is preventive social security only, can be found in Korpi and Palme (1998). Some scholars (Dasgupta, 2000) prefer to retain the distinction of social security vs socio-economic security. Social security refers to contingency measures (protective) and socio-economic security refers to work based security (promotive security).

specific contingencies by compensating them for the loss of income and/or additional expenses arising thereby” (p. 206). This explanation by Guhan clarifies not only the need for wider application of protective social security but also for the co-existence of promotive and protective social security programmes.

The state’s approach and interest in the new arena of SP is different from the earlier poverty reduction approach, which the governments in developing countries followed for many decades. This change has taken place because of: a) the recognition of the ‘chronically poor’ within the not clearly understood pool of poor persons, and b) the increasing importance being attached to equity principles rather than efficiency principles (Ravallion, 2003; Shepherd et al., 2004). Though the issue of providing for SP has been very important, the state’s financial and political capacity has been minimal. It is in this context, that multiple-agencies providing for an individual/household become important.

2.1.3 Multiple agencies in the provision of social protection

In this study, social protection is defined as a set of benefits available (or not available) from the state, market, civil society and households, or through a combination of these agencies, to the individual/households to reduce multi-dimensional deprivation. In a restricted sense, SP is a “set of policies that governments can pursue in order to provide protection both to the ‘active poor’, enabling them to participate more productively in economic activity, and to the less active poor, with considerable benefits for society as a whole” (Shepherd et al 2004: 2). In the rest of this section, I will elaborate on this aspect of multiple agencies providing for SP.

Considering multiple agencies in the provision of SP is important in two respects. First, an understanding of different sectors will be helpful in designing a state policy, which complements non-state efforts rather than substitutes for them (Agarwal, 1990). Second, often households/individuals do not depend only on one sector (especially in the context of the weak financial capacity of the state to provide for the large numbers in need of SP) and, therefore, how the ‘potential’ synergy of welfare pluralism from multiple sectors contribute to

SP is important for a policy analyst (Robinson and White, 2001). As this thesis is focussing on the allocation pattern of the state's resources, it is likely that non-state sectors may affect the state's own allocation systems. Therefore, we will briefly describe each sector before we make a synthesis.

2.1.3.1 State provision

The rationale for state intervention in the realm of SP arises from the fact that it is a 'public good' (see Atkinson and Stiglitz, 1980; Atkinson, 1969; Atkinson, 1989; Barr, 1992). Production and distribution of a public good, relying solely on the market, results both in inefficiency and inequality (Barr, 1987). We will see later (in section 2.2.2) that though this normative theory holds valid, the state's involvement in providing SP has been the result of various political and institutional features.

In India, this was partly because the sector of social welfare was placed among the 'directive principles' of the Constitution, resulting in the state's engagement in SP as a desirable activity, rather than an obligatory sector of intervention. Besides, the constitutional articles 38, 41, 42 and 47 (dealing with social welfare) were placed in the 'concurrent list' (where there is joint responsibility between local states and central government). This categorisation of social policies as a 'desirable activity' led to a "needs-based conception of justice in theory, but was in practice based on ideas of charity, benevolence and paternalism. The idea of a right to welfare or justice was clearly precluded" (Jayal, 2001: 39). Thus, it is important to note that it was the local state governments that introduced protective social security programmes before central government. The state of Uttar Pradesh first introduced an old age pension programme in 1957; a number of other state governments started to introduce various IM programmes since then (see list of states and the year of the introduction of social assistance in [Dev, 1998]). The central government introduced a comprehensive National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) in 1995, soon after the introduction of its economic liberalisation programme in 1991. Today, most states in India provide some form of IM to

meet a range of SP needs, such as the old age pension, maternity benefit, widow's benefit, relief on the death of primary bread winner and disability benefit.

The evolution of promotive social security programmes in India is less clear, though since 1952 a variety of measures for poverty reduction were adopted through central government's Community Development Programmes. Rural works programmes were initially designed as relief programmes (food for work) in 1960s and some of these programmes were transformed into rural development programmes. Among them the National Rural Employment Programme (1980-89), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (1982-89) and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (since 1989) are some of the well known schemes - all of them carried out on a cost sharing basis between central and state governments. However, it was the government of Maharashtra's Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) that became very well known and gained the attention of both policy makers and academicians because of its ability to provide a legal guarantee of work or cash if the guarantee was not met.

A more detailed treatment of these promotive and protective schemes and their current performance is the subject matter of chapter four. The key issue here is how far the declaratory objectives of these programmes are related to actual practices. To understand this gap, we need to understand the nature of the state that perpetuates these practices (section 2.3). Often, it is the non-state agencies that influence the actual practices of the state, and therefore we need to understand these agencies.

2.1.3.2 Market provision

What constitutes the 'market provision' of SP is an intriguing question in the Indian context because of the coexistence of the formal and informal market.⁹ The formal market for social security is insurance and rural banking. The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), India's leading insurance company, had designed some special schemes for agricultural labourers in the late 1980s. Its annual report in 2000-01 reported that 18.2 per cent of its new policies in 2000-01 came from rural areas. Though it has a wide variety of programmes, separately for

⁹ To make the issue more complex, a good number of informal markets work in close connection with formal markets. One research suggests twelve types of intermediaries in the Indian financial market (see <http://www.gdrc.org/icm/country/asia-india.html>; accessed on 19/12/2005).

individuals and groups, its achievement in terms of coverage is about eight per cent of population, and this often tends to be urban-biased (Harriss-White, 2004b). Often, a rural labourer relying on seasonal agricultural labour for livelihood finds it too difficult to save regularly to pay the insurance premiums. The first priority for such labourers is to meet their needs today, rather than saving for security. In this context, the method of sharing risks through 'group insurance schemes' has been proposed for developing countries. Group insurance schemes (often called micro-finance institutions), where an organization acts as a broker between the provider and group members, with the group taking joint responsibility for each individual member, have been performing better than individual insurance schemes in terms of the number of people involved and the 'return' (Osmani, 1991; Jutting, 2000; Chatterjee and Ranson, 2003; Ahuja, 2003). It is worth noting that these group insurance schemes are often initiated and managed by voluntary organisations. Thus, they are mixture of market and civil society institutions.

However, the extent to which market institutions meet the SP needs of poor people is numerically very limited. In the context of south Asia it has been shown with strong evidence that it is still the local moneylending practices that meet the major credit needs of rural people. A recent rural survey by the World Bank-NCAER (2003) has revealed that moneylending institutions have gained strength since 1991 (when economic liberalisation was started and the priority of the Nationalised Rural Banks to provide rural credits disappeared). The survey also reveals that 70 per cent of the rural population has no bank account and 87 per cent have no access to institutional credits (cited in Srivastava, 2005). However, accessibility to moneylenders is determined by the asset base of the creditor. Both empirical and theoretical research (Stiglitz and Weiss, 1981; Hoff and Stiglitz, 1990; Aleem, 1993) has repeatedly shown this differential access to credit.¹⁰

So far the market provision of protective social security has been the focus of discussion. For promotive SP too, individuals and households rely on the markets in various

¹⁰ The oft-cited reason given for this differential access by neo-classical economists are imperfect information (not clearly knowing who has what assets) and moral hazard.

ways. One of the important schemes of the Integrated Rural Development Programme¹¹ of the Government of India was to provide loans (with lower interest rates) through rural banks to people 'Below the Poverty Line' (BPL)¹² for income generation purposes (note the mixture of state and market). But, the use of the loans intended to be for income generation for the purposes of income maintenance instead (e.g. a loan given for the purchase of cows used for hospital or marriage expenses by selling the cows), has been repeatedly reported in evaluation studies as one of the major reasons for the failure of anti-poverty programmes. Besides, local politicians often gain loans for poor farmers to pay off their private high interest loans to the moneylender, and the same politician convinces the poor farmer that 'bank loans are not meant for repayment' (Rajasekhar and Vyasulu, 1991). Thus, banks were often accessible only through the intervention of politicians, and the poorest households were excluded from this source for most purposes.

Often, such public intervention for promotive SP becomes necessary because of the imperfections in the labour market. As mentioned earlier, it is only a small per cent of the Indian labour force which is involved in the formal labour market. The agrarian labour market is seasonal, depending on rain-fed agriculture, and socially constructed with the traditional relationship of lower caste households doing the farm work for landlords (Ramachandran, 1990; Breman, 1993). This aspect requires more detailed analysis, which will be presented in chapter five.

2.1.3.3 Voluntary sector provision

The importance attached to the voluntary sector's (or civic organization's) provision is because the voluntary sector is presumed to emanate from the collective action of individuals and groups in society (Robinson and White, 1998). Ideologically, this alternative political space, created by civil society, outside the usual arenas of party and government, though not outside the state (Kothari, 1984) is supposed to be more efficient and effective

¹¹ Besides, since 2000, important policy changes have taken place on loans for anti-poverty programmes. Nationalised banks no longer give an individual any loan for income generation purposes. Rather the loan is given to the self-help groups, which the government is vigorously supporting.

¹² The Government of India conducts a survey every five years to determine which households are below the poverty line.

than the state machinery itself on the one hand and more inclusive than market provision which is often exclusive. However, the complexity of this sector is seen in the heterogeneous nature of civil society institutions. Organisations such as NGOs (ranging from internationally funded to locally originated), religious associations with charitable activities, self-help groups and philanthropic organizations come under this sector.¹³ Many of them provide welfare services to the community. For example, financial assistance is made to a needy family on the occasions of death, marriage or accident by self-help groups or religious organizations. Often, the needs of the beneficiary or household is not the sole reason for provision by these organizations. A religious association may choose to provide its funds to a more religiously devoted family and the mechanism to appeal against such allocation is almost nil. Besides such ideologically biased provisioning, lack of stability and lack of replicability (Harriss-White, 1995) have also been reported as lacunae in the provisioning pattern of this sector.

2.1.3.4 Household provision

Differential intra-household allocation is important to bear in mind to understand how demands are made by each household. Social security needs are primarily experienced by the individuals in the household, and therefore i) those who need such support in the household, ii) who makes the claim and iii) who provides social security, are important questions. Even within a household there is differential provisioning and a family may be far from the altruistic unit theorised by Becker (1981). A growing body of research (Appleton and Collier, 1995; Arnold et al, 1998; Bradshaw, 2002; Chant, 1999; Kishore, 1993) has proved conclusively that women, children (especially daughters) and older people may often be at the receiving end of unequal intra-household allocation.

In providing assistance, in the case of social security, for an individual family member, the roles associated with informal care and love fall unequally on the members of

¹³ Even if we take only the legal definitions of nonprofit organizations in India, there are five types: non-profit organizations can be registered under five different Government Acts in India depending on the nature and objectives of the organization. The Acts are: Societies Registration Act, 1860; Indian Trusts Act, 1882; Co-operative Societies Act, 1904; Trade Union Act, 1926; and Companies Act, 1956. All the organizations registered under these Acts qualify for the essential elements of organized, private, nonprofit distributing, self-governing and voluntary (Salamon and Anheier, 1997) enterprises.

household. For example, the care of the elderly may be purely a duty for the female members due to gender biases and cultural values. The elderly person may be treated as of more value if monetary provision is available for them. The monetary benefits received or part of the benefits, may be used for promotional expenses of other preferred members (for example male children) in the household. If no provision is available, there may be neglect of the person needing social security, resulting, in extreme cases, in death or sending away to another relative, i.e., breaking up of the family/moral unit (Agarwal, 1990). Therefore, the need for social security may be gender-biased, and decided by the head of household depending on the utility of the individual member of the family to the household. This in turn may affect the way demands are made by the household on the provisioning agencies of the state, the market and NGOs. This will also determine how the resources are used and what coping mechanisms are adopted. For example, provision made to a female-headed household may be better utilized than that to a male-headed household. But, the linkages of a female-headed household to the elite or provisioning agency may be weak, making it impossible for them to make their demands effectively (see Burgess and Stern, 1991).

2.1.3.5 A synthesis

Though the above agency wise description is useful for analytical purposes, each agency may have different rules for providing SP and a comparison would be difficult. Etzioni (1961) identified three types of mechanisms¹⁴ or organizational behaviours that are used to gain compliance or cooperation: 'coercive' (control through forces of sanction), 'remunerative' (control over material resources and rewards) and 'normative' (control of symbolic rewards such as prestige, esteem). Uphoff (1993) suggests, in the context of rural

¹⁴ These three types of organizational behaviours have been expressed by various different names by different authors depending on the focus of their theories. French and Raven (1959) focusing on the types of power, used the terms 'coercive power', 'reward power' and 'referent power'/'legitimate power'. Galbraith (1983) focusing on the kinds of power used the terms of condign power, compensatory power and conditional power. Boulding (1989) focusing on systems used the terms threat system, exchange system and integrative systems. Game theorists (Rappoport, 1969) have proposed negative-sum, zero-sum and positive-sum models. Social behaviour schools (Hirschman, 1970) have talked of 'exit' (desired but may be prevented), 'voice' (criticism and bargaining) and 'loyalty' (acceptance of some disutility). See Uphoff (1993) for an excellent comparison of these authors.

development, how the state, the market and NGOs might adopt these mechanisms. The dominant motive of persons engaged in the market is profit making, and individuals interact through the markets as clients or customers. In such a framework, markets create remunerative mechanisms through price signals and incentives. Dealing with an NGO, an individual may be a member and the NGO functions with the objective of self-help or service towards a common interest. In such a context, the chief mechanism is the normative principle. For example, the main consideration for a rich landlord to give a loan to a poor family may be the ability of the poor family to repay the loan (remunerative). But an NGO may primarily apply the normative principle of need, and only secondarily give importance to the repayment of the loan. From the perspective of the state, an individual is primarily a citizen or voter. And the primary mechanism that the state uses is coercive, i.e., the state has a certain quota of rationed resources; normative and remunerative principles can be applied only to facilitate the coercive mechanisms, though there may be welfare rights for citizens.

Access to SP from one agency may be influenced by the provisioning pattern of another agency. In close-knit communities, the resources, roles, power, norms and legitimacy all overlap in multiplex relations between individuals and organizations (e.g. a member of a poor household may relate to the same elite in his roles as political leader, landlord and volunteer in some group or religious activity at the same time) (Kabeer, 1994b). Therefore, how the network between individuals in these agencies function and how the decision makers involved in the agencies, in different roles, act differently in different relationships becomes very important. It is in this triangular tension of state forces, market forces and societal forces (Meier, 1992) that policy formulation and implementation takes place. Thus, the impact of redistributive policy and provision should be investigated in a framework of institutions and public authorities responsible for its implementation. Therefore, access to SP at local level is determined by negotiations between various agents and institutional rules. In the next section we will review how these negotiations, bargains and conflicts are structured in an institutional context.

2.2 Towards a politics of social protection

2.2.1 Political nature of social protection

The nature of SP itself is political on various grounds: First, by the very crucial presence of ‘social’ in the phrase, social protection is primarily a mechanism for the redistribution of resources. This redistribution can be understood to take place in two ways: vertical and horizontal. In western countries, horizontal redistribution is emphasised where inter-generational redistribution through income-related contributory benefits is the model for social security. Vertical redistribution is concerned with resource transfer between economic classes through taxation. In developing countries, where governments attempt to develop promotive and protective aspects of social security through various cash transfer programmes, vertical redistribution is the ultimate aim. However, in the context of the informal economy and pervasive tax evasion by the middle and upper classes, it is often the case that governments find little disposable income in the treasury (Atkinson and Hills, 1991). This may constrain the type of policies and programmes that a government can pursue. Though this aspect is very important, this thesis is not looking into it.

The second aspect of the political nature of SP arises from the fact that SP is a public good as we have argued earlier (section 2.1.3.1). The distribution of a public good is essentially a political issue. This thesis is centrally concerned with this question, especially the way the distribution of this public good (of SP) takes place within the general political dynamic at local level. Therefore, in this dissertation ‘political’ is defined “to encompass the entire sphere of the social. The implication of this is that events, processes and practices should not be labelled ‘non-political’ or ‘extra-political’ simply by virtue of the specific setting or context in which they occur” (Hay, 2002: 3). In this sense, the politics of SP is multi-layered, because though the individual should be the unit of analysis, a variety of agents around the individual (both conflicting and bargaining) play crucial roles in the allocation of SP to the individual.

2.2.2 Multi-layered nature of the politics

The multi-layering of the politics of SP could be due to various factors. For example, as outlined in section 2.1.3, SP is provided by a variety of agencies. Researchers may restrict their study to one source of SP for the purpose of focus, and the politics involved there. A large number of studies are of this kind, where state-mediated SP alone was studied. But, it is often the case that multiple sources, in the course of providing SP, interact and create ‘a political economy’ of unique combination, which is seldom studied. Here, I have attempted to create a typology of existing literature of the politics of SP. Some of the types of literature are not directly linked to the SP issue, but more generally with the analysis of the welfare state. While these different types of literature on the politics of SP reveal the complexity, their layered structure is presented in a diagram (Figure 2.1). As I explain each category of literature, I will set out how this dissertation is linked with that particular category.

a) Welfare regime models

The dominant stream of literature on the politics of SP is the approach to the study of types of ‘welfare regime’. This tradition has a long history dating back to Titmuss’ (1974) classification of welfare states into ‘residual’ (where individuals and households bear most of the risk and the state steps in only when private support is not there), ‘industrial-achievement’ (the social security an individual can get is determined by the employment a person has, and in turn the free-market principles dominate the sector) and the ‘institutional-redistributive’ model (the state adopts a leading role by creating a system of defined contribution for intergenerational transfer to generate a shared responsibility of various citizens for social security). Titmuss has further argued that though social risk may be similar in different countries, the response of the state to social risk may vary, depending on the political ideologies and the financial capacity of these states.

The crude classification of Titmuss (e.g. see Obler, [1981] for criticism on Titmuss) was recently modified through more robust work by Esping-Andersen (1990) classifying welfare regimes into ‘liberal’, ‘corporatist’ and ‘social democratic’. Though this model was

applicable only to western industrialised countries, this approach was so influential that later scholars (e.g. Gough *et al*, 2004; see Kabeer [2004] for an alternative framework) attempted to apply this model to extend the welfare regime analysis to explain social policy differences globally.

In India, though not directly from a social policy perspective, Kohli (1987) and Harriss (2000) have looked at how far political ideologies of federal states have contributed to poverty reduction. In this context, the argument of Dreze and Sen (1989) in the Indian context is worth considering. These authors have argued that though the state needs to be less interventionist in the market, the state needs to intervene more in the social arena such as SP and social development. However, some political scientists (e.g. Kothari, 1990) have expressed their scepticism about the effectiveness of such measures. They make the accusation that often, in the context of a value-eroded populist politics, as is the case in India, politicians use social slogans to gain power rather than deliver what they profess. We will deal with this question again in the next section when we discuss the state in India.

In these studies, national politics and political ideologies of the parties are important explanatory variables, and these scholars attempt to explain the variations in social expenditure as well as the policy priorities. This dissertation, which deals with the local politics of SP does not make use of the classification of welfare regimes, which has macro level implications. However, the question of whether the national level political party ideologies affect the local politics will be examined.

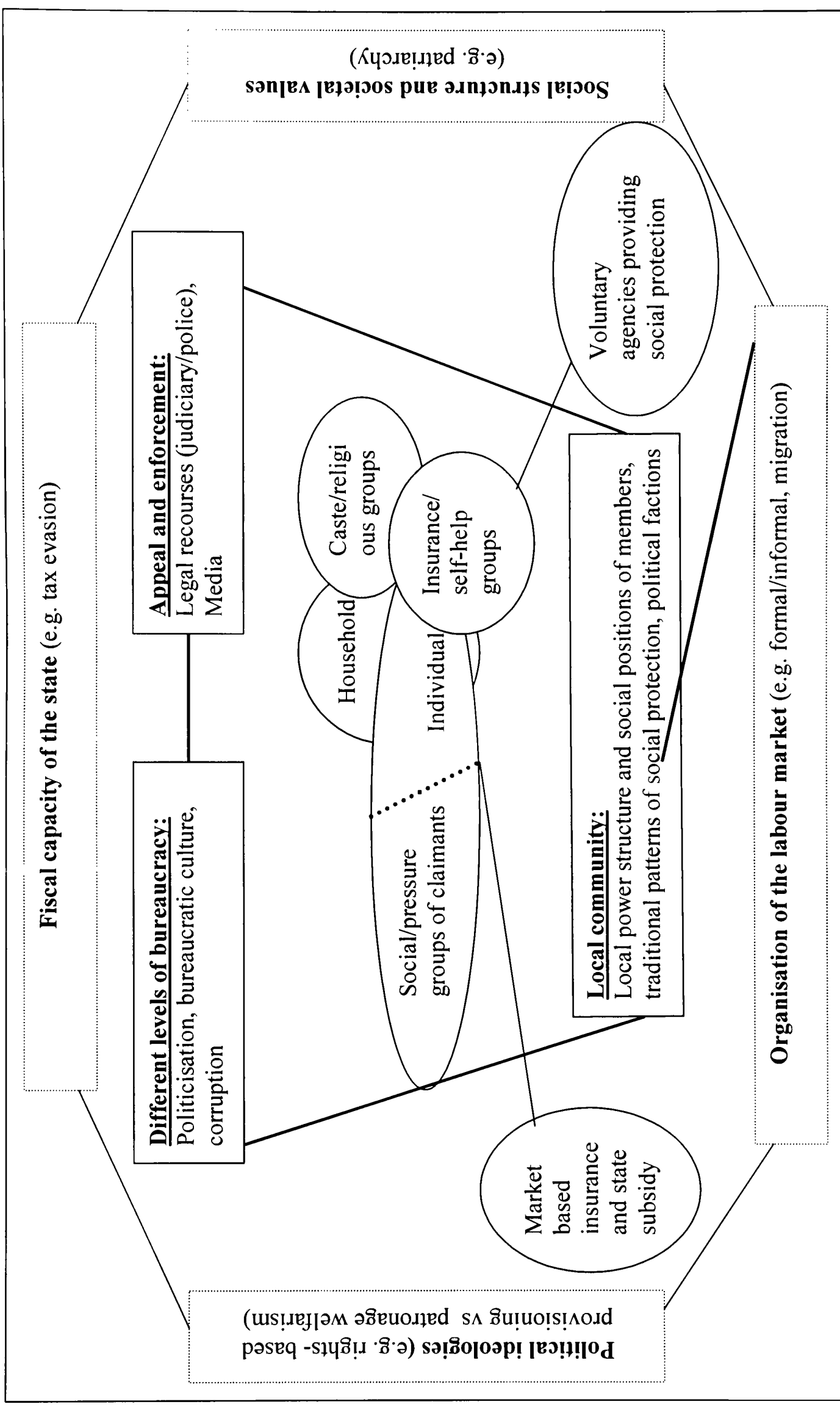
b) Bureau-shaping politics

A second type of study focuses on administrative machinery. Here, the delivery of social benefits is the key question. Even if the state has the financial capacity and political willingness for appropriate social policies, the administrative capacity could be limited. Some scholars (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Elmore, 1978; Schaffer, 1984; Barrett and Fudge,

1981) argue that to distinguish implementation from policy formulation is misleading, and policies are formulated in the process of implementing as the constant re-interpretation of the policy guidelines take place through bureaucratic interaction with the policies given by the legislators. Here, social policy research has benefited from the discipline of public administration in a substantial manner. The literature on street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980) has shown how the behaviour of organisational bureaucracy is structured not only by the public policy and hierarchy, but also by their personal interests and by the nature of the particular client group they deal with. Though public choice models of bureaucratic behaviour (Dunleavy, 1991) emphasise the role of politics that could be vital in explaining bureaucratic behaviour, social policy analysis in Western countries in general has considered implementation of the policies and bureaucratic behaviour to be largely independent of political intervention (e.g. Hudson, 1997; Wright, 2003). The differential behaviour of bureaucrats is seen as their personal bias (e.g. differences of sensitivity of officials in black and white areas [Hill, 2003]), separate from the political manoeuvring they may be subjected to. Generally, the response to such situations has been to reform the bureaucracy. This strategy often recognises other actors in the society as an ‘action environment’ (see Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1997) in which bureaucrats make interventions. In this sense, the ‘policy elites’ are bureaucrats and political leaders.¹⁵

¹⁵ Grindle and Thomas (1991:195) define policy elites as “political and bureaucratic officials who have decision-making responsibilities in *government* and whose decisions become authoritative for society” (emphasis added). Most of the literature on policy studies also uses the term ‘policy elites’ in this sense.

Figure 2.1 Framework of multi-layered politics of state mediated social protection



Policy analysis in India has been different in this regard. The lack of an independent bureaucracy (state) from the political elite (and society) has been dealt with extensively by various scholars in various contexts (for a general discussion see Jain, 1992 and 1999; on food policy see Mooij, 1999b; on court and elites see Moog, 1998; on policing see Joshi, 2005). This is an extension of the earlier argument on the weak versus strong state thesis (Myrdal, 1968; Huntington, 1968; Migdal, 1988), and on implementation deficit in the policy process¹⁶ as has been reported from most developing countries (Grindle, 1980). One important contribution of this dissertation will be to establish the bureaucratic-political linkages in the provision of SP benefits as this has not been done in India. Chapter seven deals with this.

C. Informal methods affecting the formal social protection

A third type of literature on the politics of social security focuses on community aspects or traditional sources of SP. The nature of exchange in informal institutions in face-to-face communities is qualitatively different from impersonal market relations (Bardhan, 1993). Platteau (1991) has summarised this approach by comparing and contrasting two conflicting arguments: a) moral economy approach, i.e., how the social rights of subsistence are secured by everyone in the community through an institutional arrangement of minimal market exchanges (Scott, 1976), and b) the political economy approach (Popkin, 1979), i.e., a rational peasant's self-interests and conflicts in the villages often deny benefits to the needy in the village economy. Examining the exchange patterns of an Indian village involving land (tenancy), labour (harvest share, piece-rates, daily wage) and credit (credit institutions, urban money-lenders, village money-lenders and friends and relatives), Dreze (1988) has pointed out the prevalence of an 'exploitative' system, which largely excludes poor people. Even in the extreme of exploitative systems such as bonded labour there may still be 'patronage care' for elderly people, who may have served their whole life for a landlord, making it an

¹⁶ The usage 'policy process' is understood in this study as a process within a larger set of processes. The larger process comprises three components: a) The social situation that necessitates the policy (how the social situation is perceived and problematised has its own ideological and theoretical roots); b) the policy itself and c) the policy goal or the new social situation that policy aims at (how intended and unintended consequences of the policy give rise to changing social situations and the need for new policies to deal with the new social situation). The second component has various sub-components but works within this larger process.

informal/market pension system. How far these market forces prevent the rural poor from benefiting from public provision and under what conditions poor people are forced to take market assistance for social security have not been well researched.

This type of literature has gained significance in recent times because of two aspects: a) the neo-liberal agenda of governments retreating from social expenditure is considering informal provision through the networks of community members as an important source which the government's provision should be complementing rather than replacing; b) modern government relies on local communities and local knowledge to tackle the problem of imperfect information about the social risks of a particular individual/household in a decentralised administrative set up. This second aspect is important to this study and needs closer examination. Part of chapters five and six deal with this issue of informal provisions interacting with the state SP.

d) Power imbalance of claimants and their mobilisation

Though the question of SP is primarily an issue of enhancing the individual's wellbeing, often the vulnerable population may mobilise to raise their group rights. Here, the right demanded is not for the group, but to each member of the group. But, a collective attempt is made to achieve it. The fourth category of literature on the politics of SP deals with this issue. It treats vulnerable populations as a social group in a power relationship with the rest of the community. Differences in interest, preferences, ideologies and interaction patterns create a unique identity for social groups and they are often in conflict with the rest of the society. As a result, stigma and other social and physical constraints may help deny access to benefits as well as general rights. One of the rare works on *The politics of disablement* (Oliver, 1991), and on the politics of the elderly (Minkler and Carroll, 1999; Walker and Naegele, 1999; Hudson, 1999; Binstock and Quadagno, 2001) are representative literature in this category. The case study on which this dissertation is based found some evidence to show the mobilisations by claimant groups when their rights are denied. The effectiveness of such collective protests is discussed in chapter seven.

e) Intra-household power dynamics

A fifth category of literature is more concerned with the micro-level issues of power relations. These studies can be further classified into two groups. The first group deals with the household allocation issues in the framework of gender and age. How the status of the individual, classified according to gender and age, creates power imbalances in a household and how resources are consumed and roles and responsibilities divided has been a classical question for both economics (e.g. Becker, 1981), and sociology (e.g. Curtis, 1986). We have seen this in section 2.1.3.4. In the second group, the policy analysts have built upon the models of intra-household allocations and argued for policies that could regulate these power relations (see Lewis and Meredith [1988] on the analysis of informal care by the daughters for elderly and disabled parents and for policy suggestions to complement state policies of social care in the UK; see Risseeuw [2001] for policy analysis of household and community care by elderly women in Sri Lanka; see Sen [1984] and Harriss [1986] for food distribution bias within the household, and appropriate policy suggestions for India; see Agarwal [1991] for the differential strategies taken by men and women at a time of household ‘income shocks’ and risks). This literature emphasises the fact that the informal provision in the household is much more important than the formal protection given by the state/market. This study, taking cues from these earlier studies will develop the argument about the way the household dynamics interact with community norms and bureaucratic politics. Chapter eight is devoted to this issue.

Though each category of studies deals with differential allocation, the reasons given are different and appropriate for each category. This study is taking a step further, to see how far the network of actors in each sector structures access to the state’s SP. This approach aims not only to advance knowledge, but also has policy implications. First, the wider informal network in society has been shown to cause even excellent policies by the state to fail (Mosse, 2004); second, primary policy concern today is to ensure a welfare mix through a variety of sectors (Rose, 1976; Rao, 1996). However, this is not an easy task. As we have seen earlier in

section 2.1.3.5, ideological orientation and institutional arrangement of each of the organisations is different, and as a result the power dynamics are also likely to be different. Equivalizing the power relations between the actors from different sectors would be misleading. The actors could also be exercising their power and discretion beyond the framework of the sector to which they belong. The ability of the actor to move between various political layers could also determine their actions, and shape the politics of SP. These complex scenarios necessitate defining 'power'. Who are the actors involved in the power relations which influence the allocation of SP? How are the capacities of each actor determined and how are they used? What framework could be used to study this topic?

2.2.3 Power and welfare rights

Policy is often seen as a depoliticised tool for intervention (Harriss-White, 2002). Often, such a technocratic and apolitical approach is criticised as biased towards market institutions (McNeill and Boas, 2003). This shift to emphasise policy oriented analysis is a diversion from earlier socio-political analysis. The sociological tradition has from an early stage focussed on investigating the power structure¹⁷ in society and concluded that agency and power can have significant importance for the distribution of material goods as well as social status, and determining how many people attain and maintain access to scarce resources and mobility (Tumin, 1967; Saunders, 1990). The concept of social class assumed key significance in these theories. But why power and agency are given less importance in the governance approach is that power is understood to have dispersed among various actors in partnership and network. This is a matter of serious concern in the approach to the study of governance (taking multiple sectors into consideration)¹⁸ since it generally marginalises the

¹⁷ Social stratification theories develop on social structure theories. Social structure theories are concerned with the distribution of social positions, and how these positions interact to create a system (Blau, 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1989).

¹⁸ There is a huge body of literature on governance and I do not wish to elaborate it here. The underlying message that emerges from the writings of various authors (e.g. Jessop 1998; Rhodes, 1997; Leftwich, 2000) on the topic is that though the term governance is used in various ways (e.g. i) as the minimal state; ii) as corporate governance; iii) as the new public management; iv) as 'good governance'; v) as a socio-cybernetic system; and vi) as self-organising networks (Rhodes, 1997: 47), what is most crucial is to understand the change in the nature of the state from an agency that provides

issue of agency and power (Newman, 2001). This retreat is not justifiable in view of the multi-dimensional perspective on power by Steven Lukes (1974; 1986). The logic of power dispersed among various actors is an extension of the pluralistic understanding of different actors able to exert power over the other (as understood by early elite studies e.g. Dahl, 1961). The network of various actors in the governance framework is not totally unguided. In fact, power is found in interactions or networks of various actors, rather than as the property of the actors (Havel, 1985 cited in Lukes, 1986: 13-14).¹⁹ As Peters (2000: 45) comments: “something may emerge from the rather unguided interaction within all the networks, but it is not clear how this will happen, and there is perhaps too much faith in the self-organising and self-coordinating capacities of people”. As Lukes goes on to explain a different dimension of power, we can understand what could be the nature of self-organisation. According to him, the ability to exclude and include issues on an agenda is second dimension of power (the first dimension being the ability to directly and deliberately change things by influencing the behaviour of the other), and to express subjective interests the third dimension. Therefore, self-organising through a network of various actors in governance may manifest itself in the exclusion and inclusion of some citizens as a result of powerful actors’ ideas and interests.

O’Brien and Penna (1998) in their work on *Theorising welfare*, where they make a historical sketch of the evolution of the concept of power alongside various welfare paradigms, reach a similar conclusion. They argue that the knowledge and claim to truth in the neo-liberal agenda through the rational activities of professionals and bureaucrats (Etzioni, 1969) is increasingly replaced by post-structuralist understanding of individual subjectivity. Michael Foucault, the chief proponent of post-structuralism, by using the phrase ‘power-knowledge’ argued that political, social and individual lives are inseparably connected in the

services to the people to an agency that steers/manages a variety of sectors. However, some scholars are critical of any substantial change in the nature of the state and they argue that the origin of the ‘governance’ is primarily from international development agencies (e.g. World Bank, UNDP) as an overall management technique for the efficient use of public funds provided to inefficient governments (Minogue, 1998; 1999).

¹⁹ Parson’s system theories view power as a property of a system and structure rather than that of actors, which is created through social interaction. Here not only actor-actor, actor-event relations are given importance, but event-event relations are given importance (Knoke, 1990: 123).

daily *practices*. This had important applications in the welfare theory through ‘needs’ discourse (Fraser, 1989 cited in O’Brien and Penna, 1998).

The emphasis on *practice* by post-structuralists also had significant implications for the theory of citizenship, on which the foundations of welfare rights were laid. The traditional understanding of citizenship (civil, political and social rights by Marshall, 1977; 1981) was criticised for being a single-evolutionary and legalistic version of citizenship.²⁰ This renewed understanding of citizenship based on practices affirms the nature of the “dynamic social construction of citizenship which changes historically as a consequence of political struggles” (Turner, 1993: 2).²¹ Wilson’s (1990) study on the citizenship of poor persons whose social obligations are more emphasised than social rights is important from the perspective of practice-based understanding of citizenship. In this politicised understanding of rights and policies:

“Government concerns not only practices of government but also practices of the self. To analyse government is to analyse those processes that try to shape, sculpt, mobilise and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and life styles of individuals and groups...One of the points that is most interesting for thinking about the linkages between questions of government, authority and politics, and questions of identity, self and person” (Dean, 1999:12-3).

What sort of theoretical framework could be used to study the multi-dimensional power relationships involved in these processes and events?

2.2.4 Bourdieu-Giddens framework for studying power relations

The key question at the heart of this dissertation is the struggle over re-distribution. This question of distribution cannot be separated from that of production and organisational power. Therefore, the question of how the labour market is organised, how the system of administration works in a democracy, comes into the picture of re-distribution. Often, this question of the struggle for resources is examined using a ‘structural’ approach. But, structural explanations can be biased towards societal institutions of caste and class. On the

²⁰ Note also that the Foucauldian understanding of power deconstructed the nature of law. For example see Hodgson’s (2001) critique of social aspects of law and formal contracts.

²¹ See also Procacci (2001) on how the individualisation of risk has taken place and the differential response from governments without any mechanisms based on solidarity/social principles.

one hand, these societal structures are criticised for not having adequate definitional clarity.²² On the other hand, institutions of the state, which were supposed not to be biased to societal institutions (though, still embedded in these structures) requires a more sophisticated analytical framework. Individuals voluntarily make decisions, find innovations and use networks to move between structures and institutions to maximise resources. Thus, individuals were able to move out of caste or household structures for private gains, and to receive moral, social and economic support from structures when required. Importance is attached to this individual agency in the ‘transition’ approach (see Potter, 1997 for a definition of this approach and Whitehead, 2002 for an application). This actor-oriented analysis was deployed by anthropologists and sociologists to resist the structuralist and culturalist explanations of social change in the 1960s and 1970s. However, this methodology lacked the dimension of how the individual’s behaviour and motives could be embedded in the social and institutional structures (Long and Long, 1992), and thus lacked the second and third dimensions of power. It is exactly this lacuna which is addressed in the Bourdieu-Giddens framework.

The ‘structuration theory’ of Giddens (1984; 1991) and Bourdieu’s (1977; 1990; 2005) theory of ‘constructivist structuralism’ argue that there is a dialectic relationship between human practices and objective structures/rules. Internalised norms (Giddens) or the *habitus* (Bourdieu) of actors, embedded within institutional structures, constantly interact with the ‘locale’ (Giddens) or ‘field’ (Bourdieu) and transform each other²³. Bourdieu’s ‘field’ is in effect ‘a network’ among positions and personal relations of various actors. The actors bargain, co-operate or conflict on capital (Bourdieu specifies economic, social, cultural,

²² Whether the concept of class is applicable in the Indian context has been hotly debated. Rudolph and Rudolph (1987) argued that in the context of weak industrial capital and absence of organised labour, to challenge the dominant ideologies, the concept of class was irrelevant. However, their simplistic understanding of ‘class’ as an industrial bourgeoisie versus labour class has been criticised (Byres, 1988). In another attempt to make the concept of class applicable to the Indian situation Bardhan (1984; 1988) has extended the idea to include a third class of government employees apart from the capitalists (industrial and land owners) and labourers (unorganised or organised). Rudra (1989) has made another category of ‘intelligentia’ as a separate class. In still another formulation, Beteille (1965) has argued caste to be a more meaningful category to understand power rather than class in the Indian context.

²³ See the similar framework of analysis in the New Institutional approach in sociology (Nee, 1998; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Goodin et al, 1996).

economic and symbolic capital; Giddens speaks of ‘allocative’ and ‘authoritative’ resources; also note that Weber speaks of material and ideal interests). Here, the agency that is embedded in the social structure has the property of ‘knowledgeability’ as well as ‘capability’ which enables them to take courses of action beyond the rules of these structures. At the same time, these “actions constitute and reconstitute the institutional conditions of actions” (Giddens, 1987:11). This is very close to the post-structuralist understanding of *practices* and formation of informal rules (section 2.2.3). This theory has been incorporated into the analytical framework of local development (see Long and Long, 1992; J. Harriss *et al*, 2004) and has been empirically studied in the African context (see Elwert and Bierschenk, 1988; Bierschenk *et al*, 2002).

How far are these theoretical frameworks relevant to Indian context? What is the nature of state and politics in India? These questions are dealt with in the next section.

2.3 The nature of politics and state in India

It is already evident from the treatment of the subject so far that by taking a ‘statist’ approach this study cannot do justice to the topic since the interaction of various sectors and its impact on the state’s allocation pattern is the subject matter of inquiry. At the same time the central importance of politics and the state is emphasised. Therefore, the traditional approach of the state (Hobbes, Locke, Mill; see Held, 1989 for an overview), as an apparatus of government trying to influence society, is to be qualified with what institutions and social structures give rise to the state, and thus to its politics and policies. Jayal (2001:10-11) has shown beyond doubt that the ‘state’ in India is a ‘contested concept’ and there is a qualitative difference from the western context where the boundary between private and public is more clear (see also Vora and Palshikar, 2004). This context-specific understanding of the state requires us to take into consideration society’s culture and aspirations and how it shapes the state.

Migdal (1988; 1994; 2001) and Kohli and Shue (1994) have put forward the approach of 'state-in-society', which brings the interconnectedness of the state and society into a theoretical framework²⁴. The advantages of this approach are 1) its ability to disaggregate the state, enabling one to understand the power distribution at and between various levels of the state and 2) the recognition of blurred boundaries between the state and society because of mutual transformation through interactions. The need for disaggregating the state is unavoidable because of enormous discretionary power given to the lower levels of government units in the decentralised modes of governance. This approach is critical of both Marxian and Durkheimian analysis of the state, where socio-economic changes are given much more emphasis than the state's action and society's politics. Though this 'state-in-society' approach adopts Weber's approach of the mutual interaction of politics and wider society, it warns against Skocpol's (which also follows a Weberian analysis of the state) 'statist' approach where the autonomy of the state is emphasised (1982).²⁵

Apart from these theorists a number of studies in India have shown the evidence for the applicability of the state-in-society approach in India. It is impossible to summarise the works on the Indian state here and this is not within the scope of this study. Further, in reviewing these works it will be soon understood that they refer to the Indian state in general and do not disaggregate the state, i.e., the local state is not the priority question for most of these theoreticians. However, a general understanding of the Indian state is useful before considering the characteristics of the local state.

From the perspective of what the state does (rather than what its institutions are), there are three dominant interpretations of the Indian state. These three interpretations have serious implications for the poor service delivery (Paul *et al*, 2004). First of all, the Indian

²⁴ The interconnectedness of state and society forms one of the constitutive elements of the concept of governance (see Rhodes, 1995; 1997). Jayal's (2001) work is also in this direction.

²⁵ However, Skocpol's (1992) later formulation of the argument of 'polity' is very close to the state-in-society approach. Skocpol (1979; 1982) also distinguishes between 'society-centred' and 'state-centred' approaches, but prefers a state-oriented approach. See also Jessop's (1990) criticism of Skocpol for the dichotomy of state and society. It is also worthwhile to note that Kohli (1987) himself had earlier adopted a statist approach when he analysed different federal states in India and their ability to reduce poverty.

state is critiqued as being managed by an *intermediary political class*. Following Michael Kalecki's (1976) work on the intermediary class, rather than the big bourgeoisie class, as the class involved in the activities of capital accumulation, a good number of studies identified various categories of people in India as intermediaries. State professionals such as teachers and other white collar workers (Bardhan, 1984), petty and high level officials, managers (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1987), unemployed graduates, and rich peasants (Khan, 2000) are some of them. This 'not necessarily rich but numerically crowded class' (Harriss-White, 1999b: 16) have substantial organisational power and networking capability through elected and unelected politicians. This networking capacity has been shown to be crucial in the success of grain markets (Harriss-White, 1996) in gaining jobs (Jeffery, 2003). This dissertation will argue in this line, and show how gaining welfare benefits take place according to the networking capacity. Though the poorest sections of society (those seeking welfare benefits) participate in the democratic process (by voting), their direction of participation is guided by this intermediary class. Therefore, how these poorest sections network with the intermediary class will determine their ability to gain welfare benefits.²⁶

Second, this intermediary class is able to perpetuate a *rent-seeking state*. Before liberalisation, this rent-seeking was in the form of obtaining licences for various purposes (*licence-raj*). However, the works of Wade (1985) shows that the rent-seeking state is still powerful in the post-liberalised scenario. Wade's argument is that civil servants maximise revenue through corruption, transfer this money to politicians for personal favours (e.g. job transfer to a desired location), and politicians need this money to buy 'party tickets' or to satisfy party workers. The third critique of the Indian state is that the system has *lost legitimacy because of a degenerating political system*. When the single party (Congress) political system lost its internal democracy resulting in state emergency in 1975, in the newly emerged multi-party scenario political ideologies were less important, and parties adopted populist strategies as well as began to recruit 'political contractors (Kaviraj, 1986: 1699) who could bring in votes by any means such as coercion, caste affiliation and money (Kothari,

²⁶ How network is defined and operationalised is discussed in section 5.3.2.

1990; Frankel and Rao, 1990). Through these processes Kohli (1990) notes the Indian state has succumbed to an ‘authority vacuum’, which is the key reason for the crisis in the governability of India. According to him, intra-elite struggles for power, rather than the social mobilization approach, is the pro-poor approach by political parties.

2.3.1 The local state in India

A separate treatment of the subject of the ‘local state’ is necessary since the complexity of the structure of the state necessitates less coherent ‘functioning of the state institutions at the local, intermediate and national levels’ (Jayal, 2001: 19). Nevertheless, before going any further, it is important to clarify what is ‘local’, since I will be using it as an adjective such as ‘local elite’, ‘local government’, ‘local state’ etc. The literature is not consensual on ‘local’ means. Uphoff (1993) has identified various layers ranging from international level to individual level, which can be considered as ‘local’ in various contexts. Therefore, it is important to operationalise ‘the local’ for the considerations of this research. “The basic characteristic of what is local from a socio-economic perspective is that most people within a locality, community or group have face-to-face relationship and are likely to have multistranded connections as members of a common church, as buyers at the same market, as relatives through extended families” (Uphoff, 1993: 609). The most definitive characteristic of local in this definition, the face-to-face relationship exists only at village level. While the positive side of the multistranded nature of relationship is the opportunity for collective action, the negative side is that conflict in one field may spill over into another (DeHerdt et al, 2004). The key feature of these communities, according to Bardhan (2002), is that the members of these communities identify the non-members easily and treat them separately. This differentiation is based not merely on a geographical basis. Social identities also construct this.²⁷ The concept of ‘local’ is not just about places. It is about settings of interaction (Giddens, 1984), and these interactions produce a locality. Thus, locality “is

²⁷ For example, a relative visiting the village or a returning migrant from the city is treated differently from a professional school teacher who visits village every day. According to Appadurai (1996: 181) ‘production of locality’ is a ‘structure of feeling’.

constructed as a political arena where order and disorder are constructed, and spheres of authority are forged and intersect” (Kassimir, 2001: 103).

In the context of India, these local communities have constitutional power when the ‘local’ is operationalised as a village. Besides, the village being the lowest administrative unit provides a platform for decision making with some autonomy. The studies on local areas in India can be classified into two broad categories. First, those which study one or two villages to understand social, economic and political aspects of the particular local community (some of these studies are consulted in chapter five). Most of these studies are by sociologists and anthropologists and they tend to be descriptive (however, see a rare study by Wade [1988] explaining how collective action occurs in village settings). The second type of literature on local areas deals with the issue of decentralisation. There is a significant amount of literature in this category since 1980. These studies attempt to elaborate how the local community relates to the central administration (some of these studies are reviewed in chapter four). While the first category understands ‘state’ as one of the institutions in and around the village community, the second category implicitly maintains the boundary between the ‘state’ and ‘society’ as very intact.

A small group of studies that do not fall into the above two categories has inspired this research and understanding of local state. In this set of studies, the local state is seen as a product of the local society and therefore the boundary between the state and society is blurred. Detailed review of these works is necessary. The most representative work in this field of literature is that of Harriss-White (1999b, 2003). She has argued that the state in the context of South Asia could be termed as what Reno (1995) called the corrupt state of Sierra Leone: the ‘shadow state’. Studying the informal economy in India, her key point of investigation is what brings order to this economy. As the state’s arm does not reach through to the informal economy, it is the private contracts (often exploitative) and social identities that regulate this sector. Thus, there is hardly any distinction between state and market here.

“When we look at the local state, the actually existing state below the levels of state capital, as we follow policies down the hierarchy of levels, we soon find ourselves in an economy that is on the edge of - or frankly outside - the ambit of state regulation

(despite what is laid down in official statements of intention, and in legislation and orders and institutions); that is, in the informal economy (2003: 74).

A host of new actors emerge here. Private armies (*goondas*) to enforce illegal contracts, fixers, intermediaries, gatekeepers, etc. are some of the numerous people who actually carry out the daily routines of the 'shadow state'. These actors are from the intermediary class described earlier. This political and economic disorder is deliberately used to enable collective and highly-organised economic abuses and misappropriation of state's assets by the local elites and leaders. Here, the state exists, but in such a way that the authority and legitimacy reside in the private social status of the individuals since following the rules of the shadow state is the route to get things done (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000: 168). As a result, the boundary between state and society is blurred (see also Appadurai (1996). In this blurred-boundary situation the winner is the leaders or local elites since they are able to reduce the power of the bureaucrats, and to accumulate that power as their personal power.

There are two opposing views on the legitimacy of this local state. A group of scholars (Ashish Nandy, Partha Chatterjee, Akhil Gupta and Rajni Kothari), inspired by post-structuralism, argue that local elites are able to resist the national elites (see section above on the state India) and their interests to protect local interests. These national elites are inspired by western understanding of enlightenment and modernity, and pursue arrogant policies with the help of bureaucracy. The opposing group (see Bardhan, 1997; Jeffery and Lerche, 2000) argues that state structure is meant to contain the violence by the local social structures on powerless citizens. These thinkers, though recognising the importance of civil society, contend that empowerment of the poor masses is the pre-requisite for a development oriented localism. But, who are these local elites who take the lead in the local state?

2.3.2 Local elites²⁸

An understanding of political decentralisation is necessary to fully appreciate how the local elites gained and maintained legitimacy in India. This is undertaken in chapter four. However, the concept of elite existed apart from their political legitimacy. A good number of analytical studies (Pareto, 1935; Mosca, 1939; Mills, 1956; Miesel, 1958; Bottomore, 1964; Parry, 1969; Eldersveld, 1989) and empirical studies (Lasswell et al., 1952; Hunter, 1953; Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1974; Domhoff, 1978; see Singh, 1988 for a range of Indian and international studies) on the elite have clarified the concept. My attempt here is to reach a definition drawing on this literature (rather than to settle the controversies raised) and to briefly describe how elites could affect social security provision.

At the heart of elite theory is the idea that in every society a few people with social status and power make decisions that affect the majority of population. This intersection of status and power in the same individuals makes them the reference points of state-society relations in a given community. It also implies that the power of the elite may not necessarily be derived from the overt leadership or formal positions they hold. Therefore, elites can be seen not only in elected political positions; they will be visible in the market and NGO operation as well. In fact, the potential power because of the strategic role, control and influence through these organizations is the distinctive feature of an elite. However, the elite in modern India (or for that matter in most societies) are not merely people 'born to power and privilege' (Mitra, 1992: xiv). Various factors such as state-sponsored education, reservations policies for the backward classes, political parties recruiting lower caste cadres (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000) have helped the emergence of a substantial number of elite members from the lower strata of society.

²⁸ The term 'elite' came to political and sociological theories through Vilfred Pareto, who used the term to indicate 'inequality of individual endowment in every sphere of social life' (Bottomore, 1964: 8). In the English language, the term 'elite' refers to the collective identity of the group of persons who could act in solidarity. However, as we have seen above, the heterogeneity of the elites and lack of solidarity has been emphasised in later literature. Thus, it is now conventional to use the term 'elite' in a singular sense referring to a person from the elites. This study uses the term in this sense.

In a given community the elite may have a multiplex relation with, and may have access to and control over, more than one agency. This may allow them to use a social security provision as a mechanism to expand their power in the community through the linkages they possess. It also allows the elite to create a network with other elite members of the community to strengthen their own position. For example, a 'market elite' person may, by using his network ability with another elite, prevent the public provision or collective action needed for a poor household to serve instead the market 'interest' (e.g., forcing the poor to provide labour at cheaper price at a landlord's farm, which an unemployed person might not have done had he the opportunity to get public provision). On the other hand, a political elite person may encourage collective effort by a self-help group as long as the group interaction of the members is in his favour, and what may potentially reduce the power of the market elite on the community members.

Conclusion

This research is primarily within the discipline of social policy, because it addresses two key arenas with which the discipline of social policy is often concerned, namely, the social policy or administrative arrangements and outcomes (Gray and Jenkins, 1999). In this sense, while state mediated SP is studied, the role of the state itself is critiqued. As a result, the dissertation steps out of the usual arena of social policy investigation into the politics of local economies to understand how traditional/informal patterns of livelihood mechanisms complement/undermine state intervention. The traditional power holders in society come into conflict with the state institutions as well as the claimants of social protection in this redistribution process. These processes are seldom explored. This lacuna is addressed using a 'bottom-up' evaluation method in this dissertation. These methods are explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Methods

“The consequences of [qualitative/quantitative] division are unmistakable and unfortunate. Important research questions are often overlooked, or if asked they tend to be distorted.”
(Charles Ragin, 1987: viii)

Searching for appropriate methods to study the politics of social protection was as difficult as defining what its politics were. This chapter explains how this difficulty was addressed and how a variety of methods were used, focussing on the question of how access to the state’s social protection benefits were structured through the interaction of state benefits with private and other non-state benefits.

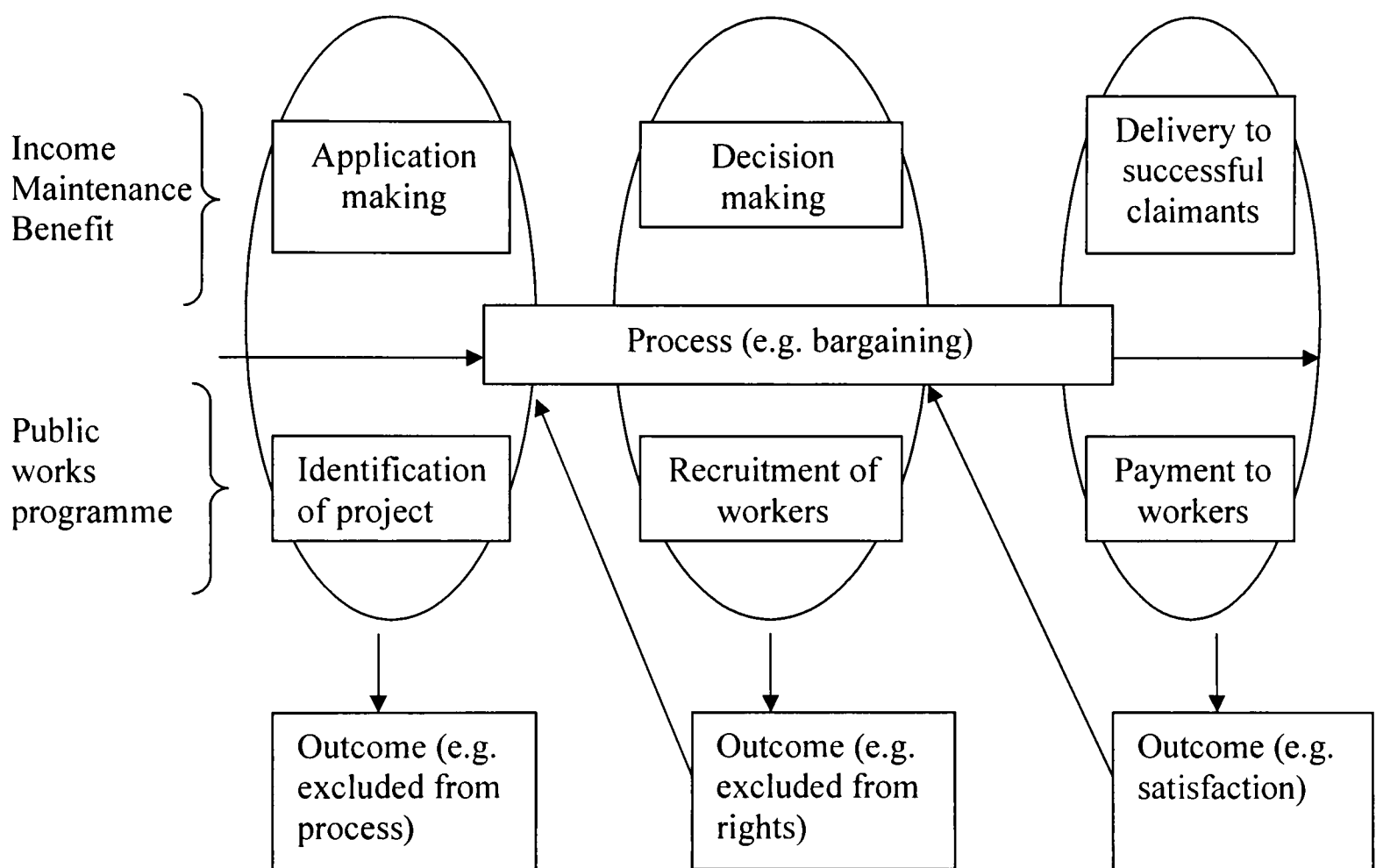
3.1 The study design

As explained in the previous chapter, this study is concerned with the implementation aspect of public policy, rather than its formulation aspect (though this distinction is difficult to make in the practical sense). I decided to concentrate on policy implementation for the primary reason that the issue of access is primarily involved with the implementation process (policy design too can have implications for access). The second reason for placing less importance on policy formulation was that often the policy formulation takes place in an isolated situation of a few bureaucrats and high level politicians, and poor people may feel they have no power to influence policies at the formulation stage (Weiner 1962; see a more recent example of how poor people are less informed in the budget making process as shown with evidence by Mooij and Dev, 2002).

This study further divided the question of implementation into three subsections: i) claiming welfare rights, ii) responding to these claims and iii) achieving welfare right (see the Figure 3.1). However, there may be people who are claiming benefits for which they may not be eligible, because they have links with ‘interested’ decision makers who may grant their demands. In a similar way there may be eligible people who may not be able to make demands or be prevented from making demands due to wider social forces (e.g. caste). As the diagram shows, each of the processes in the implementation are separate events. In each

event, the claimant, bureaucrat and the local elite have different roles to perform and therefore different interests. An actor-oriented methodology studies the political, economic and social interests of actors at each stage and between stages through examining the interaction patterns. Each process as a separate event and as an implementation process, in total, has specific outcomes, which in turn contribute to the processes. Thus, studying 'access' also includes studying the economic, political and social conditions associated with better and poor access.

Figure 3.1: Method of studying policy implementation through an actor-oriented process approach



3.1.1 Bottom-up evaluation for studying multiple actors

Often, the studies on the implementation of public policies adopt an approach of evaluating the programme on the basis of its outcomes (compared with the policy goals) rather than the process of implementation. Such methods of evaluation assume that good

outcome indicators are the result of good implementation. This evaluation methodology assumes that the programme was 'prescribed' as a solution to a problem (the 'rational' approach), and the better the outcome indicators, the more the problem is reduced. Though this approach has been criticised by pointing out that policy process is not always linear (Rose, 1976), this approach is still widely used because of its methodological simplicity and ability to produce 'proof' through quantitative figures.

However, what such simple measures neglect is the fact that evaluation itself is a political activity. Both social realists (Pawson and Tilley, 2000) and social constructivists (Gubba and Lincoln, 1989) are agreed on this. Despite this admission, if 'individual subjectivity' (as we have seen in the previous chapter on how post-structuralist analysis of policy requires this) needs to be brought into policy analysis, we need to adopt a 'constructivist approach' so that we can appreciate the contextual, relative and subjective knowledge (see Taylor and Balloch, 2005 for a comparison of both methods).

This study did not adopt the outcome-based method of evaluation for a further important reason. As this study is defining the resources from non-state sectors as important as state resources, the concept of 'outcome' could not be operationalised to non-state sectors for obvious reasons. It is particularly because of this reason that an actor-oriented method of evaluation was required. This method also has the advantage of holding the agency responsible for the failure of policy, as compared with outcome-based evaluation since outcome could be due to factors extraneous to policy (Paul et al, 2004).

It is here that the conceptual distinction made by Sabatier (1986), between top-down and bottom-up policy evaluation, is useful and appropriate to study the question of access. The starting point of the top-down approach to policy analysis is the policy decision of the government. The outcome indicators are compared with the objectives of policy decisions and the actions of the target group and implementing officials are assessed as to whether they are consistent with them. Keeping the legal objectives of the policy as the frame of reference, top-down analysts typically call for constraining the discretion and actions of the street-level

bureaucrats for effectiveness of policy implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979).

Bottom-up analysts criticise the top-down approach by arguing that the perspectives of central decision makers dominate the policy analysis. The key point of bottom-up analysis is that private interests/private sector and street-level bureaucrats could be strategic actors influencing the courses of action meant to be taken according to the prescribed policy. Using a method of 'backward mapping' (Hill, 1997), the 'bottom-uppers' identify the actors involved in the policy process at the local level. Further, they isolate the strategic interaction between these actors in the process of implementation (Hjern, 1982).

Thus, before the study could start, I had to identify the processes of protective and promotive programmes at the local level through informal inquiries with a variety of people including officials, applicants, informed persons and local leaders. The study, which hypothesised that the local power structure would directly affect the process of allocating welfare benefits, had to investigate the spectrum of power holders (actors): the powerless and the powerful (Harriss-White, 1999a).

3.1.2 Comparative case study

The differential allocation of social protection (SP) benefits in one locality may be determined by a variety of interlinked factors in which the elites, administrative personnel and the potential beneficiaries are players at different levels. A comparative case study approach was found to be useful to single out these factors and to examine the linkages. "Case-oriented studies, by their nature, are sensitive to complexity and historical specificity. Thus, they are well suited for addressing empirically defined historical outcome, and they are often used to generate new conceptual schemes, as well" (Ragin, 1987: ix). In the context of bottom-up evaluation (rather than comparing the outcome with the prescribed policy goals) the case-study method was useful for generating a new scheme by linking the actors and ideas emerging from the data. The social protection programmes were studied in detail at two different localities (villages), collecting data from various sources. The purpose of the inquiry,

as in most of the case studies, was less to generalise, but more to open up the ‘black box’ of differential allocation of social protection in a local area. The case study approach proved to be very useful when causal mechanisms¹ had to be identified for a particular phenomenon. These causal mechanisms were identified using a variety of research methods: in-depth interviews with elites and stakeholders (mostly administrators) of SP programme, identification of elite networks, a survey of beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, unstructured and semi-structured observation, and secondary data sources such as newspaper reports, court cases etc.

‘Comparing two villages/localities’ does not mean a systematic comparison to explain all the differences between two villages. What the research tries to explain is the reasons for differential allocation in social protection. The two villages were selected because case studies focusing one village could be biased by a specific local situation. More than one case can challenge the researcher’s findings from one village when matched with the other village and the research question could be sharpened through this comparison. Thus, an iterative process enriches the research process (see Przeworski and Teune, 1982; Also, see Migdal (1988) and Mooij (1999a) for similar approaches in the selection of case countries and areas respectively).

3.2 Method of case selection

Two villages from two different districts of the case study area of the Marathwada region from the Indian state of Maharashtra were selected as case study areas. As social security is on the concurrent lists of the constitution of India, the programmes differed significantly between states and comparison of two states would have been difficult.

The chief reason for selecting Maharashtra was the suitability of the state for the research questions. First, Maharashtra’s development model is often summarised as ‘selective

¹ In recent times in social science research causal mechanisms have been given preference over causal inferences (Sayer, 1992; Salmon, 1989) because of well-known statistical limitations associated with congruence testing and correlations. See Bennett and George (2004) for detailed argument. They define causal mechanisms as “causal processes and intervening variables through which causal or explanatory variables produce causal effects”.

inclusion' (Lele, 1981; Jenkins, 1996; J. Harriss, 2000). The dominant *maratha* caste, which enjoys political and economic power (see chapter five on how a caste is considered to be dominant), distributes development funds to their own caste and other castes on a selective basis. The focus of this research is how far this selective inclusion is applicable in the case of differential allocation for SP, what guides the selection, how this is selection justified to excluded eligible members, what happens to the legitimacy of the elite due to this practice. Maharashtra has a well-developed *Panchayati Raj* (village self-government) system dating back to 1961 and development activities are run from district headquarters. This long tradition (for more than 40 years) of the local institution of the *panchayati raj* involved in welfare activities provides a legitimate role for the local elites. Therefore, Maharashtra is a suitable state to study the issue of the influence of local elites on differential allocation. The second reason for the selection of the state is the very high deprivation in rural areas compared with the general development experience in Maharashtra (more in the section 3.2.1 below).

3.2.1 Maharashtra: A brief introduction

Maharashtra has five distinct regions: Konkan, Deccan, Khandesh, Marathwada and Vidharbha. (See the administrative map of Maharashtra in figure 3.2). Each region has a specific culture, history, physiography and distinctive socio-economic background. While the regions of Konkan and Deccan are prosperous (being coastal areas and getting better rainfall, facilitating agricultural production of sugarcane and cotton and thus prosperity in related industries) the last two areas are economically backward. Khandesh is a hilly region (in the Satpura hills) dominated by *adivasi* people.

Though Maharashtra, the third largest state in India both in population and area, is often written about as one of the most developed states in India, its development is heavily restricted to urban centres. It has a per capita income of Rs 28,204, well above the nation's per capita income of Rs 20,989. Though the state accounts for 9.4 per cent of national population, its economy contributes 13 per cent of nation's economy. But, these impressive figures are skewed to urban areas when we realise that the state's growth is dependent on four

Figure 1: Physical map of Maharashtra

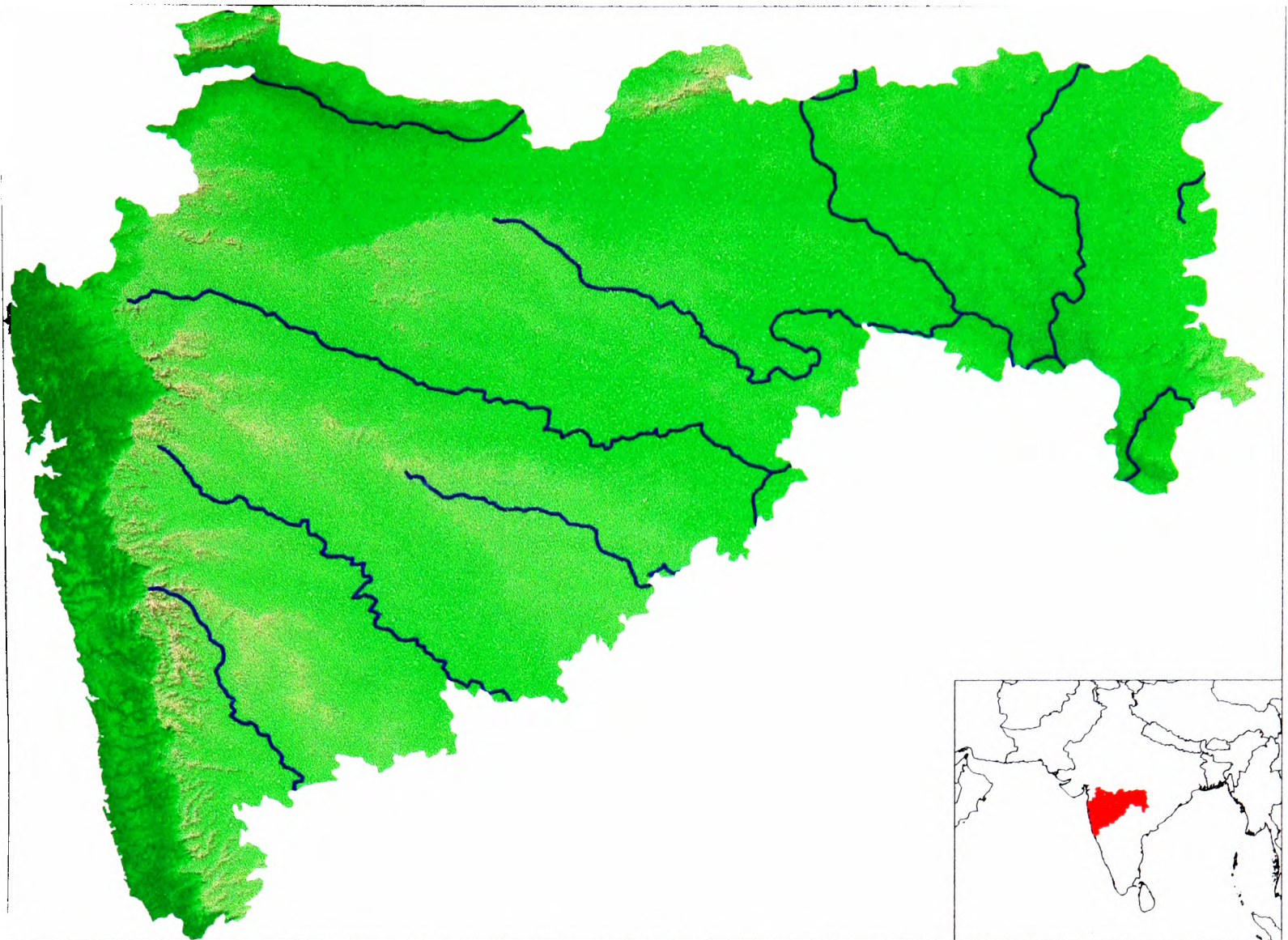
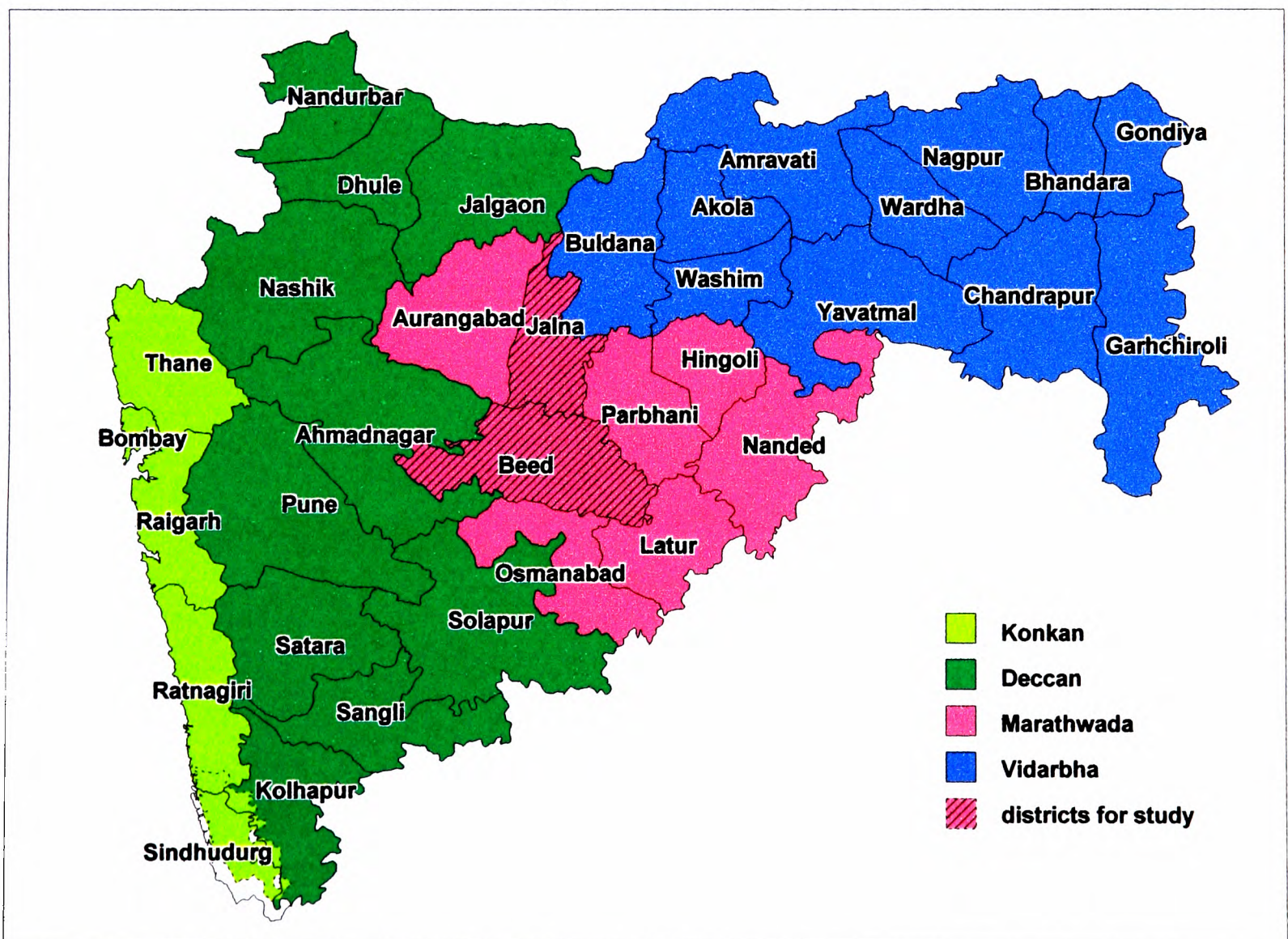


Figure 2: Regions and districts of Maharashtra



Note: For administrative purpose, the regions of Deccan and Vidarbha are divided further and therefore six administrative divisions.

cities - Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Nagpur- which account for around 50% of the total GDP of the state (DfID, 2005). The Human Development Index, combined for urban and rural areas, places Maharashtra at third rank among the 15 major states of India. When the HDI is calculated only for rural areas, Maharashtra is at 14th rank among the 15 major states of India (Prabhu, 2001). The development patterns differ significantly between regions and it is important to delve more into the regional case rather than the state in general.

The region of Marathwada was selected from the different regions of Maharashtra particularly because this is one of the poorest regions not only in Maharashtra but of all India. In the Human Development Report of the state of Maharashtra (2002), except for the district of Aurangabad all the districts of Marathwada were below 20 (ranking between 1[best]-35[worst]). Writing about Marathwada, Sirsakar (1995: 47) aptly comments: “it is paradoxical that this region has remained so underdeveloped despite its central location and its water resources”. This distributional issue is one of the core aspects of the study and therefore a more detailed analysis of the economic, social and political institutions of the case area will be analysed in chapter five.

3.2.2 Selection of ‘local’ case area in the multi-layered administrative set up

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, in this study the village was considered as ‘local’. The study explored the administrative and political factors affecting the village by examining the block (*tehsil*), district and state that encapsulate the village unit. The advantage of the comparative case study method is to deal with this issue of shifting the units of analysis (Ragin, 1987). As explained above the two villages were selected from two different districts.² Together with an assistant, the researcher stayed in small towns close to the villages selected during the fieldwork and travelled to the villages under study every day. The villages were 7-11 kms from the town (The villages under study were approximately 450 kms away from Mumbai).

² The selected districts were among the 10 poorest districts in Maharashtra.

One important criterion in selecting the case villages was to make sure of the suitability of the villages for the research questions (Seshaiah, 1979). Since the exclusion or inclusion of the poor claimants for social protection was the primary question, it was decided to select those villages where there were many households below the poverty line (BPL). Thus, in Bajgaon 20% and in Saralgaon 28% were BPL households. The second criterion was to strike a balance between manageability and gaining representation of whole rural areas. There are two types of villages in rural Maharashtra: 1) Large villages with a weekly market and other infrastructure such as public telephone, post office etc; 2) 8-12 small villages around each of the large village with fewer facilities. It is important to study market and non-market village to understand the rural situation in total. The market villages act a hub for information, market needs, access points of services such as post, telephone and travel. In the study, Bajgaon had a population of 7350, with a weekly market, and Saralgaon had a population of 2750, depending on a different village for market purposes. Care was also taken not to have significant agro-topographic-economic differences between villages.³

There was no significant difference between the villages in the pattern of claiming social security benefits from the state. This was tested statistically using the data set of IM. The results showed that both the difference in proportion of people applying for benefit between villages ($P > z = 0.246$), and the difference between proportion of people receiving benefit (having considered only the people who applied) between villages ($P > z = 0.596$) were not significant. Thus, the villages could be treated as equivalent cases to study the question of access to social protection.

The first two months of fieldwork were spent in Bajgaon. The next two months were spent in Saralgaon. We then returned for two months to Bajgaon and spent the final month in Saralgaon⁴.

³ Two villages within same region can vary in their economic conditions depending on the availability of water through the small rivers that tend to create fertile basins for a small number of villages. These differences were learned by examining agricultural rates for casual labourers and preliminary observations.

⁴ An extra month was required in Bajgaon since it was a larger village, especially for the survey. Preparation, pilot study and secondary data collection took one month.

Though the inquiry was focussed on these two villages, the study extended to the respective *tehsils* and the district that included these two villages (some 14 nearby villages were visited during the fieldwork period for various purposes, for example an EGS was closer to a different village or an official lived there. On such occasions, the researcher tried to find out how the micro-politics, generated due to the particular situation of that village, had affected EGS projects there.) Thus, the iterative process (for modifying research questions) was done through the visits to villages as well as visits to *tehsil* and district centres. In other words, village is understood as 'local' in this study, nested within the *tehsil* and district.

3.3 Pilot study

A short one week pilot study was carried out in a village with a population of about 2200 in Satara, Western Maharashtra. During the pilot study, the researcher successfully identified some elites in the pilot villages, and interviewed nine elites (three political elites, two shopkeepers, one money lender, one woman leader who was involved in a self-help group and two landlords). Some modifications were made to the checklist of elite interviews. A clear method to select key-informants from different groups of officials, beneficiaries and knowledgeable people was identified during this pilot study. The researcher also encountered the problems associated with the use of some local terms and how these terms affected the way people tended to identify the elites. These lessons were helpful in sharpening the questions as well as expediting the research steps in Bajgaon and Saralgaon.

However, the survey instrument was not tested in the pilot village. The survey instrument was developed after four months of fieldwork experience in both the villages and administrative procedures. So, the survey instrument was tested in a different village in Marathwada. An NGO, which provided an introduction to Saralgaon, was helpful in pointing out a village where pre-testing could be done. Five beneficiaries each from the SP programme were selected for pre-testing. Some modifications were required to the instrument.

3.4 Methods of data collection

Four phases of the fieldwork, which were conducted in the following order with some amount of overlap, can be distinguished in each village community: i) a phase of familiarising with the community, meeting people, introducing ourselves, making strategic friends and identifying key informants, ii) identifying the elites of the community through the reputation technique, iii) in-depth interviews with elites, bureaucrats and other relevant persons from the sectors of state, market and civil society, and iv) a survey of the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of social protection.

3.4.1 Familiarising with the community

After essential meetings with district and *tehsil* officials and gaining the necessary permissions, a process of interaction and rapport building with community leaders began. Considerable time was spent to interact with young men of the village who were spending time in village shops and tea-centres. They were happy to spend time with an ‘outsider’ and to provide useful information through community gossips, detailed narrations, clarification of doubts, and later to identify the houses of the survey respondents. From their narratives and unstructured observation a list of key-informants was created. These key-informants were the first group of people for systematic inquiry (more in the section 3.4.2). Sometimes these friends, understanding that the researcher was studying SP, guided me to a beneficiary’s house.

Visiting institutions, participating in community activities, providing information about schemes (but we made it clear that we had no power over allocation), and random visits to poorest households, were some of the other means we used to familiarise ourselves with the local community.

The method of building rapport with the local elites/dominant caste first has its own limitations. Often, the poorest people tend to identify the researcher with the elite and tend not to provide information frankly (Breman, 1993). However, if the poorest people and lower castes are contacted first it can result in conflict between the researcher and local elites and

non-co-operation from them. In this research, elite interviews being one of the most important components, this step could not be risked. On the other hand, winning a poor person's trust is not easy. Often, we expressed solidarity through symbolic gestures, and tried to meet them repeatedly to get them speak frankly to the researcher.

3.4.2 Identifying the elites

Key-informants were first approached for the purpose of identifying the elites in the community (A profile of these key-informants with their socio-economic background is attached in Appendix 1). The panel of key-informants in Saralgaon had 19 members, and in Bajgaon 29 members

Each member of the panel was asked two questions: A) 'List the influential persons of the village from the point view of whom people approach when they need help.' B) 'Rank the persons in the list from the most influential person to the least influential person'. This method of identifying the elites is known as 'reputation method.' (A note has been added in Appendix 2 explaining the theoretical importance of this method, and its application in the field area).

Most of the studies using reputation techniques aim to uncover the community power structure⁵. The purpose of this research was to identify the power structure and its role in the provision of SP. So, the respondents were asked to reflect on whom the community members approached for help, while nominating the elites. The reason for this was that it might happen that a person might be powerful in the community, but might not be helpful/approachable. In the context of SP provisioning such a precaution was essential.

Any person whose names were nominated by five or more panelists was considered among the elites. In this study only the persons identified in this way as elites will be referred

⁵ Dahl (1957) criticized the reputation technique particularly because this approach identifies community power structure without looking into whether the reputation and power are actually used in the community decisions (see Wolfinger, 1960 and Knoke, 1990).

to as 'elites'. Others will be termed 'notables'. These elites were chosen for in-depth interviews.

3.4.3 Elite and stakeholder interviews

As explained in the previous chapter, the influence of local elite on the provision of SP is a central part of the hypothesis. Therefore studying their sources of power, views and patterns of decision making has crucial importance to the study. A general checklist of themes was prepared to guide the in-depth interviews with local elites and stakeholders. This checklist included topics of brief history of the emergence of the elite, self-perception of sources of power, general needs for which people approach the elite, type of help provided by the elite, methods of private provisioning or denial by the elite, criteria for decision making, perception about agencies providing SP, reasons for 'targeting failure' (if it is thought there is a failure), recommendation for state benefits, justifying or denying recommendation, particular community associated with the elite, pressures and networks being helpful a hindrance to the work of the elite. The detailed checklist is attached in Appendix 3.

Initially, when the research was designed, it was envisaged that the elite interviews would constitute the main source of information for research. However, the information provided by the elites was not rich, but often scanty and sometimes even misleading. This was partly expected (Moysier and Wagstaffe, 1987; Hertz and Imber, 1995). But on occasions where the elite completely misguided the researcher or withheld the information, the key-informants (as explained in section 3.4.2) were useful source.

The persons identified through the reputation technique were considered as 'elites'. However, there are many persons (e.g. government officials) who did not appear in the list of elites. These stakeholders in government programmes, and other civil society members (NGO head, labour union head, various committee members) were also interviewed. A list of respondents with whom in-depth interviews were conducted is attached in Appendix 4. Many of these interviews took place during the visits to collect secondary data.

The initial plan was to electronically record these interviews. However, only 30 per cent of them could be electronically recorded. There are many reasons for not being able to electronically record all the sessions. On some occasions, these interviewees were not comfortable with the idea of recording their voice; on other occasions the researcher found the elite and administrator tended to be more frank and revealing without a recorder. On some other occasions good information came outside the interview context. On all occasions daily note making in the evening was a useful exercise to record the unstructured aspects of interviews.

3.4.4 Identifying the network of elites

“There is nothing which distinguishes methods for the collection of attribute data from those for the collection of relational data” (Scott, 1991: 3). Relational data on elite-linkages was collected using the techniques of informal inquiry and focussed group discussion (FGD). However, the traditional FGD methods were substantially altered since the researcher was building on the observations. The researcher had a fair idea of what kind of relations existed between elites by the end of fieldwork through informal enquiry and observation. However, these observations had to be confirmed, clarified and corrected by community members. Therefore, close informants, some of them being key-informants, were invited for FGDs. In Bajgaon there were six persons while in Saralgaon there were only four persons in FGDs.

The members of the groups were asked to give a score of 0, 1, 2, 3 for a pair of two elites (or relationship between two elites) to note the items - ‘would not greet’, ‘knows each other and greets’, ‘exchanges resources’ and ‘can vouch for each other’ respectively⁶. The answer has to be given as a group and individual answers would not be taken. As expected, there was no unanimous opinion about these ratings. However, the method created a discussion about the relationship between elites, and good insights were available from such

⁶ For network analysis the ties between two persons have to be recorded as binary, that is whether a relationship exists between the two or not (Scott, 1991).

discussions. Some of the difficulties of data collection are linked with the issue of power in the community and they are discussed in chapter five.

3.4.5 Observation

Observation was an important tool in this research. Most of the observations were unstructured observation of situations as they unfolded as the researcher was in the community, for example, of interaction between elites and potential beneficiaries, the middlemen and writers in the application process, officials dealing with the beneficiaries, delivery of the benefits at the bank and by post, interaction of elites amongst themselves, community meetings, interaction of landlords with labourers, contractors interacting with labourers, shopkeepers dealing with poor people and many other situations. Details of these observations were entered as 'field notes' on a daily basis. Each situation brought new insights into the relationships with the community and they contributed to further inquiry.

Some other situations were subjected to semi-structured observations. Visiting various EGS sites was one of these. Various information, such as the number of workers, social information about them, who was in charge, type of work, wage rate and villagers' views on EGS work were collected. Eight EGS sites were visited in total. Meetings of various SP committees were another situation for planned observation.

3.4.6 Secondary data

Much secondary data was collected during the fieldwork. The first important source was from local newspapers. A free press is an important agent of public action (Sen, 1999). Two Marathi news papers (*Sakal* and *Lokmat*) and two English newspapers were reviewed daily with the purpose of identifying relevant reports and issues in other villages about any aspects of SP. About 100 different news items related with SP were a good means for external validation, as these news items were a good source for finding out what was happening in the nearby villages and getting information and clarification about those issues from the *tehsil* officials.

Another source of secondary data was from the *tehsil* and district offices. These offices contain a rich source of data in hard copy forms. Information collected from these sources include the number of beneficiaries for different programmes, types of EGS works and number of people at work, and the number of people below poverty line from each village in the *tehsil* where Bajgaon and Saralgaon were located. The *tehsil* offices also had a number of circulars and notices, which explained changes in the programme, eligibility criteria and the introduction of new programmes. Some of these documents could be photocopied while others had to be manually copied.

There were two court cases each on IM and IE during the fieldwork period. The details of affidavits, arguments and judgement of these two court cases were obtained.

3.4.7 Sample Survey

The innermost geographical location of the multi-level administrative set up, namely village, was more closely examined. A survey of the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries was conducted in the selected case-study villages.

3.4.7.1 Survey instrument

The survey instrument had two parts: a) Household information and b) benefit claiming/receiving. The first part was same for all the respondents. But the second part varied according to the benefit each person had claimed or was eligible for. As explained earlier, there were four different types of state SP programmes and therefore, the second part of the survey instrument was in four different forms. The instruments are reproduced in Appendix 5.

Important information sought from heads of household were: 1) demographic characteristics, 2) income sources and assets, 3) local affiliation data (membership of organisations/institutions), 4) credit availability and pattern of receiving informal help, 5) state benefits received and 6) attitudes to differential allocation of welfare benefits from sources such as state, market, other institutions. Most of the items were structured, but some space was allotted for open-ended responses in a five page-questionnaire (in Marathi).

Information was collected on the whole joint family if the respondent lived in a joint family. This would allow one to understand the general economic background of the household. For example, one of the rich shopkeeper in the village had his single sister, aged 55, living with him after she was divorced. If data was collected strictly on a household basis without considering the joint family she would appear to be a very poor person since she had no assets or income sources. This would make her eligible to obtain the benefit for a destitute woman (which she was actually receiving). The data on joint family were collected particularly to identify such cases of informal support.

Important aspects of benefit claiming/receiving were 1) the process of application making, 2) reasons for (not) making application, 3) person helping to write the application, 4) expenses for application making, 5) person responsible for the success of the application, 6) information and perception on the result of application, 7) awareness of benefit amount, criteria, process of decision making, 8) on delivery of the benefit, 9) any exclusion from benefit, 10) reason for exclusion, 11) person responsible for exclusion, 12) use of the benefit, and 13) perception about the scheme. Most of these items were structured and there were few open ended questions. The schedule was contained in four typed pages of Marathi.

3.4.7.2 Sampling strategy for survey

Respondents were selected from three strata/groups⁷: a) People who were eligible and receiving SP benefits, b) People who were eligible but excluded from the SP benefits, c) People who were not eligible but receiving SP benefits. The whole population of the case villages in the particular stratum was included for survey.

It was easier to select the respondents for groups A and C for SP benefits. A list of current beneficiaries and recent beneficiaries were available at *tehsil* level. However, determining the second category of 'who are eligible but excluded' was difficult. There were a large number of people who were excluded and a good number of them considered

⁷ In fact there is a fourth stratum, i.e., people who are not eligible and do not receive social security from any source. They are better off people and may often be elites. Their perspective and opinion can be largely covered through elite and key-informant interviews.

themselves to be eligible for benefit. (Being in the informal economy income is not easy to assess. This will be dealt with more in the next chapter).

To select the respondents for this category the researcher primarily relied on the list of individuals/households below poverty line (BPL) of 1997-98, which was in use at the time of fieldwork. The list also contained the age and sex of the head of the household. From this list various situations of vulnerability could be identified. For example, if the age was more than 60/65, the person was eligible for an old age pension. If there was only one female, or if it was female headed household, there was high likelihood that it would be eligible for benefit for the destitute or dependent children respectively. In reality the researcher had to make a number of visits to the households in the BPL list to determine what the real situation of the household was and to determine whether they were eligible for the benefits. The hierarchy or the mental map, drawn from previous research, helped the researcher to identify poor households: landless households, poor peasants with a small piece of land (less than two acres), small business, and peasants with large landholding/big business/salaried class. At the end of the fieldwork, when data on various assets and income sources was available the households could be further classified (Crow, 1999). However, the BPL list was not reliable and I found a large number of the poorest people excluded from the BPL list (see Hirway, 2003 for political reasons of being excluded from the BPL list). Many of these people were picked up through my random visits. This 'random walk' by meeting and greeting people by making friends and inquiring who lives in the household was an important method for including people with a variety of disabilities, who might have been excluded if only one method was adopted (see CPRC, 2004), the poorest people who appeared in no records, and the old and immobile people who were confined to the household.

The researcher adopted slightly varied methods to obtain the list of respondents for each SP programme. The awareness and take up of benefit substantially varied between one-off benefits and continuous benefits. One-off benefits were national maternity benefits (NMBS) and national family benefit (NFBS). The eligibility conditions were also different. Continuous benefit is old age pension, disability benefit and benefit for single parents for their

dependent children (I will name these Continued Income Maintenance Benefit (CIMB) as an umbrella name for all three. The eligibility conditions for the continuous benefits were similar (See the discussion in the previous chapter). On the other hand, the IE programme and the EGS had very different methods of self-selection. As a result different methods were also used in the selection of beneficiaries from each programme.

CIMB: 214 individuals from 177 households were interviewed. 32 persons from the Bajgaon interviewed were either disabled or receiving/eligible for the benefit of dependent children. Six persons from Saralgaon were either disabled or receiving/eligible for the benefit of dependent children. 176 persons were receiving/eligible for OAP.

NMBS: It was informally learned that awareness about this scheme in the target group was very low. As a matter of fact, only four mothers were aware of the benefit, and only one person was able to obtain this benefit. Therefore, my enquiry about the scheme was directed in a different way. The reasons for limited awareness of the scheme and other administrative problems were studied using in-depth interviews of administrative personnel. The interviews with the individual respondents in the survey focussed on the expenses, health care and work pattern during pregnancy, and how these expenses were met, especially whether they had taken out a loan.

Interviews were conducted with 27 mothers from Saralgaon, and 44 mothers from Bajgaon. Two mothers were from one joint family. So, a total of 70 households were included. Thus, about 63 per cent of the total population (depending on the list of *anganwadi sevika*) became the sample in the study. But it is important to mention that some of the poorest households escaped from the list of *anganwadi sevika*, and 'random walk' was helpful to include such categories of households.

NFBS: This programme, like NMBS, did not have much take-up though there was some awareness of the programme. The inquiry here took the line of how the family had coped with hospital and other expenditure related to the death, whether there has been a change in the activities of the children of the household after the death of the head of the household, and any loans during diseases and death.

Here too respondent selection was difficult. The list of people who died below the age of 65 was identified through discussions with *anganwadi* teachers and local elites, and sometimes through my random visits to homes, because registration of death was not done always.

EGS: This programme had a self-selection method. No such list of ‘eligible persons’ existed (the existing list was camouflaged one. See more on this in chapter six). So, the method of identifying the respondents adopted was through a different strategy. While visiting the EGS sites the researcher noted down the beneficiaries and either conducted interviews at the work site during leisure hours or during the evening hours in their homes. 82 households were included as the sample for study. Only one person from a household was interviewed, though there was more than one person working in EGS from a household, the reasons for which will be made clear in the chapter on results. People from the households of BPL and other poor households, who said they were looking for work were included as ‘eligible persons but excluded category’. A large number of them came from those who were involved in the seasonal migration of sugarcane cutting.

Table 3.1 shows the number of respondents from each programme.

Table 3.1: No of respondents from each programme

	CIMB		EGS		NMBS		NFBS	
	HH	IR	HH	IR	HH	IR	HH	IR
Bajgaon	119	142	49	49	43	44	21	21
Saralgaon	58	72	33	33	27	27	7	7
Total	177	214	82	82	70	71	26	26

HH – Household; IR – Individual respondent

A total of 310 households were surveyed (102 households from Saralgaon and 208 households from Bajgaon). In some cases, especially on CIMB, more than one person was interviewed from the same household, because there might be two persons who were eligible for the benefit from the same household and either one or both of them might have been receiving benefit.

3.4.7.3 Administering interviews

The survey was carried out in the last month of fieldwork in each village. This was particularly helpful for two reasons: First, to design a robust survey instrument based on qualitative information, second, to gain quality information having built rapport through a stay in the village.

Each of the households was visited at least twice. On various occasions we visited them three times. These repeated visits were useful to gain consent from family, and to talk to the beneficiary confidentially. Nevertheless, some times, especially with very old persons, it was necessary to have a mediator to communicate. This created a real problem. Sometimes, the destitute person's benefits were being taken away by their 'guardians' and it was not acceptable to gain information from these people. Besides during the survey method, to collect a proxy's opinion on the well-being of subject would not have been methodologically sound.

Most of the interviews were conducted by the RA and me jointly. Since most of the interviewees were illiterates or semi-literate, the questions were asked verbally and the answers were ticked or written on the survey schedule.

3.4.7.4 Problems during survey

One important problem that came to the surface during the survey was that of recall. People, especially who have been getting benefits for a long time or those who applied for benefits long ago did not remember when they had started getting benefits or when they had applied. The means to overcome the recall problem was to look at written records. Some people had a 'pass book' and at least some of the early dates when they were given the benefits were recorded. But the vast majority of them did not have any written records. Some of them had securely kept the money order receipts. This took time to verify the date of starting the benefit. But for people who did not have any of these records, the researcher had to rely on their best estimate. The same problem occurred in asking the number of years they had worked in the EGS scheme.

Another major difficulty was over incomplete information. Very few respondents knew exactly which benefit they were receiving. The list we possessed clearly indicated which benefit he/she was getting. But the response from interviewees was confusing. However, they knew clearly whether they were receiving a continuous benefit or not.

Determining age (age being one of the important criteria of eligibility) of the respondent was another problem. Either there was no record, or people did not know their own age correctly. In some cases people proved their age by pointing out that they remembered some of the historical events such as partition from Pakistan and communal violence in the village or drought in 1972 and what their approximate age was at that time or whether they remembered these incidents (see similar method adopted in Indonesia by Schroder-Butterfill, 2004). These accounts were far from satisfactory. But they were useful to get an approximate age.

3.5 Data processing and analysis

As is clear from the methods of data collection narrated above, five types of data sets were obtained at the end of fieldwork period: 1) qualitative field notes, 2) transcribed interviews, 3) quantitative survey data (310 households), 4) secondary documents and 5) quantitative network data. The qualitative data (item Nos 1 & 2) is about 500 typed pages. This variety of data sources facilitated 'data triangulation' to check the statements of interviewees against my own observations.

3.5.1 Data processing

The transcribed interviews, notes and newspaper reports in Marathi and English were keyed into computer, and later processed using the software Nvivo. In Nvivo open coding (a passage rather than a term was used as a unit of coding) was done first to understand the emergent concepts, and later using the themes emerged re-coding was done to facilitate to group the codes into analytical categories. Then time was spent to understand the emergent analytical categories and research questions. These nodes were grouped and regrouped repeatedly. This process of recoding continued until the written draft was produced (Richards,

2002; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Thus, qualitative data processing was closely associated with analysis.

For the quantitative survey data, using SPSS, the data entry was manually done resulting in a 212(variables) x 310 (cases) spreadsheet. Later this spreadsheet was broken down into different small data sets according to the programmes. Processing network data was easy since the number of elites were less than 20 in each village. Network data is summarised in two data sets of one village each. This data set was analysed used the software of Ucinet.

3.5.2 Data analysis

As happens in field-based research, the analysis began with the fieldwork. Especially for this study from a bottom-up evaluation perspective looking for grounded mechanisms of differential allocation fieldwork-based analysis was essential. First, through bottom-up evaluation, a detailed account of the process of policy implementation of income maintenance and public works programmes was created. Here procedural questions were answered using information from the sources of interviews and field notes of observation (e.g. what is the application making procedure?). This narrative account was tested in the second village to correct/modify those elements that were particular to one village. Later, at the writing stage, this detailed account was complemented with the question of 'how many', for which answers were found from the survey data (e.g. how many people were helped by relatives to complete the application form?).

Bottom-up evaluation was also a good opportunity to apply some of the elements of a 'grounded theory' approach. The best result of this application was the change in the hypothesis of the study. The study first hypothesised the network of the claimants with politicians to be the key element of differential allocation. However, observation of widespread use of intermediaries (writers, brokers etc) between claimants and politicians, or claimants and bureaucrats forced the researcher to modify this hypothesis. The next logical step in the analytical process was to examine the cases that did not use intermediaries but still

gained access to SP (see Robinson, 1951/2000). This led to a detailed study of the manner in which the direct relationship between bureaucrat/politician and claimant was established and maintained. Once this pattern was clear, 'plausibility probes' (Mitchell, 1983/2000) were used to test whether the interpretative paradigm of intermediary vs direct link with politician was valid across cases.

Thus, results were used to understand the emergent issues, rather than to formulate a theory to be tested later. Once these emergent issues were understood they were analysed using the framework of power-relations (explained in the previous chapter) of interaction between the various actors. This framework analysis was useful, since the apriority criterion could be independently tested with the emergent issues (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994).

At the stage of writing up, several analytical groups were created. Persons with similar response nodes (e.g. easy access to bureaucracy, direct links with a politician) was grouped as one category, and brought under analysis as to why they might have had similar experience. Comparing configurations or combinations of characteristics was the actual process that lay behind group comparisons: What particular combinations facilitated the conditions of inclusion/exclusion of claimants for welfare benefits? Here the comparative methods of agreement and difference were used for individual beneficiaries and households (Mills, 1888/1970). The 'most similar' and 'most different' cases were examined to understand the variable on which the agreement and difference depended to produce a particular outcome. On the one hand, it was difficult to prove that such combinations would produce such outcomes again, because of the fact that counterfactual configurations rarely exist (Ragin, 1987). This explanatory weakness was addressed using two methods: First, theory was used to interpret how such a configuration might facilitate such an outcome. Second, the particular cases (some times events) that fell outside these combinations of general conditions were explained through a method of 'case tracking', where detailed historical data of the case were used. Such explanations provide nuanced understanding of the case, and its particular reasons for a different outcome compared with general trend. Sometimes, extreme cases are explained in detail to contrast their experience with the general

population as well as with the opposite extreme. Some of these cases were singled out through repeated cross-tabulation in the survey data set. The identical case record for qualitative and quantitative data was helpful for such interpretations.

In the context of power-structure analysis, interaction pattern analysis rather than conversation analysis was conducted. Not only were the actors involved analysed, but the context, organisational value the actor possessed, the event in question, the issue they were discussing, the interest of each actor, support basis (socio, economic and political) for each of them were also studied.

One challenge has been that new configurations of qualitative data brought new ideas. Supporting these new ideas from existing quantitative data was difficult. Measurement of some of the key concepts such as 'eligibility' used in the study have been complicated, because of the variety of interpretations of the concept by various actors involved in policy implementation. Case study tradition relies on interpretative methods on such occasions. Further, measurement was less relevant since testing a theory was not the aim of the study. Rather, use of the theory was to explain issues/outcome, and to ascertain which interpretation gained more weight.

As explained earlier, quantitative data was to complement the qualitative data as well as to provide the evidence of 'extent' of qualitative arguments. By comparing various groups of caste, religion, landless, the groups associated with elites, important descriptive findings could be arrived at. Time lag to obtain the benefit after making the application, expenses incurred to make application, kickbacks to officials and middlemen etc were statistically summarised. Though quantitative modelling was not the primary aim, regression analysis was carried out to understand what independent variable or combination of variables increased the probability of obtaining benefit.

Network data was helpful to assess the community power structure, and 'factional' politics in each community. Survey data provided information on respondents' sources of information, political support to obtain benefits and such relational data. This information from the surveys was mixed with network data to explore whether the powerful elite

enhanced their power base by providing SP benefits. The brokerage relationship of the elite also can be explained using network analysis.

Thus, through these mixed methods of analysis, mechanisms underlying the differential allocations are explained.⁸ These mechanisms constitute the building blocks to causal explanations (Elster, 1989) of policy deficits.

3.6 Limitations

3.6.1 Related to case study approach

The case study approach used to be criticised by statisticians for the methodological problem of lack of ‘degrees of freedom’ since there are few observations. However, this argument has been convincingly refuted by Campbell (1975), King *et al* (1994), Bennett and George (2004) primarily on the grounds: a) the case study researcher conducts ‘pattern matching’ with a number of dimensions of the case with the expectations and predictions of the theory; b) the case study researcher does not aggregate variables, rather variables are treated qualitatively with relevant dimensions; c) the researcher observes various steps while searching for causal paths and at each step the magnitude and signs are assessed to provide sufficient ‘degrees of freedom’.

However, King *et al* (1994) point out that case studies suffer from a different type of problem called ‘infinite regress’ since there is ‘infinity of causal steps between any two links in the chain of causal mechanism’ (86). Therefore, it is the researcher’s ability to discipline the research focus and to examine only the necessary links, which provides a solution to this problem. However, there are no satisfactory solutions to the criticisms of establishing uninterrupted causal paths and choosing one causal mechanism while more than one causal mechanism exists (Njolstad, 1990; Achen and Snidal, 1989).

⁸ See Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998) for the distinction between three types of explanations: ‘mechanism-based’, ‘universal law-based’ and ‘description’.

3.6.2 Assessing eligibility: subjective element

One of the main criticisms of the current practice of the differential provisioning arises from the fact that politicians tend to ignore the eligibility criteria. However, one of the chief eligibility criteria is being in low income group. The data collected do not include income. In the informal economy assessing income is not an easy task. The World Bank's (2004) Living Standard Measurement Study for India included 17 items for each individual in the household to assess income (Activities (5), expenditure (4), vulnerability (3), farming and livestock (4), remittances and transfers (1)). Even after considering all these, what one obtains is a self-reported income or expenditure (which is often under estimated). Rather, I decided to use assets as proxy for income, which has been reported to have highly significant relationship in various studies in developing countries (Shill, 2005).⁹

3.6.3 Only partial network is measured quantitatively

Only a partial network is mapped using the quantitative method, and not all the players are brought into the network data. Network data includes that of the community elites. However, there is an intense network among the poor people or claimants, which acts as one of the important methods of mutual support. However, this has not been mapped. But, as a matter of fact, it is difficult to collect all the network data and a researcher has to choose what he wants to measure within the limits of time and manpower.

3.6.4 Small N problem of some of the programmes

For quantitative analysis, the data from NMBS and NFBS was not useful. There was only one beneficiary who received NMBS benefit from the 71 interviewees. There were only three beneficiaries from 26 interviewees of NFBS, who had received these benefits. The mode of obtaining the benefits could not be quantified because of this small number. However, the

⁹ See Patnaik (1971) on why land should not be used as a proxy for class. See Jeffery's (2003) arguments in opposite direction. In this study land is considered as an asset.

data which was obtained to examine their self-management mechanisms in the absence of state provisions, was useful. These two programmes had a very low level of awareness for various reasons. These reasons are analysed using qualitative data. These cases were useful to see whether patterns of access were similar across programmes.

Conclusion

The methodological contribution of this research is the way the question of multiple sectors providing social protection was studied using an actor-oriented approach. By studying actors, in whom different organisational values were invested, and events, in which multi-dimensional conflicts are concomitantly met, the conjectures of the conditions of exclusion and inclusion could be analysed. The process evaluation is done not against some normative standards, but in the interactive patterns of actor-actor, actor-event and event-event framework.

Chapter 4

Social protection policies in India and their performance

'There are many locks, but just one key is enough' – an informal broker who helps claimants, when asked why people approach him for help.

This chapter aims to provide a detailed review of various social protection policies in India, in particular those of income maintenance and income enhancement. Critical evaluation of these policies based on secondary literature and of the findings from this research is covered later. The aim is to make a case for the analysis in the following chapters. Therefore, quantitative evidence for the exclusion of eligible persons is presented in the chapter, to support the dissertation's first hypothesis. It will be argued that there is a need to look for other causes of implementation failure in a different way, and not simply in the apolitical explanation of implementation deficits.

4.1 Brief overview of re-distributive policies and programmes in India

The development plan that was conceived for independent India aimed to 'catch up with the industrialised world'. Economic growth was the major objective. India adopted a centralised planned approach to attain this objective. Under the guidance of the Planning Commission, the country undertook Five Year plans with industrialisation as their focus. It was assumed that social and economic inequality would be overcome through the 'trickle down' of such economic growth. Urban areas received disproportionate economic investment and attention in this process. Community Development Programmes (since 1952), which aimed at rural development, focussing on the creation of a rural infrastructure, ultimately tended to benefit the rural elite (Nayyar, 1998). The first three Five-Year plan documents (1951-55, 1956-60 and 1961-65) simply assumed that overall growth would mitigate poverty. However, dissatisfaction with India's development plan, simply concentrating on growth,

began to appear in the late sixties when it was found that “no reduction in inequalities in consumption, incomes or in concentration of economic power” (Vaidyanathan, 2001:1807) had taken place. One of the early responses to improve the rural situation was investment for the ‘green revolution’ (which was later realized to be helpful only to large farm holders and counter-productive for the poor who were landless agricultural labourers and small farm holders). In fact, rural poverty (measured as consumption) increased from 34 per cent in 1960-61 to 57 per cent in 1970-71¹ (Nayyar, 1991).

These realities also coincided with the changes in international academic debates and development theories. The initial emphasis on industrial and economic growth was perfectly consonant with modernization theories, which emphasized the primacy of state intervention. Doubts about whether democracy was necessary for development was raised in some academic circles and some felt democracy was a consequence of economic development (Bhagwati, 1966). Later it was realized that growth alone would not bring equality. Thus, in the 1970s the Indian government began to develop re-distribution policies. For the first time, redistribution received important attention in the fifth Five-Year plan (1972-76) which delineated a ‘basic needs’ programme. Since then a number of targeted poverty alleviation programmes such as employment provision, elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age, positive discrimination for historically neglected groups (tribal groups, lower castes), minimum public health facilities integrated with family planning and nutrition for children, protected water supply, amenities for landless labour and slum improvement in larger towns, and rural roads and rural electrification began. The number of schemes and financial outlay increased substantially. By the 1990s those measures accounted for 38 per cent of public sector, combined for state and central governments, outlay (Harris-White, 1999c). This expenditure is much lower than other developing countries. The expenditure on

¹ I do not intend to enter into a discussion of what constitutes ‘poverty’ at this point. Often, measurements change according to the objective of the study. In this section the purpose is to show how slow has been India’s poverty reduction and therefore, the inability to improve people’s living conditions. Though data collected based on ‘capability’ (in the sense of Sen) as the measure would have been ideal for this, widely accepted and commonly used data on poverty are based on income and calculating poverty ratios using calorie intake (consumption).

social sectors has been less than two per cent of GDP² over a long time and since 1991 (the year when India adopted structural adjustment and liberalisation), a larger share of this expenditure has been borne by the state governments, which were already facing a fiscal crisis (Mooij and Dev, 2002; Karunakaran, 2004; RUEP, 2005).³

In general, there are five types of poverty alleviation programme in India. Most of these programmes are designed by the Centre government and financed jointly by State and Centre. A variety of departments both in central and state governments have the responsibility for these programmes. The agency carrying out the programme could be at district or block or village level. These programmes are:

- 1) *Income enhancement programme* includes schemes such as self-employment programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme, Development of Women and Children, and a variety of employment generation programmes (e.g. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana).
- 2) *Food and nutritional security programme* includes those of public distribution system (PDS) and Integrated Child Development Scheme.
- 3) *Basic Minimum Services programme* includes those of education, housing, sanitation and health.
- 4) *Income maintenance programme* includes schemes such as the disability grant, old age pension, maternity grants and job seekers' allowance by registering at employment exchanges.
- 5) *Natural resource management and livelihood programme* includes those programmes such as watershed management.

² Compare this lower expenditure pattern with that of six per cent of expenditure in Malaysia, 12 per cent in Botswana or 15-25 per cent in OECD countries.

³ There is a new fiscal crisis of the state governments of India. It is due to the policy of central government since 2005 that central government would not extend loans to state governments to meet their planned budget and state governments are expected to raise the money from private markets . . . Often, the state is unsuccessful in market borrowing and it turns to agencies like the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and their policies on social sectors are adopted. The most recent episode in this crisis has been as follows: When the government of Maharashtra approached the World Bank for an assistance of Rs.17 billion to complete 257 irrigation projects in the state, the World Bank insisted that the state create a regulatory authority for water, and create a tariff for water. The State government, eager to gain the loan, rushed a bill through to this effect without even reading the Bill in the Assembly and with a voice vote (indicating that even opposition parties agreed to the proposals) along with 15 other Bills (RUEP, 2005; Sainath, 2005).

As is evident, numerous programmes exist, and effective administration of these programmes would require tremendous coordination between various ministers, departments, bureaucratic officials and above all policy congruence. In fact, it is this 'projectisation' which has been criticised as one of the key problems of development administration (Makandiwire, 2004). These projects/programmes have often arisen out of 'election gimmick' (political expediency) rather than a general policy concern. A detailed analysis of each of these programmes would be voluminous, and outside the scope of this study. Rather, I limit myself to examining the income enhancement (promotive) and income maintenance programmes (protective) which are the focus of this study. Before doing so, it is important to understand the nature of the decentralised administration of these redistributive programmes in India.

4.2 Decentralised administration and social protection

The role of the local state governments in delivering welfare has been noted for its theoretical and practical purposes internationally (Butcher, 2002). But, India has its own trajectory for the decentralization of welfare administration. Often, scholars mistakenly attribute all the bureaucratic machinery to the British legacy of colonial period. As a matter of fact, a geographically vast country like India requires decentralised governance for obvious reasons. Das (2001), reviewing the pre-British administrative arrangements, has shown how various kings reached the interior villages through a decentralised administrative system.

Panchayats/villages are considered to be politico-cultural-economic-administrative institutions in India existing for about 4000 years (Mehla, 1998; Mathur, 1999).⁴ However, during colonial rule these institutions lost their importance since they had no administrative or political responsibilities. Before independence, colonial requirements in India, such as tax collection and maintenance of law and order, established the institution of district collectors

⁴ "Panchayat' literally means assembly (*yat*) of five (*panch*) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the village community" (Mehla, 1998). Traditionally, these assemblies settled the disputes between individuals and villages. (However, such rural organizations are not unique to India. Each rural community all over the world has some local institutional mechanism to govern itself.) The addition of 'raj' with panchayat and creation of 'panchayat raj' is relatively new with its origins during the British administration. Raj literally means governance or government. Thus by coining the word panchayat raj, (in parallel with British raj) it is attempted to institute government at village level in a similar manner to a government at the Centre (Mathur, 1999).

who were directly linked to the centre. For the rural areas District Boards and Local Funds Committees were formed with various tasks in the late 19th century. They undertook various welfare tasks such as constructing and maintaining the roads, bridges and ferries for which money was collected from rich people in local areas (Jha and Mathur, 1999). However, all these attempts at decentralisation were decided by administrative necessity. Local government and decentralised institutions were not seen as instruments deserving political and financial devolution of power prior to independence.

During the freedom struggle and immediately after independence the Congress party and government had strong roots in rural areas since the Nehruvian political model was to “politicize the rural periphery in a nation-building effort” (Varshney, 1995: 191), by giving importance to rural politicians who could garner support for the party through development schemes. When the Constitution of India was written for an independent India, a directive principle was included, under the influence of Gandhian ideology of the ‘ideal village’, that panchayats be re-established and promoted. On the other hand, Ambedkar (1948), the architect of the constitution and himself from a lower caste, looked to more centralised government for the reason that in the decentralised village governments lower castes would lack genuine power sharing mechanisms.

However, the centralised planning and implementation of the Community Development Programmes (CDP) since October 1952 was a failure. The Balwanti Rai Mehta Committee, appointed in 1956 to study the problems of implementation of the CDP, found that due to lack of local knowledge, procedures, physical resources, local personnel and involvement of beneficiaries, the aims were not achieved and wasteful expenditure was incurred. The report recommended the need to enable people to exercise their responsibility of vigilance over local institutions (Mathew, 2000). Thus, panchayats became the official organs of local development from 1959.

There was confusion as to what the role of the panchayat was to be. The block or *tehsil*⁵ - an intermediary institution between *panchayats* (comprising various panchayats) and the district (Zilla Parishad (ZP)), was the central point for the implementation of development projects. The Panchayat was seen purely as an entity of administration to carry out development activities or to implement orders from the Block. This reduced genuine participation from panchayats and therefore, true decentralisation. Though various committees (appointed by central and state governments to study the problems of local administration) argued for political power and financial autonomy for the panchayats, it was only in 1992 that the Indian Parliament officially granted constitutional status to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) by inserting articles 243, 243-A and 243-B through 73rd Constitutional amendment. All the states adopted this new constitutional amendment with variations appropriate to regional specificities.⁶ At the local level, elections became mandatory and some reservations of seats for the weaker sections of scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), and women were also built in. PRIs were also given power to implement poverty alleviation programmes. (Various layers of administration along with their jurisdictions in India, the political bodies and court systems are attached in Appendix VI)

Whether decentralisation has a positive impact on development and poverty reduction is still an unsettled question (see for example Crook and Manor, 1998). However, in the context of social protection, Conning and Kevane (2001) have pointed out that it is technically delegation of authority to local level administration rather than decentralisation, since at local level the authority administering cash transfers or public works programmes has no power to change the eligibility rules (Later, we will see that, this distinction could be

⁵ The primary role of a *tehsil* office is to collect revenue. The *tehsildar*, the head of the *tehsil* is also responsible for the law and order situation in his jurisdiction. On the other hand the Block, which has co-terminus jurisdiction with tehsil carries out most of the developmental activities (water, housing, education, health care). However, in Maharashtra, social protection benefits (both IM and public works programme of EGS) are carried out through the *tehsil* office. Block office administration is carried out through consultation of politically elected representatives (*panchayati raj*) and block officials. Therefore, the political bargaining on the developmental activities is evident. On the other hand, there is no politically elected body in the *tehsil* office. This creates a covert politics around social protection issues.

⁶ It is also important to note that the Congress party which was gaining increased power at the centre had pressure on it to decentralize its powers. Thus, the decentralization process in the country also had the nuances of the local elite incorporated into the democratic framework.

questioned, since the local elites acting jointly with bureaucrats may interpret the eligibility criteria and set informal rules).

As we have noted in chapter one, a key question for social protection administration is ‘targeting’; and decentralised institutions are increasingly being used for this purpose by the governments. There is voluminous literature on targeting itself. A typology of these targeting principles (means-testing, assessment into categories, self-selection) is presented in Appendix 13. Application of any targeting principle brings enormous problems for administration. The institutionalist economists often suggest that to deal with problem of information asymmetry and heterogeneity of needs, decentralisation is the chief administrative option (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000). Often, settling the seemingly technical issue of deciding ‘who is less active’ (due to old age, disability or people who may lack social networks to gain work e.g. widows and the destitute) is difficult for the administration since the information on the actual circumstances (e.g. lack of documentation for the date of birth, to determine whether a person has children or a disability) and income (e.g. a pervasive informal economy) of the person is not easily available.

However, experience of targeting across the world has shown that decentralised targeting is not a magic way of reaching the poorest households. The gains from decentralised targeting have been modest (Ahmed et al, 2005 for general discussion; Alderman, 1998: Albania on social assistance programme; Galasso and Ravallion, 2000: Bangladesh on food for education programme; Coady, 2001: Mexico on social assistance programme). These experiences of limited achievement through decentralised targeting have been argued as the outcome of a system of mutual control in close-knit communities, which act as the basis of not revealing information to an external authority (e.g. state administration) that may be essential for targeting (Abraham and Platteau, 2000). It has been further argued that since local government is more embedded with the social institutions, it is difficult to escape from entrenched bias, such as gender, through decentralisation alone (Beall, 2005). Taking cues from some of these studies and his own study on ‘elite capture’ in India, Bardhan (2002) has argued that the structure of incentives in the context of developing countries is different and

caution is therefore required in advocating local level targeting. Thus, the outcome of the policies could be very different to what the government intends to achieve. In the rest of this chapter, outcome measures of the income maintenance and income enhancement programmes are explained. Poor outcomes (e.g. substantial exclusion of eligible claimants) could be due to the problems of targeting which we just saw above. The reasons will be examined in the latter chapters.

4.3 Promotive programmes

Promotive programmes are designed to raise households out of poverty, and a variety of these programmes are designed by central and state governments in rural India. I am focusing on one of these promotive programmes, the Public Works Programmes (PWP), which constitutes one of the most important promotive methods for the vulnerable poor population of rural India.

4.3.1 Employment generation: one of the promotive programmes⁷

Nurske's (1957) theoretical proposal, that rural labour, which is found in surplus in developing countries, could be put to effective use for national development, is at the heart of the rationale for PWPs. However, historically, it is the relief component, aimed at helping populations affected by natural disasters (eg. drought) that has been the chief motivating factor behind the PWP (Hirway and Terhal, 1994). Thus, the historical context and specific labour market conditions of a particular country are very important in understanding which PWP's may be adopted.

⁷ Employment generation for skilled workers had a different approach other than through public works programmes. Persons who have passed their matriculation could register their names with Employment Exchanges, and all over India in the beginning of 2004 there were 41.4 million skilled job seekers (30.6 million men and 10.7 million women) registered with 936 employment exchanges. Some of the state governments pay a small monthly allowance (e.g. Rs. 250 in the state of Maharashtra) for such job seekers. In Maharashtra in 2002-03 alone, the number of people registered as unemployed was 0.66 million, and only 11,000 job seekers were given employment through employment exchanges. This thesis is not looking into this aspect of employment generation. The focus of the study is to examine employment generation for the unskilled rural labourers through public works programmes.

In India, the land reform policy was not whole heartedly implemented and thus, except in the states of Kerala and West Bengal, there was not much redistribution through this policy change. Thus, redistribution of assets in the shape of land did not take place (Dev, 1998). Since the late 1960s Indian agriculture has witnessed important changes in the form of the 'green revolution' whereby improved technology influenced agricultural practices. This had a tremendous effect on the landless and small landholders who depended on large landlords in a patronage relationship (Breman, 1993). In addition to these important reasons, i.e., the state's failure to redistribute assets and changes in the traditional pattern of agriculture, theories about the rural labour market in India suggest further complexities.

Most theorists on Indian rural labour (Bardhan and Rudra, 1981; 1986, Binswanger and Rosenweig, 1984; Dreze and Mukherjee, 1987; Bhaduri, 1973; Walker and Ryan, 1990; Datt, 1996) have found it difficult to fit the complexity of Indian rural labour markets into the oft-used theoretical frameworks of labour markets, such as subsistence theories, efficiency wages, interlinked markets and equilibrium with perfect competition (Binswanger et al, 1993; Dreze and Mukherjee, 1989 give an overview of some of these difficulties). The reasons suggested for these difficulties have been summarised by Radhakrishna and Sharma (1998: 3) as follows: "In view of the close linkage between land, labour and credit markets, labour market conditions of supply and demand alone cannot explain the process of determination of wages and income of rural labour. The concept of livelihood or survival strategies adopted by rural labour has been found to be crucial in understanding the outcomes of labour arrangements". These interlinked processes operate through non-market forces and the informal nature of employment contracts (Harriss-White, 2003; Kannan, 2004). It is in this wider context of power dynamics that state intervention through enactment of laws, such as the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1975, has failed to make an impact. PWP, as a strategy for meeting local social protection needs, is another form of state intervention, other than the legal tools and market mechanism.

The first nation-wide PWP in India was the Rural Works Programme in 1960. Since then a large number of PWPs, funded both by state and central governments, have been

implemented in rural India (see Hirway and Terhal, 1994 for a review of different programmes). All these programmes have had the twin aims of poverty alleviation and economic development. But, except for the programme set up by the government of Maharashtra, no PWP included a guarantee element of income or employment as a serious component. Thus, the EGS gained an international reputation and was seen as a model PWP.

4.3.2 Employment Guarantee Scheme

The origin of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) goes back to the Maharashtra government's response to a massive drought that occurred in 1970-1973 in the state⁸. As a result, the objective of the programme was to guarantee the right to employment for any adult who demanded employment and was willing to do unskilled manual labour. The government continued the programme even after the drought was over, and received statutory backing by passing a bill in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in 1978 despite opposition from rich landlords (Dev, 1996a; Gaiha, 1996). Today the programme has become one of the most successful anti-poverty programmes in the country, and therefore a widely researched programme. A variant of this programme entitled the Employment Assurance Scheme, has been implemented at national level since 1993, and the Government of India passed a Bill to start a nationwide programme in December, 2005.

Though the programme was initially designed as a relief measure in 1972 (Osmani, 1991), when it was given statutory approval in 1978 the programme was modified to be a promotive social security programme. The method of targeting is self-selection by keeping the wage paid for EGS lower than that for agricultural labour (Ravallion et al, 1991; Dev, 1996b). The programme also avoids competition with agricultural demands for labour by carrying out most of the projects in low demand agricultural periods. This has been criticized as a concession to the rich landlord's lobby, which dominates the rural labour market (Gaiha,

⁸ However, the state of Maharashtra had launched a public employment scheme in 1965 on a pilot through the initiative of V.S. Page, a Gandhian activist, for the purpose of rural development.

1996). Another feature of the programme is the 'piece-work' system, which links remuneration with the quality and quantity of work.

Evaluation and research⁹ into the EGS have commended the programme for a number of reasons: a) The constitutional recommendation (Article 41) of a 'right for work for all' was for the first time operationalised in India through the EGS. If the government fails to provide work to a person who demands work within seven days of the demand being made, the government is legally obliged to pay Rs.10¹⁰ per day to the litigant;

b) EGS projects are selected on the basis of how intensively they use unskilled labour. The law, when EGS started, stated that 90 per cent of cost of the project should go on the wages of unskilled labour and 10 per cent for skilled labour/material. However, in later years this criterion was found to be difficult to meet, and it was relaxed to a 60:40 ratio of unskilled to skilled labor/material¹¹. Thus, a balance between the productivity of the assets created through EGS, and the number of persons provided with employment is necessary. The 'productivity' criterion is loosely defined as the creation of socially productive assets. The first criterion of the ratio of labour to material is difficult to meet in many possible projects, and the second criterion of productivity is seldom fulfilled (Gaiha, 1996: 1203);

c) A number of additional benefits were included for workers on EGS, such as i) drinking water facilities, ii) shelter during work breaks, iii) First Aid facilities, iv) Creches, shelter and the service of a midwife to look after the children of the labourers, v) maternity benefits for women labourers, vi) Ex-gratia payment to labourers in case of injury or death while working on EGS projects, vii) money for the hire of working tools and viii) availability of work within eight kilometers of the worker's house;

⁹ Though not exhaustive, the following are some of the important studies on EGS on which this discussion is based: GoI (1980), Herring and Edwards (1983), Acharya (1990), Datar (1990), Sathe (1991), Ravallion *et al*, (1993), Ravallion and Datt (1995), Deolalikar and Gaiha (1993), Gaiha (1996), Gaiha *et al*, (1998), Dev (1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998), Terhal and Hirway (1998), Datt (1998). Desarda (2001), Krishnaraj, *et al* (2004).

¹⁰ Until recently this amount was one rupee. However, such compensation is never paid. The State authorities claim that the State is able to provide work to whoever demands, and the legal provision is only a check on the State to ensure guarantee.

¹¹ At the time of the fieldwork some projects (a minor irrigation tank, percolation tanks, village tanks, forest ponds and roads) could be run even with 51:49 ratio of unskilled and skilled labour.

d) 50% of the financing of EGS comes through levying a tax on urban workers. Another 50% is contributed by the state government. This puts the responsibility for rural development on the comparatively well-off population in urban areas;

e) Women find EGS to be a better avenue of employment since higher payment is ensured than for private agricultural work where the payment is usually gender biased;

f) The method of self-selection reduces the administrative burden of 'targeting' the programme. This self-selection criterion is built into the programme a) by keeping the wage rates of the EGS a little lower than the normal agricultural wage rates in the private farms and b) normally, labour like digging and breaking rocks are not likely to attract the non-poor.

Table 4.1 gives some quantitative outcomes of the EGS scheme. On an average, 100 million person days of employment are generated in a year in Maharashtra with a rural work force of 20 million persons (Gaiha, 1996). In 2003-04 alone 63,782 projects were carried out creating over 180 million person days of work and costing over Rs.10 billion. Since the programme started in 1973-74 to 2004 a total of 500 thousand projects have been carried out; 62 per cent of these are soil conservation and land projects. Irrigation accounts for 10 per cent of projects (SDPM, 2005).

The macro level explanation for the success of EGS has been summarised by Osmani (1991: 337) as follows: "The secret of Maharashtra thus lies in forming a triangle between a dominant rural elite, a materially prosperous urban sector which for some reason was willing to foot the bill, and a poor but abundantly available rural labour-force." However, research has pointed out various implementation 'lapses' in the programme: a) irregularity and delay in starting the work and payments; b) complicated measurement of completed work resulting in discrimination against the weak and older persons; c) corruption, especially through inflated muster rolls; and d) that the assets created are of often poor quality. Though these drawbacks are often pointed out, the overall conclusion of researchers is that EGS has been a successful programme due to its positive outcomes.¹²

¹² The programme itself is designed around a rigorous weekly and monthly reporting of the outcome figures (EGS Act, 12-g). These outcome figures are transmitted from *tehsil* to district and then to the

Table 4.1 Quantitative dimensions of the EGS: 1972/73 to 2001/02

Year	Total Expenditure (Rs.Crore)	Wage expenditure as % of total expenditure	Employment Generation (person days in crore)	Nominal cost per day per person (Rs.)	Nominal wage per day per person (Rs.)	Real cost per day	Real wage day (Rs.)
1973	1.9	N.A.	0.5	4.2	N.A.	3.6	N.A.
1974	2.0	N.A.	0.5	3.7	N.A.	2.7	N.A.
1975	13.7	N.A.	4.8	2.9	N.A.	1.7	N.A.
1976	34.6	91.0	11.0	3.2	N.A.	2.0	N.A.
1977	51.1	75.0	13.7	3.7	2.8	2.2	1.8
1978	51.5	74.0	11.7	4.4	3.3	2.5	2.0
1979	74.2	79.6	16.4	4.5	3.6	2.5	2.2
1980	109.2	81.9	20.5	5.3	4.4	2.6	2.3
1981	122.1	75.9	17.2	7.1	5.4	3.0	2.6
1982	126.2	77.7	15.6	9.1	6.3	3.2	2.6
1983	130.9	76.2	12.8	10.2	7.8	3.9	3.3
1984	185.0	75.3	16.5	11.2	8.4	3.9	3.2
1985	232.0	63.7	17.8	13.0	8.3	4.3	3.1
1986	272.2	66.9	19.0	14.4	9.6	4.2	3.4
1987	243.4	63.5	18.8	13.0	8.2	3.6	2.7
1988	288.3	53.2	13.3	19.1	9.1	4.9	2.8
1989	254.2	50.0	8.1	31.3	15.0	7.5	4.1
1990	239.3	53.3	7.8	30.7	15.5	6.9	4.0
1991	238.9	57.4	9.0	26.2	15.0	5.3	3.8
1992	308.5	65.8	11.9	25.8	16.9	4.5	3.3
1993	421.0	60.0	14.8	30.6	18.5	4.9	3.0
1994	310.0	52.7	9.7	35.3	18.5	N.A.	-
1995	453.2	69.9	9.4	40.7	28.5	N.A.	-
1996	313.8	63.0	9.7	45.7	28.8	N.A.	-
1997	413.2	70.0	9.4	40.7	28.5	N.A.	-
1998	450.0	73.0	9.0	39.2	28.6	-	-
1999	418.3	71.0	9.2	49.7	35.3	-	-
2000	360.0	75.0	9.5	52.3	39.0	-	-
2001	489.0	76.0	11.1	52.5	39.5	-	-
2002	495.2	80.0	16.1	56.6	45.3	-	-

Source: GoM, 2003a

Earlier assessments of the programme (Dandekar and Sathe, 1980) and a panel survey over a period for 1979-83 (Acharya, 1990) revealed that targeting was above expectation - nearly 90 per cent who benefited were poor people. These studies also reported higher

Planning Department in Mumbai on a weekly and monthly basis. Weekly reports include the number of projects in progress, labour potential, labour attendance at the end of the week etc. Monthly reports include categories for the number of works sanctioned, completed and in progress, employment potential of these works, actual man-days generated at the end of each month, total wage component of expenditure incurred during the month. These reports create a rich dataset at the Planning Department. They are often published and made available to researchers, and constitute the key raw data for a number of research studies on EGS.

earnings by EGS workers compared with non-EGS workers (Dandekar, 1983; Acharya and Panwalkar, 1988). Small landholders did not have to sell off their land for livelihood since local employment was available (Gupta, 1984). However, research studies conducted after the wage increase (to bring the EGS wage rate in line with minimum wage rates) in 1988 showed the programme was more likely to include the non-poor than the poor (see Ravallion *et al.*, 1993; Gaiha, 1996). Gaiha (1996) estimated that in 1989 the proportion of the poor among EGS participants was just 27 per cent, with the powerful elites in the rural areas capturing the larger share. Elaborate procedures for filling out forms, meeting different bureaucratic officers, delay in the implementation of projects and disbursement of funds made the programme ineffective for people who were in acute poverty. The State government's own assessment has shown that EGS programme has not been successful in stopping seasonal migration (SPDM, 2005). Prabhu, (2001a) has shown that the EGS has not helped the poor to move out of poverty, mainly because of the programme's inability to change the structural conditions creating the need for such a programme itself. There is a consensus today among researchers on the need for restructuring this three-decade old scheme (Krishnaraj *et al.*, 2004; Desarda, 2001). However, there is no consensus on what has caused the failure in targeting. A detailed understanding of the administration of the scheme is essential to understand this targeting failure.

Overall responsibility for the programme is carried by the planning department of the state government at the state level and by the district collector at district level. However, the management of the programme is carried out by a committee at state, district and block level which co-ordinates various departments such as revenue and technical departments. The District collector¹³ is primarily responsible for preparing sufficient projects to meet 150 per cent of the employment demand for the next EGS season (October 1 to September 30). The collector is helped in this process by officials at the local level from two directions: i) the

¹³ The district collector has also power to approve EGS works costing up to Rs.5,000,000.00. However, since the collector has overall duty for the district, there is a junior collector with the title of 'EGS collector'. It is the EGS collector who practically handles all matters on MEGS.

Tehsildar and EGS officer are responsible to guarantee work to the people at tehsil level¹⁴; ii) The Junior Engineer (JE) of the respective public works department (eg. roads, irrigation etc) is responsible for the quality of the work and its technical aspects. For practical purposes there will be a large number of projects technically prepared and kept ready at the beginning of EGS year, and as soon as demand for work arises administrative approval can be given by the district collector (Krishnaraj et al, 2004). However, in real day-to-day practice, the influence of local politicians in getting a particular project sanctioned has invariably been reported by the various evaluations of the programme (Acharya, 1990; Gaiha, 1996). We will carry out a detailed practice-based process evaluation of the EGS implementation in the next chapter.

4.3.3 Performance of EGS in Bajgaon and Saralgaon

What these macro statistics do not reveal is the politics behind the selection of the projects and the implementation of the programme. On the one hand some villages are excluded by not granting EGS projects to be undertaken there. This is possible since the selection of projects has generally been an issue for political bargaining (Bagchee, 2005). Evidence for such exclusion of areas exists in a number of micro-level studies (e.g. NCAER, 2002: 305). On the other hand even when a work has been granted to a village, it is likely that some needy people may be excluded for political reasons. These political explanations for exclusion and inclusion will be examined in later chapters in detail. The survey conducted in the field revealed quantitative evidence of this practice.

In the case study villages it was indeed very difficult to find persons who had worked on EGS's. At the time of the fieldwork, despite four EGS projects taking place within a radius of five kilometres, there were 32 % (n=26) of the survey respondents working in these projects. 29% (n=24) of respondents said they had never worked on EGS though they considered themselves deserving such welfare provision. Of the 57 persons who reported they

¹⁴ Note that MEGS is implemented through the *tehsil* (the revenue collection wing of the administration) rather than the Block (co-ordinating agency of development activities). There are a number of developmental programmes, including employment generating programmes, which are implemented through the Block.

had worked on EGS at least once, 28% (n=16) reported they have been denied work despite seeking work. To understand who had been excluded and included, we need to further disaggregate these groups. In general, the neediest persons had been excluded from the work, the reasons for which will be examined in detail in later chapters.

4.4 Income maintenance programmes

As observed earlier, programmes of poverty alleviation were not designed within an overall policy framework. Rather, political expediency has been the chief reason. The beginning of IM programmes in India is a good example for this (A detailed analysis of the political causes of the origin of state programme of Maharashtra is undertaken later). Indira Gandhi's *Garibi hatao* (removal of poverty) campaign can be viewed as the watershed of IM programmes in various states. The *Garibi hatao* programme was a strategy by Indira Gandhi to encourage popular support when internal party criticism was at its height (Kohli, 1990). The first IM programme in India was introduced in the state of Uttar Pradesh in 1957 as an Old Age Pension. This steadily expanded to various states through the 1960s and 70s (see the year of starting each programme in different states in Dev, 1998). It was only in 1995 that the Central government began a comprehensive IM programme. It is important to recognise the fact that state governments started IM programmes earlier. Today, IM benefits come from a combination of state and central resources. Central government's resources are channelled through a programme called the National Social Assistance Programme (details of which are given below), and the state government's resources are channelled through variety of programmes (the programmes of the state of Maharashtra are explained below). Initially, though central government was involved in the implementation of the IM programmes, from 2002-03 central government was involved only in fund reimbursement to state governments. In 2002-03 Government of India provided Rs. six billion in total to state governments. Central government also oversees the way that states provide mandatory minimum provisions in their budget.

4.4.1 National Social Assistance Programme

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) was started in 1995 by central government. It is said to have mainly drawn inspiration from the social security programmes in Tamil Nadu. Guhan's (1993) study, based on the experience of Tamil Nadu providing IM, argued that an IM programme in India could be implemented with less than one per cent of national GDP. Accordingly, a strictly means-tested benefit system through cash transfer was introduced for three different types of life situations:¹⁵

1) The first programme aimed to provide support for an ageing population. With 7.5 per cent persons aged above 60 (according to the census of 2001), India has been declared an ageing nation. In absolute figures this is over 77 million elderly persons. What is significant about this ageing story is that the achievement of longevity has been very rapid in India. When India gained independence in 1947, the average life expectancy was 32 years (Prakash, 1999), and today it is 64.3. Disaggregated statistics of ageing shows that sex ratio of (men/women) for the population above the age of 60 this is 91/100.¹⁶ Besides, 78 per cent of the elderly persons are living in rural areas, and are in poor conditions. However, the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) is meant for older persons (above the age of 65 for both men and women) in households below the poverty line, who are destitute in the sense of having no regular means of subsistence from their own sources of income or through financial support from family members or other sources. It provides Rs.75/- per month per beneficiary.

2) The lack of insurance in the event of the death of an earning member, and lack of security in the rural employment situations (and no compensation paid by the employer in the event of injury or death) is the guiding concern of the second programme. Through the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS), a household below the poverty line could receive a one-time benefit on the death of the primary breadwinner. The 'primary breadwinner' has been defined as the member of the family whose earnings contribute substantially to the total

¹⁵ The conspicuous absence of a national programme for the disability benefit is intriguing from a welfare state perspective. 2001 census of India estimates that all over India the disabled population is 21,906,769. Out of which 42.5 per cent are women.

¹⁶ Note that for general population the sex ratio of (men/women) is 106/100.

household income. The benefit is Rs.10,000/- in case of death of the primary breadwinner to the bereaved household.

3) While maternity benefits and leave for the formal sector are available in India, there are no such provisions for rural labourers. This lack of adequate maternal care has implications for infant and maternal mortality rate. Though India has significantly improved on these indicators since 1950, the figures are still very high compared to other Asian countries. India has a total fertility rate of 2.78 children born per woman (2005 est.). Currently, the maternal mortality ratio, defined as the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, is as high as 504. Infant mortality rate in India is 56.29 deaths per 1,000 live births (2005).

The National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) is meant for pregnant women in households living below the poverty line for the first two live births. The benefit is Rs.500/- per pregnancy. Since 2001-02 this scheme has been transferred to the Department of Family welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for better co-ordination of nutrition and national population control.

A numerical ceiling for each state is calculated by central government, taking account of the population, poverty ratio and proportion of the eligible group in terms of age or birth rate or mortality rate depending on the programme. This numerical ceiling is given to district headquarters by the state and the panchayaths identify the required number of beneficiaries for the benefits. For the state of Maharashtra the numerical ceiling for NOAPS for the year 2002/3 was 669,800. For NFBS the numerical ceiling was 48,000 and for NMBS the ceiling was 509,200 (Planning Commission, 2002). It is expected that 50 per cent of eligible people below the poverty line will be covered with this numerical ceiling. Therefore, it becomes clearly evident that the administration has to in some way choose only some of many eligible members.

Table 4.2 gives the performance of the programme since its inception. Seeta Prabhu's study (2001b) has shown that the take up is often less. The take up rate for NOAPS was 81.6 in 1996-97. However, for NFBS and NMBS the take up rate was 28.9 and 27.6 respectively.

Table 4.2: Financial and physical performance of NSAP 1995-2001

Year	NOAPS		NFBS		NMBS	
	Expenditure (Rs. Crore)	No. of beneficiaries	Expenditure (Rs. Crore)	No. of beneficiaries	Expenditure (Rs. Crore)	No. of beneficiaries
1995-96	109.88	2937677	43.44	284260	24.50	657891
1996-97	319.55	4760327	92.00	266090	52.63	1282025
1997-98	365.19	5087830	130.56	218486	54.70	1557292
1998-99	467.15	5080821	188.02	266411	70.43	1562072
1999-00	456.25	5017542	194.98	215815	73.40	1299719
2000-01	476.66	5148226	200.93	202999	83.90	1456079

Source: Planning Commission, 2002

These central government's schemes are complemented by the schemes of state governments.

4.4.2 Maharashtra government's income maintenance programmes

The scheme known as *Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana* (SGNY henceforth) was introduced in September 1980 during the Congress rule in Maharashtra. It provided Rs.60 per month to the old and infirm (disabled and widows with children below the age of 16), persons above the age of 60 (women) and 65 (men) from the poorer sections of society. Abdur Ramhan Antulay, who was the then Chief Minister¹⁷ of Maharashtra believed the 'people's representatives are God's representatives on earth and they have a responsibility to look after the handicapped, widows, old and ailing'¹⁸. However, the programme was a copy of similar programmes that were being initiated in other states of India. The Congress had lost a number

¹⁷ Antulay, a Muslim leader educated in London as a lawyer, was handpicked by Indira Gandhi (in June, 1980) to perpetuate her policy of stronger central power through state elite accommodation (Frankel and Rao, 1990), after Sharad Pawar (who dissented from the central powers being imposed on the state) moved away from the side of Indira Gandhi, rather than with the support of local Marathas (See Ashraf, 2003). In the later power struggle Antulay lost his chief ministership (in January 1982) to Y. B. Chavan who was a Maratha. As a result of Antulay being handpicked by Indira Gandhi, he was instrumental in promoting the programmes of the wider politics of *Garibi hatao* (removal of poverty) by Indira Gandhi. These issues behind the policy making of social protection are not covered in this dissertation, as the politics around implementation is the focus here. Pellissery (2005d) discusses them.

¹⁸ Refer Parliament Debates at

<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/lsdeb/ls11/ses5sp/0130089703.htm>
(accessed on 9th December, 2004)

of parliamentary seats (in the election of 1980) to the opposition headed by Sharad Pawar (following a nation-wide split in the Congress party), a Maratha who was chief minister before Antulay and who had substantial local support. However, in the state election in the same year, the Congress Party was able to retain its power. The new programme was widely believed to be aiming at wooing the masses back to the party fold.

Since its inception, the programme has been modified 31 times through official policy changes. The important policy changes have been, i) an increase of amount of benefit to Rs.100 in 1988, ii) making special provision of benefits for landless females in old age in 1991 under a new scheme called *Indira Gandhi Niradhar and Bhoomiheen Shethmazoor Mahila Yojana*, (IGBMY henceforth) iii) incorporation of Central government funded programmes with state programmes in 1996, and iv) an increase in amount in 2000 to Rs.250. A court case against the state on the programme was brought up in 2001. A large number of beneficiaries, who used to receive benefits since the inception of the programme in 1980, were denied benefit as a result of re-assessment to determine who were 'really eligible'. As a result of the court case the government widened the eligibility criteria in 2004 by introducing another new scheme called *Sravanbal Yojana*. It is with these historical milestones the programme has evolved. Though these policy changes are important in their own right, this study's focus is to see how far these policies are actually interpreted, implemented and the benefits reach the local people.

As a matter of fact, both state government programmes and central government programmes are administered by the same machinery at district level. The state government mixes the resources and estimates how much it could provide to a claimant. Thus, a person successful with any of the above three schemes (SGNY, IGBMY and *Sravan Bal*) receives a monthly benefit of Rs. 250.¹⁹ However, government of Maharashtra did not have any programmes for one-off payments like that of Central government's NFBS and NMBS. For

¹⁹ The benefit of Rs.250/- is a combination of state government's and central government's contribution. The State government contributes Rs.175/- each for a beneficiary through either of the two different programmes of SGNY or IGBMY. Central government contributes Rs.75/- per beneficiary through NOAP scheme. These are meager benefits since the minimum amount required to meet the calorie requirements in rural areas of India is Rs.328 per person per month.

these benefits the state administration merely disbursed them according to the criteria demanded by the Centre.

In 2003-04 the government spent Rs. 139.85 crore on SGNYS and 466,166 persons benefited. During the same period Rs. 96.85 crore were disbursed for IGBMY, and 322,833 women benefited from this.²⁰

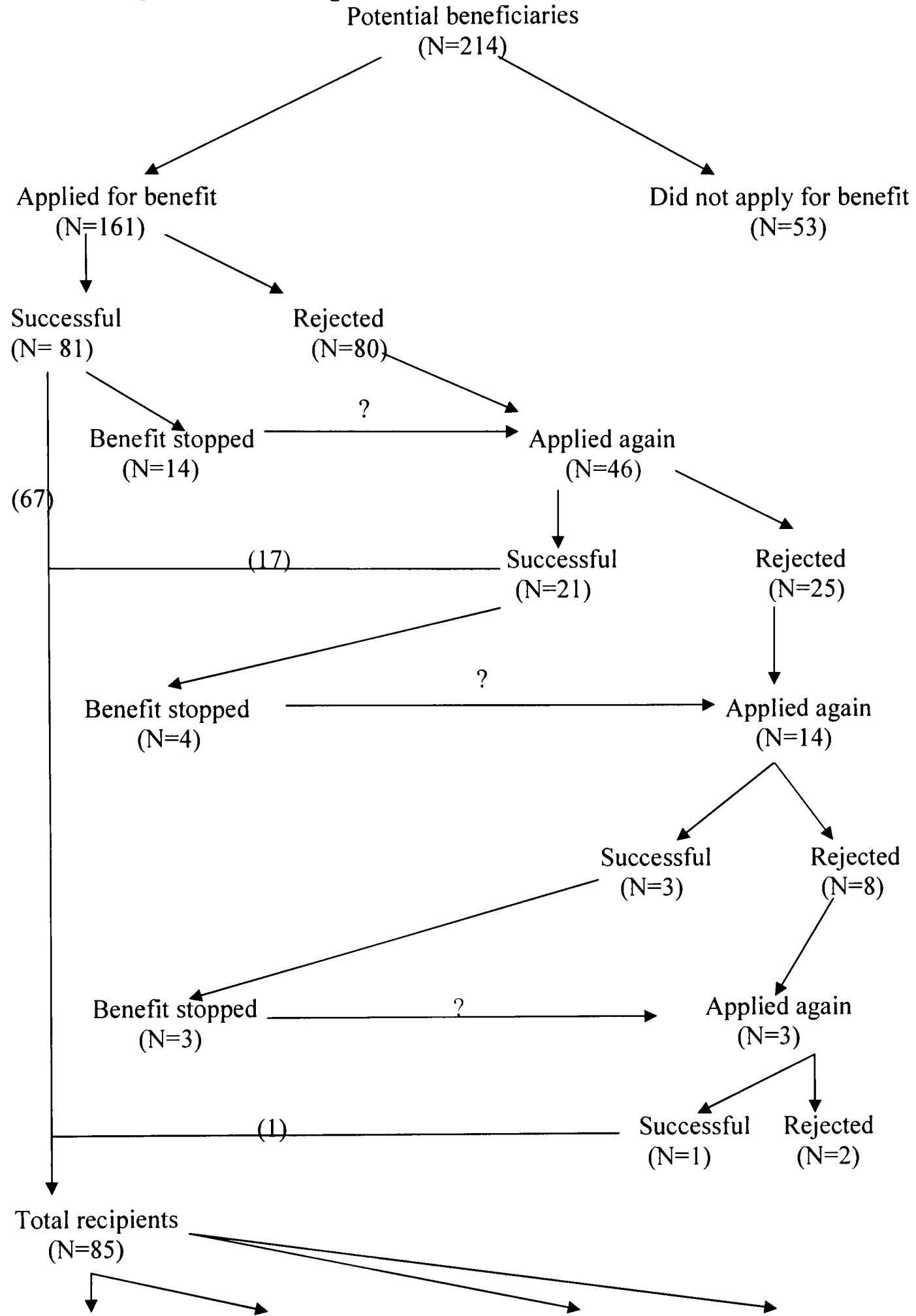
Evaluations of IM programmes at various states have revealed two significant features: 1) IM benefits significantly contribute to the quality of life of the beneficiaries (among others see, Farrington et al, 2004; Panda, 1998: Orissa; Soneja, 2003: Uttar Pradesh; Harriss-White, 2004b: Tamil Nadu). 2) Though the beneficiary selection is narrowly defined, inclusion of ineligible cases through misrepresentation of income, age, place of residence, have been extensively reported (see Rajan, 2001; Harriss-White, 2004b; Subrahmanya and Jhabvala, 2000; Sankaran, 1998). Harriss-White's study on Tamil Nadu particularly emphasises that exclusion of eligible persons is a much bigger problem than inclusion of the ineligible persons. This study in the further chapters will establish the political nature of exclusion and inclusion.

4.4.3 Performance of IM programmes in Bajgaon and Saralgaon

Unlike the EGS programme, it was not difficult to identify the claimants of continued IM programmes in the villages, particularly because a list of beneficiaries existed. Since the nature of claiming the benefit was formal (through a written application procedure), compared with the self-selection of the EGS, it was easy to quantitatively calculate the number of persons included and excluded for these programmes through a survey. A detailed summary of the results of surveys from the two villages can be found in figure 4.1.

²⁰ *Sravan Bal Yojana* had just begun at the time of fieldwork and the quantitative figures for the programme were not available. Apart from these three programmes of IM, the government of Maharashtra also runs a scheme called Sanjay Gandhi Swavlamban Yojana, started in 1980, under which young persons are given a small loan (Rs. 2500) to support an income generation programme. Though this is a promotive programme, interestingly it is classified as an IM programme. This programme was not studied within the framework of the thesis.

Figure 4.1 Path diagram of claiming and receiving IM benefits



Destitution criteria		Income/age criteria	
Recipients Meeting criteria	Recipients not meeting criteria	Recipients meeting criteria	Recipients not meeting criteria
(N=19)	(N=66)	(N=58)	(N=27)

As mentioned in chapter three, the respondents were selected only from the eligible claimants and those who were receiving benefits. So, from the figure above, it can be understood that 24.8% (n=53) claimants who did not apply were excluded despite being eligible for IM. 34% claimants were excluded because their applications were declined at various stages. Even among those included for IM, only 22.6% (n=19) met the destitution criteria, and 31% did not meet the income/age criteria, let alone destitution.

The performance of one-off benefits was much poorer. There was very little awareness about the NMBS scheme, and of the 71 persons surveyed only four persons were aware of the scheme and only two had received the benefit. For NFBS the awareness was high, 25 persons out of 26 had knowledge of the scheme. But on many occasions they came to know about the scheme after the time-limit to make the application was completed (the application had to be made within one year of the death of the primary bread winner), and thus their applications were rejected. Three persons in Bajgaon had received the benefit of NFBS though 12 persons had applied from both villages.

Conclusion

Though, it is due to the failure of promotive measures, we require protective programmes (Harriss-White, 1993), for practical reasons it will be clear that some people will always fall out of the promotive programmes. For example, people who are old, infirm and pregnant women would find it difficult to improve their livelihood through participating in promotive programmes such as PWPs. Some protective measures from the state will always be necessary. This justifies why promotive and protective programmes should coexist and why they should be evaluated together.

But, examination of the social protection programmes in the case area shows that neither in their origin, nor in the policy framework were these programmes seen as complementary. We also have noticed how far political expediency shaped these as programmes/projects rather than a policy. These programmes, implemented in a decentralised framework, provide ample space for local politicians to manoeuvre in their own interests. As

a result, though secondary data on programme performance does not reveal this, the evaluation surveys have reported the inclusion of ineligible persons and exclusion of eligible persons. These quantitative results have significant implications for the issue of access to welfare programmes. How is access structured for social protection programme? What mechanisms and legal provisions are available to check these patterns of inclusion and exclusion? Who should be held responsible for these patterns?

The policy makers and implementers are poles apart in attitude, motives and behaviour. Myron Weiner (1962: 152) has stated this succinctly: “The distance of the national leadership from rural political pressures disposes them toward a program which they justify on economic grounds, while state and local leaders are sensitive within their constituencies and are therefore disposed towards policies on political considerations”. Is this statement valid after four decades? On the one hand, it has been shown convincingly that public policy formulation is distant from local leaders and politics (e.g. see Mooij and Dev [2002] study on budget formulation in India). This literature on public policy formulation has shown that both private and political interests at national level shape these policies in such a way to take away the spirit of policy from re-distributive interests. On the other hand, distinct from the time of Weiner, plurality of interests at local level needs to be recognised in recent times (Khan, 2000). Therefore, the distinction of intended and unintended outcome of the policy aims requires more fine-grained analysis.

In the next chapters it will be argued that by looking only at the government programmes, the issue of access cannot be settled. The way the market and civil societies operate often structure access to the social protection programmes of the state. This can be studied by looking at the processes of claiming, decision making and delivery of the benefits. Various persons involved in these processes and their interests could reveal what structures the access.

Chapter 5

Power structure in rural Marathwada

“Power has a rationality that rationality does not know, whereas rationality does not have a power that power does not know” (Flyvberg, 1998: 2)

The previous chapter demonstrated a significant exclusion of eligible claimants from social protection benefits, and thus showed that public policy is failing to achieve what it intends. This chapter outlines possible reasons for this failure of public policy. As argued in the previous chapters, the private interests of the ‘power elite’ (and sometimes these interests expressed as that of civil society) have a significant impact on public policy and access to public resources. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the social, political and economic interests of the ‘power elite’ of the case villages is provided, since understanding the power structure is essential to understanding the way access is structured. Through examining the organisation and reproduction of resources in society (e.g. what do people do? how are their activities organised? who controls these activities? and what are the mechanisms of control? etc) we are able to appreciate the power structure of a society.

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section is a short description of the economic, social and political conditions of the Marathwada region, within which the case study villages are based. While a historical analysis is important to understand how the consciousness of different socio-economic and political groups evolved, this has not been included here. Besides, other scholars have done this in detailed way.¹ The focus here is to understand the local (village level) power structure (which has been covered by very few scholars). This is analysed in section two and three based on the primary data collected as part of the fieldwork

¹ See on politics: Sirsikar, 1995; Lele, 1981; on economy: Karnik and Burange, 2004; on social structure: Ghurye, 1969; on general social history: Kumar, 1968; see also Omvedt, 1976, 1977 and 1994 on gender and caste movements in Maharashtra.

5.1 Marathwada: the case study area

For administrative purposes different regions of Maharashtra are divided into different divisions. Eight districts in the central part of Maharashtra (35 districts in total for the state, and 602 districts in India) forms the region of Marathwada.² For administrative purposes these districts are further subdivided into *tehsils* or blocks. There are 77 *tehsils* in the region. Marathwada's total population is 15,589,223 (16.8 % of the state's population), and 67 per cent of the population lives in 7813 villages (in rural areas). Though this is higher than the state average (per cent of rural population in the state of Maharashtra being 57.6), this lower than the national scenario (rural population in India is 72.18%).

The region is drought prone with an average of 650 mm rainfall per annum. It is classified as one of the poorest regions in India (Mehta and Shah, 2001). Its literacy rate is 51% (Maharashtra's literacy rate is 76.8% and that of India is 64.83%). All eight districts of the region come into the list of 'most backward 100 districts of India' (Gol, 1997). 30% of households below the poverty line in the state are situated in this region.

The region was under the feudal rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad until 1948 (until 'police action' during the state-reorganisation under the then home minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel liberated it). The region was not developed during the Nizam's regime. Though the region was merged with Maharashtra in 1956, it continued to be neglected by the political leaders of Western Maharashtra who had the backing of sugar co-operatives. These were negligible in this region.³

² Marathwada division has its headquarters in Aurangabad. The city of Aurangabad is a Municipal Corporation (Nanded being the only other Municipal corporation in the region) with an airport. Marathwada has 53 towns in total.

³ Among the leaders from the region, who have reached top political positions in the state, are the present chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh (Latur district), ex-chief minister S B Chavan (Nanded district), ex-chief minister Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar (Latur district).

5.1.1 Economy

Marathwada's economy is predominantly agrarian⁴ with 73.8 per cent of the work force engaged as cultivators or agricultural labourers. In rural areas 85.5 per cent of population is agriculture-dependent (Col, 2001). With only 15 per cent of total cultivated area having an irrigation facility (this little less than the national average of 16.4%), agriculture is mostly dependent on rain. Therefore, the *kharif* (monsoon) crop in the months of June-September is the main crop. Important crops grown in the region are cotton, sugarcane, *Jowar* (sorghum), *Bajra* (millet), wheat and *tur* (gram). There is some production of oilseeds, cereals and pulses.

The Maharashtra economy is closely linked with the co-operative movement, which the government has been promoting since the 1960s. Marathwada has 23,437 co-operative societies and 20 per cent of them are agricultural co-operatives. 92 per cent of the region's cultivators are members of agricultural co-operative societies. (Possession of land is an essential condition to be a member of agricultural co-operative and therefore, the landless poor are excluded from these co-operatives). Often elections to the co-operatives are more keenly fought than the village council elections. These co-operatives also provide loans to cultivators. In practice, it is the politically elected chairman who has the power to grant loans. Official positions in these co-operatives are often stepping-stones to higher political posts in the district or state. This explains why co-operatives are more a political body than a body that ensures an efficient economy at the village level. The secretary of the co-operative society of one village said to me during an interview: "often pressure comes from the political leaders to provide loans for those who have not repaid the loan from the previous year. A person who repays loan regularly is not preferred. Sometimes there are pressures even not to

⁴ Industries are mostly concentrated in urban areas. Marathwada has 1872 registered industries based mostly in small towns and cities. Out of this there are 34 sugar co-operatives (Maharashtra has a total of 177 sugar co-operatives) and 35 cotton mills. In a large informal economy like India the unregistered firms outnumber the registered firms many times.

try to the recover the loans”.⁵ Maharashtra’s co-operative banks and movement have been at serious risk of fiscal deficit in recent times due to these practices of non-repayment.

Marathwada has a large landholding pattern⁶ and some landlessness (NCAER, 2002; GoM, 2002). Of its total rural work force of 5,740,787 persons, 40.5 per cent are landless agricultural labourers.⁷ During the rain-fed agricultural season labourers depend on landlords for work and then migrate to neighbouring districts or cities for their livelihood.

5.1.2 Social structures

The multi-layered nature of rural India’s social structure is succinctly put by Rath et al (1993:16) as follows:

“The basic and primary unit of the society is the elementary or joint family. Every family belongs to an exogamous division of a caste and several such divisions constitute an endogamous caste or an endogamous section of a large caste. On the other hand, every family belongs to the community with whom it shares a settlement site, be it a village or a hamlet attached to a village. In socio-religious affairs control of the individual is threefold – that of his family, his village and his caste”.⁸

In the Indian context, Beteille (1974) has shown that caste is to be considered as an important analytical category, besides class, to understand power structure. Anthropologists consider certain castes to be dominant, according to the numerical factor and the political and economic power that one caste is able to wield over other castes (Srinivas, 1966; Dumont, 1970; Oommen, 1984). Often, numerically, the majority of the population of a village are from a single caste. This single caste could be the ‘dominant caste’ of the particular village. In addition to the numerical strength, economic power too contributes to decide whether a caste

⁵ There has been much research on the issue of why some co-operatives perform better than others. See Attwood (1974; 1988), Attwood and Baviskar (1987), Baviskar (1980).

⁶ The size of landholding differs significantly between regions depending on the quality of the land and irrigation facilities available. The census of India calculates that Marathwada has a large landholding pattern compared with other parts of Maharashtra. However, in the villages surveyed people considered having 5-10 acres of land as sufficient to make a living since irrigation facilities are limited. A household with over 10 acres of land was considered to be a large landholding. In the villages surveyed, less than 10 per cent of households had over 10 acres of land. At an all-India level, the following typology of landholding is generally accepted: Small (less than 2.5 acres); small to medium (2.5 to 7.5 acres); medium to large (above 7.5 acres).

⁷ It is extremely difficult to make a national comparison for this statistics. First of all, the concept of the value of the land differs significantly between regions. A review of various studies (Jayaraman, Lanjouw, 1999) have shown that over the years landlessness has increased. One study in Uttar Pradesh reports 23% of landlessness in 1993 (Dreze et al, 1998).

⁸ This is based on Dube’s (1955) work on the *Indian Village*.

is dominant (Mandelbaum, 1970). People from other castes too live in the same village. But, they would not be able to exert dominance in the village (Bhatia, 1974; Srinivas, 1955). In addition to this caste factor religion plays a significant role in determining the social structure of rural India.

In Maharashtra, *Marathas* constitute the main landholding and political caste in most of the villages. Besides being the dominant caste, *Marathas* have a history of leadership in the region. Though they constitute only 40 per cent of the state's population, they hold 80 per cent of official political positions. Landless labourers depend on *Marathas* for daily wage-work opportunities. Both numerically and politically this is the dominant caste in the region. Despite the existence of wealthy individuals from other agricultural castes such as *Kunbis*, *Dhangars*, and the important business caste of *Marwaris*, the dominance of *Marathas* is almost unquestioned (Lele, 1981; Ghurye, 1960; Karve, 1965).

Marathas themselves claim they belong to the *Kshatriya* warrior caste.⁹ Since the early 20th century, there have been strong anti-Brahmin movements in *Maratha* dominated areas, and as a result, unlike in other parts of India, Brahmins, the first category in the caste hierarchy, are not normally found in dominant positions in the villages of Maharashtra (Omvedt, 1976). The *Maratha* community has a highly organised hierarchical kinship structure. There are high and low status *Marathas* who are identified by determining whether they belong to the core '96 *Kuli*'¹⁰ of the caste. This is crucial in arranging marriages. During the elections, votes are won or lost depending on whether the *Maratha* is from the '96 *kuli*'

⁹ This is second in the traditional caste classification of *Brahmins*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*. Some historians argue that *Marathas* sprang from *Kunbi* agricultural castes and served in the military class Shivaji, the King, giving a special identity for them.

¹⁰ Historians are divided over the origin of *Marathas*. They came to prominence about 350 years ago under Shivaji, the king (1627-80). Shivaji was born into the *Bhonsle kuli* of *Marathas*. *Kuli* means clan. 96 exogamous clans, in the central region of Maharashtra, which marry with each other and their descendents are considered as 'real/pure' *Marathas*. Some historians attribute the *Maratha* clan system to be a continuation of five tribes from *Rg veda* times. Today a variety of lists exist determining who belongs to 96 *kulis*. However, today no one knows who belong to these '96 *kulis*'. Recent writers see belonging to be based on income and education (Lele, 1981: 58; Nasegal, 2002). However, a certain amount of morality (principle of purity) is always associated with it. During the fieldwork, one claimant of social protection shouted to the researcher loudly that one of the elite leaders in their village is not from the '96 *kuli*' since he takes money to grant benefits for others. The ritual purity of *Marathas* is evident from the seclusion of female members of the caste from the public domain even in modern times.

(Lele, 1981). *Marathas* are politically organised through organisations such as the *Maratha Seva Sangh*, *Maratha Mahasangh*, *Chava* and *Sambhaji Brigade*. The last two organisations are often seen as militant organisations, since they resort to violent responses to issues compared to the first two organisations, which have the reputation of being cultural organisations.

15 per cent and four per cent of the population belongs to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes respectively in the region. One of the largest landless castes is the *Mahars* and neo-Buddhists¹¹ (which are a scheduled caste/*dalit*),¹² which has a significant political voice in the region. It is also important to note that *Mahars* (like *Marathas*) are martial people with significant representation in the Indian army since the pre-independent period (White, 1994; for a detailed account of the life of *Mahars* see Pillai-Vetschera, 1994). In recent times the *Mahar* community's political voice was heard strongly with its demand to rename Marathwada University after Dr. Babasaheb Amedkar, whose efforts have contributed to the social improvement of this mostly landless caste. Alienated from the agriculture related activities, many from the *Mahar* community migrated to urban areas where they imbibed more egalitarian values.¹³ Often, their return to village can result in violent clashes with the still traditional rural power structure over day-to-day activities such as water fetching from hand pumps etc. (Sirsikar, 1995; CPDR, 2002). The *Mahar* community is often contrasted with *Mahang*, which is another *dalit* community. However, there is less *dalit* solidarity between these two castes, and often *Mahars* accuse the *Mahangs* of aspiring to be like *Marathas*, while *Mahangs* accuse *Mahars* of treating them unjustly.¹⁴ Though the above description associates castes with certain occupations, this division of labour should not be

¹¹ The population of Buddhists is not easy to enumerate since what is classified as Buddhists also belong to the *Mahar* caste. Dr. Babasaheb Amedkar, the architect of the Indian constitution and a prominent leader from this caste, converted himself along with a large number of people from this caste to Buddhism to protest at the injustice done by Hinduism to one of its own castes. They are called neo-Buddhists today. They identify themselves as *Mahar* or Buddhist depending on the circumstances.

¹² The term *dalit* means 'oppressed', and this is more a political term than the apolitical term 'scheduled caste'.

¹³ Breman (1993) has described various other reasons for the migration to cities by lower castes. He explains this in terms of lower caste households' strategy to escape the oppression of high castes in rural areas.

¹⁴ This contrast is similar to *madiga-mala* contrast in Andhara Pradesh. See Deliege, 1999 for details.

seen as deterministic. With the advancement of modern education and through migration, the function and role of caste members are rapidly changing.

Marathwada's rural areas have three important religions: Hindu, Muslim and Buddhists. Hindus constitute the majority. About 25 per cent are Muslims¹⁵. The Muslim population, which is without much political voice, is involved in agriculture and trading agricultural products. But the biggest trading caste is the *Marwaris* who are found in the urban centres and big villages. They also act as moneylenders. Though *Marwaris* are well educated and, often economically well off, their political significance is limited compared to *Marathas* and *Mahars*. There are many other small occupational castes, which often support the *Maratha* caste. These traditional occupations (eg. Kumbhar as pot maker, Sonar as goldsmith etc) are increasingly moving away from their traditional occupation and gaining mobility through education and trade. These small castes are neither powerful nor as economically well off as *Marathas* or *Marwaris*. However, they are often economically better placed than *Mahars*, though, unlike the *Mahars*, their political voice is divided¹⁶ and often expressed in conjunction with *Marathas*. These castes are often classified as other backward castes (OBC), and can be considered as middle castes for analytical purposes. Some of these castes (especially castes within Muslim community) will be mentioned as we further explore the research questions in this study.

5.1.3 Political culture and arenas of electoral competition

The region is divided into 46 assembly and eight parliamentary constituencies. As explained in the previous chapter (see Appendix 6 for details) at each level of village, block/*tehsil*, district and state there are formal political and administrative institutions. The traditional pattern of power structure based on land ownership and ritual status has changed in rural India. It has been shown that though there are wide spread electoral malpractices, the

¹⁵ Communal tensions flare up now and then and it is this element which helped the BJP and Shiv Sena to take hold in the region.

¹⁶ This political unity is more a local level phenomenon. At the state level, there are divisions within *Mahar* community.

practice of universal adult franchise over the decades has made even the village an arena of intense electoral competition since citizens see the relationship between their vote and development/welfare provision (Mitra, 1979). But, as the public resources that could be distributed to the client groups at village level are very limited,¹⁷ how formal positions at other higher levels can be taken over or influenced is an important consideration for the local elites. Therefore, association with political parties provides both a collective avenue and linkages to influence higher levels of administration for the local elites.

Marathwada used to be a loyal ally of the Congress Party until 1995. Since 1988, the Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena have mobilised the disgruntled rural elites of the Congress Party, and finally succeeded in forming the government at the state assembly in 1995. The rise of these political parties with the support of the ideologies of '*hindutva*' and principles of 'sons of soil',¹⁸ has spread an anti-muslim sentiment in the region as happened in other parts of Maharashtra. Recent splits (after 1999) in the Congress Party and the formation of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has also given political voice to another section of disgruntled leaders previously in the Congress Party. The Bahujan Samajvadi Party (BSP), with its base in lower castes especially the *Mahar*, gained around 15% of votes especially from lower castes during the assembly elections in 2004. However, as in Western Maharashtra, the district level leaders from all these parties, except for a few leaders, continue to be the *Marathas*.

Thus, important elements of social structures –caste and religion- have political contents. As seen in section 5.1.1 the economic activities the people undertake are also based on caste-religion division, and thus in turn affect the political choices. As pointed out by Beteille (1965),

“The weakness of the village panchayat seems to arise from the imposition of a democratic formal structure on a social substratum which is segmented and hierarchical in nature. Although the formal structure of power is democratic, the value system within which it operates is inegalitarian. Formally, members of panchayat have equal

¹⁷ Much of the public policy implementation is carried out at block/tehsil or district levels. Legal provision and ability to generate public funds through taxation is limited at village government level.

¹⁸ This is right-wing ideology of Hindu nationalism, the interpretation of which varies from the Hindu way of life to historical revisionism. For a critical review see Elst (2001).

authority, but in its exercise the extent of this authority varies sharply with caste, class, and other factors” (p. 164).

Therefore, at the local level the identity of the individuals and the way they belong to social structures create a para-political process. These processes could create a local regime that may be useful for the local elites to exploit.

5.2 The context of the local elites

5.2.1 Bajgaon and Saralgaon

A brief introduction to the case villages was given in chapter three. Here the attempt is to show how the power structures of the local elites are created in the village context. A statistical summary of various village social groups and institutions is provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Statistics of the social groups and amenities available in the villages studied¹⁹

	Bajgaon	Saralgaon
Population	7335	2756
Households (HH)	1211	498
Religious Composition	Hindu – 713 (59%) Muslim - 339 (28%)	Hindu- 325 (65%) Muslim 69 (14%)
Major Castes (in HH)	<i>Maratha</i> - 534 (43%) <i>SC (Mahar)</i> –278 (22%) <i>Khatic & Tamboli</i> (SC&OBC Muslim) – 154 (13%) <i>Dhangar</i> (ST) – 88 (7%) <i>Marwari</i> – 60 (5%)	<i>Maratha</i> – 149 (30%) <i>SC (Mahar)</i> – 130 (26%) <i>Mali</i> – 70 (14%) <i>Pardi</i> (ST) – 40 (8%)
HH in BPL	235 (20%)	138 (28%)
Institutions	School up to 10 th std(15 year old) Primary Health Centre (1) Veterinary hospital (1) <i>Anganwadi</i> (8) Temple (3) (one belonged to <i>Marwaris</i>) Mosque (2) Co-operative society (1)	School up to 7 th std <i>Anganwadi</i> (1) Temple (1) Mosque (1) Co-operative society (2)
Public Transport	Public bus makes 6 trips a day Private rickshaws	Private rickshaws
Communication	Post office Telephone Newspaper TV/radio	TV/radio (Newspapers brought occasionally by those who work in town)
Road to town	10 km to nearest town Tarred good road	7 km to nearest town Tarred good road

¹⁹ The data is obtained from the village offices. This may not be completely accurate. I have indicated only Hindu and Muslim groups with the religious group. Often the Census of India calculates ‘tribals’ along with Hindus. My purpose here is only to show the general trends of affiliation and how people see themselves as part of the social groups.

5.2.2 Business, administrative and political organisation of villages

As it can be understood from the table 5.1, there is important differences in terms of amenities and services available to these two villages. Saralgaon had only three grocery shops (two belonged to Muslims and one to a *Maratha*), three home-based tailoring shops, one carpenter and a home-based arrack shop. There were six auto rickshaws, which made trips between the village and the small town.

On the other hand Bajgaon had 29 grocery shops, six cloth shops, 10 tailors, six footwear shops, seven Electrical-motor mechanics, six carpenter shops, 11 goldsmiths, three video-centres, two photography centres, five barber shops, four tea-stalls, six *pan* shops, 13 gambling (lucky-draw) centres, eight meat cutting and sale, two arrack sale shops, six vegetable-fruit shops, seven private doctors, two medical shops, four fertilizer-seeds shops, four hardware shops and three cycle renting/repairing shops. In addition to farming, *Marathas*, especially the younger generation, were involved in some of these business activities especially tailoring shops, electrical-motor shops, and grocery shops. The village's 'crusher' (crushing stone) belonged to a *Maratha*. *Marwaris* had a larger share of grocery shops (especially wholesale shops which sold items to other smaller shops), cloth shops, photography, fertilizer, hardware and medical shops. There were three cotton ginning companies in the village, two of which belonged to *Marwaris* and one to a Parsee 'outsider'. Except for one Muslim doctor, all other private doctors were Brahmins or Jains operating from nearby towns. Other shops such as barbers, goldsmiths, carpenters, were caste based and run by traditional castes. Muslims were engaged in all the above shops in small numbers but dominated the shops dealing with the sale of meat and vegetables.

Apart from the business and agricultural organisation of the village, there were many other institutional factors, which deserve attention. The administrative structure of the village will be dealt with first. In both villages the president of the village council (*Surpanch*) was

from Other Backward Caste (OBC) communities due to caste reservation²⁰, and we will see in the next section that the names of these persons in official positions did not appear among the elite group in each village. Saralgaon had a nine-member village council, while Bajgaon had 11-member council. One person from the Muslim community was a member in both village councils. There were two members of scheduled castes in both village councils. The rest of the members of the councils were *Marathas*.

Officials in the village (*talatti*, *Gram Sevak*) belonged to the Brahmin or *Maratha* castes. However, I came across a number of officials in the *tehsil* and district office, especially those administering the social security programmes, who belonged to scheduled castes²¹. The salaried class, working in schools, public health centres and post offices, did not live in the village and mostly belonged to higher castes or urban scheduled castes. Through my informal discussions I learned that there were less than 25 persons living in Bajgaon and one person in Saralgaon who belonged to the salaried class.

Some form of organisational structure for all major political parties existed in both villages. In Bajgaon the Congress Party, BJP, Shiv Sena, Bahujan Samajvadi Party and Shethkari Sanghatana had placards displaying the names of these parties, and there was a president and secretary for each party from the village. In Saralgaon, there were officials only for the Shiv Sena and Congress. In both villages Mahars had installed a statue of Dr. Ambedkar and celebrated his birthday.

However, the officials in administrative and political positions often worked in close association with the local elites. The officials consulted the elites on all matters where it was necessary to gain information about a household, such as creating a voters' list, BPL list, recommending a household for a government benefit etc. Though there was an office for *talatti* and *gram sevak* (in Saralgaon both of them had same office and in Bajgaon they had

²⁰ The policy of positive discrimination by the Government of India requires 33% of elected posts to be reserved for lower castes.

²¹ The policy of positive discrimination had made it possible to have a certain quota of jobs reserved for applicants from SC's. My visit to some of these officials homes revealed that they declared themselves to be scheduled castes to obtain reserved job categories. At home they practiced rituals like Hindus, a practice which Srinivas (1962) has termed as 'Sanskritization' of imitating higher castes for upward mobility. On the other hand, in the village among the lower castes this tendency was less marked.

separate offices), it was normal practice that these officials whenever they came to the village first paid a visit to the village elite (often the most powerful elite as we will see in section 5.3) and it is together with one of the elites that the official carried out the daily activities of meeting with local people. This was explicitly admitted by a *naib tehsildar*, when confronted by the researcher as to why the decisions on the application of the claimants from village had to be taken in line with the suggestion of the village elite: “Our talatti has to go to the village tomorrow also. If, we as officials at the *tehsil* do not provide a good working environment, their work of collecting taxes in the village would be impossible, and some village elite even may dare to act like goondas”. Thus, officials, who had legitimate authority, relied on others to back up power. This lack of power for those who are elected to it was the reason to adopt a reputation method to identify the elites in the village. The next section will describe the elites in these villages.

5.3 The elites and their network in the villages

5.3.1 Elites in the village

20 members of the elite from Bajgaon and 16 members of the elite from Saralgaon were identified using the reputation technique. A detailed description of each elite person is attached as Appendix VII. One fact that was clear was that people approached multiple sources for help and it was often difficult for them to rank the elites, though ranking of the political elites was relatively easy. Political elites enjoyed a high visibility as a number of persons approached them for various purposes. Thus, it is likely that while ranking the political elites, the respondents may have used the number of number of persons approaching these elites as a proxy for reputation. However, though the respondents considered moneylenders, shopkeepers and landlords as elites, they often found it difficult to compare them with the political elites.

All the elite members, except one, were individuals. The exception was the NGO, operating in Saralgaon, which was identified as a place where people went for help. As often happens, the power sources of the elites were multiple, and the elite were associated with

others in the community in multiplex relations. For example, the *Maratha* elites were often landlords (and provided work for the landless villagers) as well as political leaders (providing access to government services). So, classifying the elites according to the sources of 'power' is not easy.

A good number of them (17) were landlords, employing at least one regular farm worker. The most influential person in Bajgaon had 200 acres of land and employed 15-20 regular farm workers. 18 of the elites were also political leaders in various capacities as village council members (In both villages the village council president/*surpanch* did not appear in the list of elites since the posts were reserved for lower castes and the *surpanch* was often a 'pawn' in the hands of other elites) or as president of a political party's branch in the village or in few cases as a member of a political party in *tehsil* and district levels. Eight of them were involved in money lending businesses. Four elites had shop-keeping as their main income source. A few elites had some specific roles (healer-religious [1], broker for government scheme [1], educated person from tribal community [1], labour organiser [1], contractor [1]), which they often used with their other roles as landlords or political leaders.

Apart from six cases, all the elites had some kind of ascriptive influence, e.g. with their parents being elites or through inheritance of wealth. The six elites who did not have ascriptive influence emerged through education (3), forming political factions through conflict in the community (1) or by using a successful business strategy (2). The influence of education to create new elites has been reported in other elite studies in India (Singh, 1988; Mitra, 1992). Higher education was a common factor. Many of them (11 in total) were graduates. This was essential for them to understand and interpret laws and regulations for which help was often sought. Education was also instrumental in helping the elites adopt successful business strategies. The only 'illiterate' elite in fact possessed a high degree of functional literacy.

The oldest elite was 68 years old, and there were only six elites who were below the age of 40. Four of these young elites were from lower castes. Their particular activity was to enable the members of the lower castes to obtain the benefits that the government provided in

the form of 'positive discrimination'. Thus, government policies can contribute to creating new elite structures, and contribute towards change in the power structure at local level.

In terms of caste, seven elites belonged to the *Maratha*, and six to the *Marwari* communities respectively in Bajgaon. In Saralgaon there were six elites who were *Maratha*. Thus, the pattern of many elites from the dominant castes and one or two elites from small castes, representing caste interests and taking on the role of bargaining with the leaders of the dominant castes can be found in both villages. For example, in Saralgaon there were four elites from the Muslim community though their population was only 14 per cent of the total. This is because the Muslim households in Saralgaon were relatively well off. However, in Bajgaon, there were large numbers of lower caste Muslim households who were not so well off. Often, Muslim elites in Saralgaon when joined with the lower castes (26% of population) posed a serious threat to the *Maratha* leaders (30%). How the elites from lower castes emerge is an important question dealt with in the next section when we look at the elite networks. Though it looks as if there are no elites from the numerically small occupational castes, more detailed study reveals that there are many notables from these castes and they typically negotiate with the dominant castes. (see Appendix II where we saw many persons were nominated to elite positions on caste lines),

Political elites, except those from the lower castes, claimed that people of all castes approached them. Two persons from the nearby market village were reported to be local elites in Saralgaon. One of them was a Marwari cloth shopkeeper who used to provide credit for the people. The other was a *Maratha* political elite and landlord. This indicates how the economic and political lives of smaller villages are integrated into larger market villages.

Most of the elites lived in large joint families. Sometimes, family members of the elite dealt with the issues brought by people. For example, a female villager would meet the elite's wife while doing some household work for the elite. Communication with the elite would happen through the wife of the elite. Thus, the whole household of the elite contributed to advance the elite's status. In the front yard of the elite houses there was often a place for people to rest or to drink water.

Why are the elites important in the community? As argued in the first chapter, power is more a property of networks rather than of actors. Therefore, though the individual characteristics of the elites are important to understand the power sources, their structural characteristics are equally important. Arguing from the perspective of economic sociology, Burt (1992) has shown that the persons who are strategic players take advantage of the ‘structural holes’, and can accumulate resources and power because of their strategic positions in the network.²² This argument of ‘structural hole’ is relevant not only to the market players, which Burt studied, but also to the rural elites who act as bridge-builders between poor people and the government officials and their wider world outside the village (I will further examine Burt’s theory in the section on factions in the village later in this chapter and in the next chapter). The elites explained that people approached them not only because of their ‘know-how’ on a specific activity, or resourcefulness, but because of their contacts and power to generate a solution. This is evident from the types of need for which people approached the elites, such as mediation during conflict resolution (e.g. a police case), transactions involving the outside world (e.g. buying and selling land), and all kinds of work with government and officials (e.g. obtaining bank loans).

However, elites are not a homogenous group. They are involved in the competition for resources themselves. Further, their wealth and network density (contacts) may not be related. Dahl’s [1961] studies in American cities have shown that wealth and power are not always correlated. Therefore, an elite with more contacts may be a more crucial player in allocating public social protection funds through his contact with government officials than an elite who is rich, without many contacts. We will examine these issues further in the next section by analysing the network position of the elites in the communities.

²² The essence of the theory of a structural hole is: “By dint of who is connected to whom, holes exist in the social structure of the competitive arena. The holes in social structure, or, more simply, structural holes, are disconnections or nonequivalencies between players in the arena. Structural holes are entrepreneurial opportunities for information access, timing, referrals and control” (Burt, 1992: 1-2)

5.3.2 Sociogram of elites and properties of a network

The individual identities of the elites we have seen above are “both cause and consequences of group affiliation, social networks, and the moral codes associated with groups and networks. Identities may co-evolve in ways that make it difficult - and perhaps misleading - to separate individual and social level phenomena” (Barrett, 2005: 4). An analysis of the network enables us to dissect this complex issue into manageable pieces. Each relation between actors is unique, and may be built over a number of years.²³ An informal contact or casual connection is not a ‘network’. A network exists in various intensities between a formal relationship and a casual contact.²⁴ These dyadic relations form the sociograms.

In the sociograms presented here, we are concerned only with the highest score of the relationship (people who are related to each other with a political bond) measured in a four rank scale of ‘antagonistic to each other’(0), ‘know and greet each other’ (1), ‘exchange resources and information’ (2), ‘politically support each other’(3). The linearity here is not merely assumed but exists empirically. So, if the ‘lower level’ sociograms were presented, the relational lines would be numerous and too complex to understand. Besides, we are interested primarily in the political relationship between the points in the network. However, it goes without saying that political relations between actors are in continuous flux. Therefore, the conclusions we could draw from these relationships may change rapidly. (This issue of the choice of time point for measurement of network properties is a serious dilemma for network

²³ "Networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration" (Putnam, 1993).

²⁴ These intensities had been operationalised as binary relations (whether a relationship exists or not) to express them as relations (lines between two points). See the theoretical formulation of suitability of studying power through binary formulation in Desai (2005). However, the multiplicity of roles of the elites is not captured by the network analysis since network lines assume all the lines are equivalent. For example, the nature of interaction between a political elite and a labour organiser is very different from that of an interaction between a political elite and a religious healer. This process of reduction of a complex relationship into lines is a criticism of network sociograms. It fails to understand the bargaining that takes place between two points, and assumes co-operation (John, 1998). As Arrow (2000) has suggested, “the concept of measuring social interaction may be a snare and a delusion. Instead of thinking of more and less, it may be fruitful to think of the existing social relations as a pre-existing network into which new parts of the economy have to be fitted”. However, bearing this difficulty in mind, one could use sociograms for interpretative purposes since they are “qualitative patterns of connection among points” (Scott, 1991: 67). These structures can be used to understand the patterns of interaction.

analysts [see Bernard *et al*, 1984; Hlebec and Ferligoj, 2001]). The pattern of relationships and its implications for allocation of SP is what we are interested in.

Figure 5.1 presents the sociogram of the relationships among elites in Bajgaon and Figure 5.2 presents that of Saralgaon. A line between two elites indicates they support each other politically. What is striking from the first glance at these sociograms is the difference in density.

5.3.2.1 Density

‘Density’ is a measure used to understand the cohesiveness of a group of actors. The maximum number of relationships that the elites in the village Bajgaon can have is 190 and 48 of these actually exist. Thus, the density²⁵ of the sociogram is .25. The density of Saralgaon is lower at .17 (with only 20 relations out of possible 120 relations). A comparison of density is presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Density comparison of the elite networks in two villages

	Bajgaon	Saralgaon
Total number of points	20	16
No of connected points	18	15
Inclusiveness	.90	.94
Sum of degrees	98	40
No of lines	49	19
Density (including isolates)	.25	.17

Source: Fieldwork Data

The difference in density between the villages can be explained by understanding their geographical layout. Bajgaon can be considered as a single geographical unit with a division because of a railway line. In 1981 when the village received a grant for a large housing scheme, land had to be identified to construct the houses. There was some vacant land on the other side of a railway track which passes near the village. About 100 houses were built and given to the poorer people of the village on the eastern side of the railway.²⁶ Since then many people started building houses on the other side of the railway track and today

²⁵ The density of a sociogram is calculated as the proportion of actual lines to that of the maximum possible lines. For example to calculate the density in Bajgaon the actual number of lines (49) is divided by the maximum number of possible lines $(20(20-1)/2)$

²⁶ The question of discrimination to keep the poor away from village, using the railway track as a barrier to interaction could be studied in its own right.

Figure 5.1: *Suo Bajjaan*: Networks of elites 21

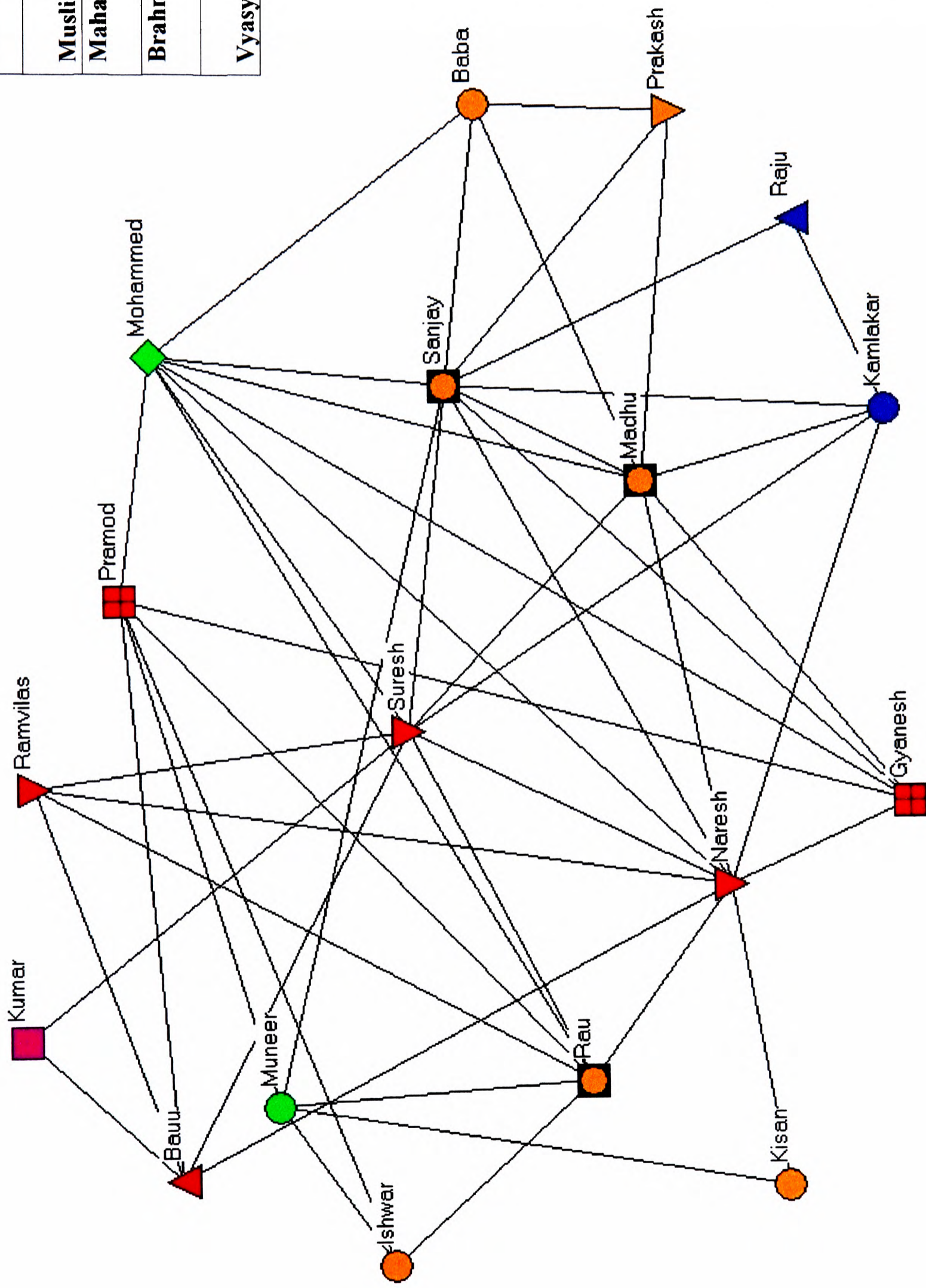
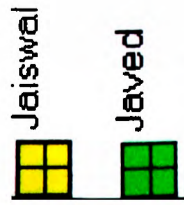
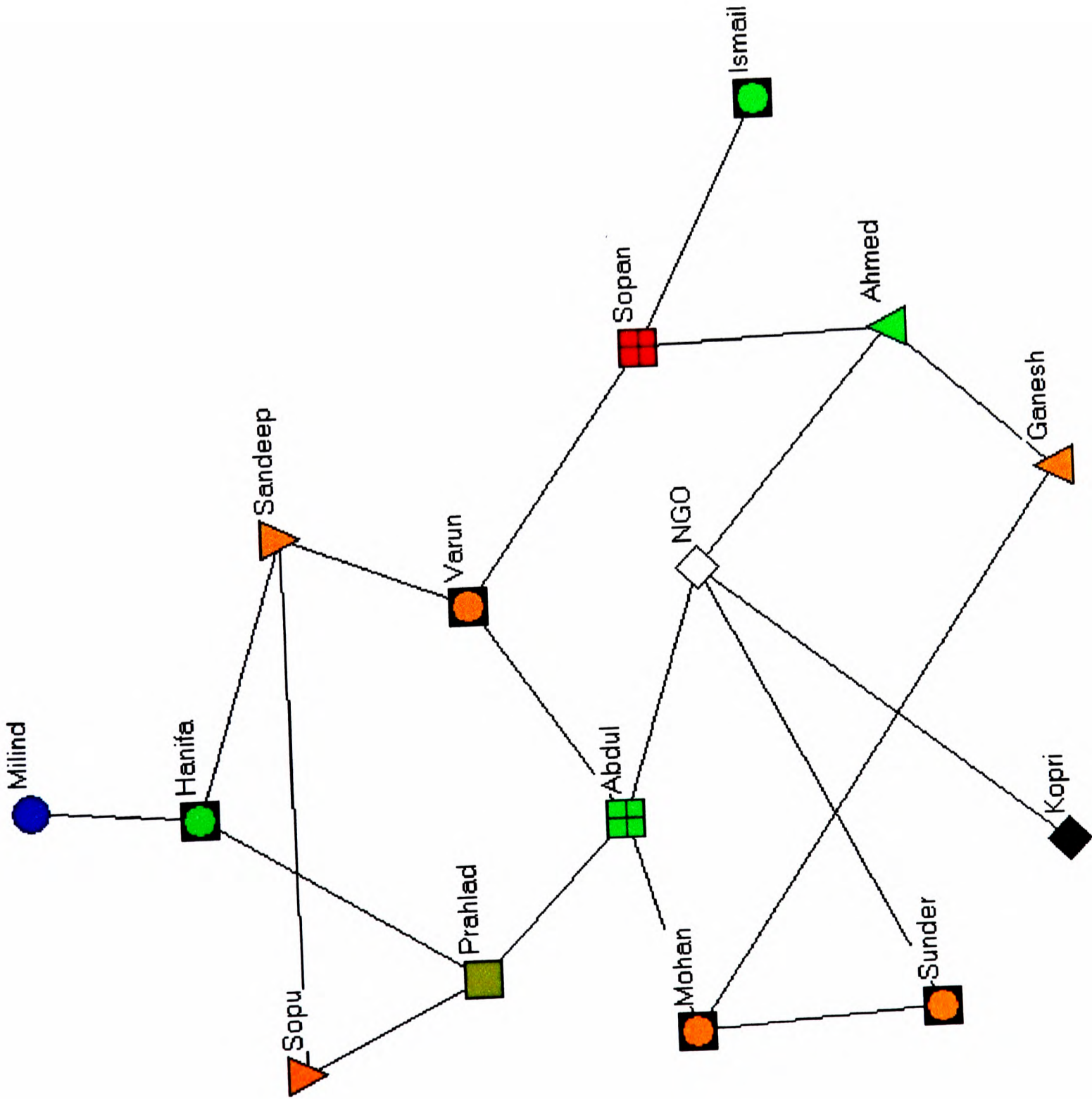


Figure 5.1 Bajjaan: Networks of elites

Maratha	Orange square
Marwari	Red square
Muslim	Green square
Mahar / neo-Buddhist	Blue square
Brahmin	Pink square
Vyasya (Jaiswal)	Yellow square

Political elite	White circle
Landlord	White square
Political elite and landlord	Black circle with white center
Moneylender	White triangle
Shopkeeper	White square with grid
Broker	White triangle
Contractor	White diamond



Maratha	
Marwari	
Muslim	
SC	
OBC	
Tribal	

Political elite	
Landlord	
Political elite and landlord	
Moneylender	
Shopkeeper	
Other (NGO, Tribal leader)	

Figure 5.2: Savdgaon: Network of elites

there are about 300 houses located there. All shops, except five grocery shops, are located in the old village site. The names allotted to these two units by local people indicate the segregation. The new location of poor houses, mainly comprised of government allotted houses, was called *Zopadpatti* (lane of huts). The old part of the village was referred to as *purana gaon* (old village). Significantly, all the elites were from the old village.

On the other hand, Saralgaon was a mixture of at least five geographical units (hamlets). There were about 300 houses at the central location in the village (where school, village office and religious building were based). One group of tribal houses (35) was two kms away from the central location in an eastern direction, and Mali (OBC) had another group of houses (60) two kms away from the central location in a northern direction. One political elite (Mohan Chandkar²⁷) had sold off his land (which he had forcibly taken from a person not from the village) to the people of the village at a 'concessionary rate', forming a composition of houses (25) with households from all castes about half a km away. Another group of houses with *Marathas* (20) was situated one km away from the central location in a western direction. There were elites in all these geographical units which made networking more difficult for them. (Stuart and Podolny, 1999). This explains the difference in density between the elites of two villages.

There are two isolated individuals among the elites in Bajgaon. So, we can conclude that the inclusiveness²⁸ of the sociogram is very high at 0.9. It is interesting to examine these 'isolates'. Javed Nasir is a lower caste (Tamboli) Muslim, who runs a grocery shop in the backyard of the village. The poorest people, mostly living in the *zopadpatti* part of the village, nominated him as elite. But none of the other elites mentioned his name. Poor people (who live in *zopadpatti*) reported that Javed provided credit (both in kind and cash) and that was their reason to consider him as an elite. Some of the people saw him as a 'good Muslim', who observed religious practices and human values by giving credits. This was probably a method to gain popular support since he lacked vital political connections. In rural areas young people

²⁷ This name and all the names used in the dissertation are fictitious names. However, these names could reveal religious, caste and familial connections.

²⁸ The number of connected points expressed as proportion of total number of points.

may start up businesses, but because of lack of political support, they may be unable to recover the credits they have issued. This may lead to failure of their business or encourage them to establish political connections. Javed's shop has been running for 12 years and the shop has not prospered like other business ventures of similar type. On the other hand, Jaiswal (the other isolate elite) runs an arrack shop and has wider links with other arrack shops in the district. He is accessible to the poor and rich alike to provide credit. However, he has a strong team of *goondas* to claim back the credit. Therefore, he does not require any political support at village level.²⁹ Other village elites also may not wish to explicitly acknowledge their connections with such illegal business firms.

5.3.2.2 Distribution of power of the elites in Bajgaon and Saralgaon

Network analysts rely on a number of measures to calculate the power of the actors. 'Degree' and 'betweenness centrality' are important measures. Degree is a simple measure of counting the number of direct relationships an actor has. In other words it is a "numerical measure of the size of its neighbourhood" (Scott, 1991: 70). For example, from the Table 5.3 we can see the total number of direct relationships in Bajgaon is 49 (a degree of 98, since each relationship connects two points). We can also see that in general each actor has a lesser number of contacts in Saralgaon compared to Bajgaon. But the variance in the number or relationships was higher in Bajgaon, indicating there may be a few, very powerful persons in Bajgaon. Therefore, we need to look at each individual's 'degree' to determine who is the most powerful. We will do this after considering 'betweenness centrality'.

The concept of 'centrality' is a critique of the concept of degree. It signifies that it is not enough merely to look at the number of contacts an actor has, but the positioning of the actors in the network must also be considered. Bonacich (1972, 1987), the proponent of this argument, devised the method of 'betweenness centrality' whereby a distinction between

²⁹ However, sometimes such isolates may get into political conflict, as happened in an arrack on a shop belonging to Jaiswal in a different village. A local mob burnt his shop and vehicles when he came into conflict with the political elite of the village.

‘actors who are connected to each other already’ and ‘actors who function as connections of unconnected actors’ is made. Bonacich argued that being connected to already connected actors makes an actor central, but not powerful. This concept is important because an actor placed at strategic points is able to function as a broker and gatekeeper (Scott, 1991). This ‘betweenness centrality’ can be very different from the hierarchical position of a person in a community or organization. This concept is also called ‘local dependency’.

Table 5.3 Descriptive statistics of degrees of relationships in two villages

	Bajgaon (n=20)	Saralgaon (n=16)
Sum of degrees	98	40
Mean	4.9	2.5
Std. Deviation	3.0	1.2
Variance	9.3	1.5
Minimum	0	0
Maximum	10	4

While the calculation of degree is fairly easy, ‘betweenness’ is a very complex calculation of how many lines pass through each point to be connected to a third point. ‘Ucinet’ (software designed to calculate network statistics) calculates this product. The higher the score of betweenness, the more powerful is the actor in the network. A comparative table of degree, betweenness, number of nominations received during the survey and reputation rank (from the survey) for the local elites is presented below.

From Table 5.4 we can see that though Mohan Chandkar and Hanifa Khan (both political leaders and landlords) come top in nomination and reputation rank, their scores on degree and betweenness are not very high. Abdul Kasam and the NGO scored very highly. Abdul Kasam is a Muslim shopkeeper and is associated with the work of the NGO. As the sociogram indicates, he is an important connector of groups. However, a shopkeeper’s connections have to be seen critically. As Harriss-White (2003) writes, they create relationships with all the political parties by giving funds to the elites during an election. Kalecki (in Sawyer, 1985:223) calls this behaviour the ‘proverbial clever calves that suck two cows’.

In general, there are a number of leaders who have high betweenness scores in Saralgaon (see a contrasting picture in Table 5.5 in Bajgaon on this variable). This indicates that most leaders have some power since the geographical dispersion and lack of dominant caste is a distinctive feature of Saralgaon.

Table 5.4 Comparison of influence indicators of actors in Saralgaon

Elites	Degree	Betweenness	Nomination rank ^a	Reputation rank ^b
Prahlad Mandin (O)	3	20.5	4	-
Sopan Sonata (I)	3	17.5	3	-
Raman Kirti (G)	0	0	10	-
Hanifa Khan (U)	3	13.5	2	2
Milind Sukhdi (C)	1	0	5	4
Abdul Kasam (U)	4	36.5	7	5
Ismail Khan (U)	1	0	4	6
Mohan Chandkar (M)	3	10.5	1	1
Ahmed Iqbal (U)	3	12.0	6	-
NGO	4	23	8	-
Sandeep Rawat (M)	4	11.5	9	-
Sopu Bhudkar (M)	2	.5	10	-
Sunder Chandkar (M)	2	1.0	5	3
Ganesh Chandkar (M)	3	2.0	9	-
Varun Kale(M)	3	21.5	9	-
Kopri Kolkar (T)	1	0	10	-

Note: Capital letters in brackets indicate the caste of each elite. M=*Maratha*, I=*Marwari*, U= Muslim high caste (*Pattan*), O = Hindu Backward caste, G = Tribal settled (*Giri*), C = Hindu Scheduled caste (*chamar*). T= Tribal nomadic (*Pardi*).

a: Nomination rank indicates 1=most nominated and 10=least nominated.

b: Reputation rank indicates 1=most reputed and 6=least reputed. See the explanation for missing values in the text.

More interesting is the case of the NGO which acts as connector with the tribal community, which otherwise would have been isolated. Two other 'pendants' (with only one connection each in the network) are Ismail, connected by Sopan, and Milind connected by Hanifa. Milind, being the leader of a lower caste³⁰, is an important connection that Hanifa made to challenge *Maratha* power. Milind's power also comes partly from the local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) who happens to be from the Scheduled Caste (SC) community. On the other hand, Ismail has wider connections with district leaders and Sopan

³⁰ Milind belongs to the *chamar* community, which is considered to be lower than other SC communities. So, when he requested votes from other SC communities, he was isolated and was defeated in the village election. But, since he formed a coalition with Hanifa, he has enhanced his power and both of them together were able to defeat Mohan Chandkar in the village election.

(a moneylender) is related to Ismail because of his wider connections. Ismail's important connection at district level is with the local MLA, with whom Milind, Sunder and Mohan are also linked. But they are not linked at village level (except Mohan-Sunder). So, when an issue arises on which the local elites are divided, external power source may force its decision.

As the above account reveals, one limitation of the sociograms presented here is that they reveal only partial networks. On the one hand, it is nearly impossible to map out all the connections. But on the other hand, we are unable to see wider connections at district and *tehsil* level (or even in a nearby market village), which may structure the connections at the local level. This problem of fixing an appropriate boundary for a network is a classical problem in network analysis (Laumann *et al.*, 1983).

Table 5.5 on the indicators of influence in Bajgaon shows Sanjay Patilkar as the key player with 10 direct relationships. However, his betweenness is also very high, clearly identifying him as the central leader of Bajgaon. As in the case of Abdul in Saralgaon, here too the moneylenders scored highly in 'betweenness' again proving the point of 'proverbial calves'.

One important observation from Tables 5.4 and 5.5 is the missing values in reputation rank, and the discrepancy of reputation ranks and other indicators of influence. We need a detailed explanation of the roles of the elites in the local communities to understand this. Sanjay Patilkar, who has the highest nomination rank, reputation rank and betweenness score is a *Maratha* political leader and landlord. He has wider connections at district level (his uncle being an ex-Member of the Legislative Assembly). On the other hand, two persons who have the highest 'betweenness' scores and lower nomination rank and no reputation are Naresh Kathat and Suresh Kathat (This is also the reason for the missing reputation scores for many elites in table 5.4 and 5.5). They are both moneylenders in the village. The moneylenders' profession is a tricky affair. Charging usurious rates of interests, and often trapping poor people into indebtedness, it is difficult to continue the profession without contacts (Catanach, 1970; Sharma, 1998). Therefore, since they keep contact with various types of persons, often irrespective of political party, to recover the money from borrowers, they tend to have a high

'degree' as well as high 'betweenness'. However, the type of relations or 'stories of the ties' (White, 1992) were qualitatively different between political leader and moneylenders,

Table 5.5 Comparative table of influence indicators of elites in Bajgaon

	Degree	Betweenness	Nomination rank	Reputation rank
Sanjay Patilkar (M)	10	28.8	1	1
Bauu Oswal (I)	5	4.9	2	2
Madhu Patil (M)	8	8.7	3	3
Kamlakar Shinde (L)	5	3.6	4	4
Rau Patil (M)	7	9.7	5	5
Mohammed Kareem (U)	8	9.9	6	8
Muneer Ali (U)	5	9.2	7	10
Gyanesh Oswal (I)	5	2.2	8	-
Kisan Patil (M)	2	0.3	8	7
Kumar Pandith (B)	2	0	9	-
Pramod Oswal (I)	6	7.6	10	9
Raju Shinde (L)	2	0	11	11
Ishwar Rai (M)	3	0	11	10
Naresh Kathat (I)	10	23.5	11	-
Suresh Kathat (I)	9	20.8	12	-
Jaiswal Lal (K)	0	0	12	-
Baba Patilkar (M)	4	0.6	13	6
Ramvilas Oswal (I)	4	0.3	13	-
Javed Nasir (T)	0	0	14	-
Prakash Patilkar (M)	3	0	15	-

Note: Capital letters in brackets indicate the caste of each elite. M=Maratha, I=Marwari, L=Hindu Lower caste (*Mahar*), U= Muslim high caste (*Pattan*), T = Muslim lower caste (*Tamboli*), B=Brahmin, K=*Kosti* (backward caste).

The correlation between 'betweenness' and the survey data of nomination rank and reputation rank are not significant. But the correlations between degree and both nomination rank (-.498) and reputation rank (-.590) are significant at 0.05 level.

compared with a tie between politician and politician. This has important implications in deciding whether Naresh and Suresh are as powerful as Sanjay in the community though they had high 'betweenness' and 'degree'. It is also striking that none of the moneylenders were given a reputation rank by community members, indicating their connections make them central and powerful though their activities have less legitimacy. However, the case of Abdul (who is a shopkeeper) in Saralgaon is exceptional. Since he is associated with the NGO, his reputation comes not only as a successful business person, but also as a person who is involved in activities as he takes the lead in community matters along with the NGO.

The case of Bauu Oswal is the exact opposite. Though he has high reputation and nomination, he is at the lower levels on the measures of degree and betweenness. Bauu Oswal is a 'religious healer'. Large numbers of people from nearby villages visit him to get a type of 'indigenous treatment' he had developed. Therefore, 'the politics of reputation' attached to him is very different from the power he has to control community matters. This is the weakness of the 'reputation technique' approach. Therefore, a mixture of methods is always beneficial in reaching a reliable conclusion

5.3.2.3 Between and within castes

Marathas and *Marwaris* together constitute 13 elites in Bajgaon. Out of the possible 42 relationships between the elites from the two castes, 12 relationships actually exist. Thus, the density of relationship among *Marwaris* and *Marathas* is 0.15. But, technically this density (*Maratha-Marwari*) is not comparable with other sub-group densities (e.g. *Maratha-Muslim*), which have different number of actors. So, a comparable table is prepared where the per cent of realised relations of the potential relations is reported (Table 5.6 and Table 5.7). It indicates *Marwaris* are a very close-knit community. This confirms other findings on this prosperous business community (Jhunjhunwala and Bhardwaj, 2002; Timberg, 1978). Lower 'cohesiveness' among the *Maratha* community is an indication of factional politics existing in the village. Muslim elites, a community often known for their solidarity, do not work together in Bajgaon particularly because of a property dispute over the Mosque (this will be described in later section).

Table 5.6 Per cent of potential relations between the elites of groups in Bajgaon

	<i>Maratha</i>	<i>Marwari</i>	Muslim
<i>Maratha</i>	.33	.28	.38
<i>Marwari</i>		.60	.27
Muslim			0

Source: Fieldwork data

A similar table for Saralgaon is not very informative (Table 5.7) particularly because there are only two dominant communities with more than one elite from their community. Other small communities (*adivasi*, Mali, *Marwari*, etc) each have one elite. Here too the

cohesiveness of the Muslim community seems to be problematic. A brief comment on this based on the qualitative data is worth recording here.

Table 5.7 Per cent of potential relations between the elites of groups in Saralgaon

	<i>Maratha</i>	Muslim
<i>Maratha</i>	26.7	16.6
Muslim		0

Source: Fieldwork data

When answering a question on why Hanifa Khan did not try to reach the leadership positions at *tehsil* level, Hanifa said “his political ambitions had to be limited to the village because communal forces are strong in the district and with the support of minority votes, it is not possible to gain a ticket at the district level”. Thus, wider communal politics have repercussions at village level. Currently Hanifa is a member of Shiv Sena, a political party favouring Hindu fundamentalism. His move towards Shiv Sena was required, since *Maratha* leaders of the village had strong links with district level leaders, who were *Marathas*. His disgruntlement with the district leadership forced him to make concessions on his community affiliations (Muslim) at the village level. While, Hanifa had earlier stood strongly with the Muslim community, when the political climate changed, he began to support the issues of ‘backward’ communities to garner the support from these groups.³¹ This alienated him from his own community members. Other Muslim members, who had earlier been united under him, scattered to various *Maratha* leaders.

In the case of Bajgaon, the conflict is between two important Muslim leaders: Muneer Ali and Mohammed Kareem. Traditionally the family of Mohammed acted as the guardian of the Mosque. But, when Mohammed claimed legal rights over the property of the Mosque in 1995, most of the Muslims protested against this. Muneer Ali acted as the leader of this protest to institute a court case against Mohammed. The dispute is still unsettled. However, on the political nature of this dispute Muneer summarily said: “it is a fight instigated by the *Marathas* to divide Muslims. They succeeded”.

³¹ Members of the *Mahar* community reported that they strongly suspected Hanifa of being behind the incident of desecrating the statue of Ambedkar with cow’s dung (by employing some goondas), and later acting as champion of standing for the interests of backward communities by ‘proving’ the case with police help.

Another Muslim notable from Bajgaon observed: “our names are being cut off from the BPL list, and no one from the Muslim community has Public Distribution Shops”. A cursory look at the BPL list and distribution according to social groups can be deceptive, since 20% of Muslim families appear in the BPL list, while the strength of the community is 28% in the village (20% of the village across all castes and religion appear in the BPL list). However, a further disaggregation of the Muslim community is required to understand the allegations by the Muslim notable. Muslims can be divided into three categories: 1) Pathans³² and Sheikhs, who are economically well off and they are mostly landholders or big traders; 2) Tamboli³³, who are categorised as OBC, run small trades such as selling fruits, bangles etc.; 3) Khatic³⁴, who are categorised as SC, are involved in animal slaughtering and related trades. Both Tamboli and Khatic are landless castes. 61.7 % of Muslims (n=47) who appear in the BPL list belongs to Pathans. According to the community members, it is a strategy by the *Marathas*, who have good contacts with officials who complete the BPL lists, to divide the Muslim community.

It is also interesting to observe the differential impact of ‘reservation’ (policy of positive discrimination) on the two communities. Hindu SC community members are invariably appointed for these reserved political posts. The Muslim power brokers do not recommend Muslim SC persons, since they are struggling for their own positions in the bargaining with the *Maratha* dominant castes. This has led a good number of Muslims moving towards the faction of Rau Patil, who belongs to the BJP, a party ideologically opposed to Muslims. I observed one old Muslim man hoisting the saffron flag (of the BJP) on top of his hut. When asked the reason he reported that it was to protest against the *Maratha* and Muslim leaders who were with the Congress Party which had denied housing scheme and

³² Warriors and Moneylenders of the Muslim community in Maharashtra.

³³ Originally ‘pan’ (betel leaf) traders of rural Maharashtra.

³⁴ Khatic literally means ‘one who cuts’. Among Muslims, the way an animal is to be slaughtered is important for ritual purposes. However, since the fusion of communal politics, this community often comes into conflict with the Hindus. In Bajgaon there was an incident of one Khatic household being challenged with a police case by the Hindu leaders under the pressure of Shiv Sena from a nearby city.

Old Age Benefit to himself and his wife, who live alone. These cleavages in the communities are next analysed in detail.

5.3.2.4 Factions as social structures of competition

As mentioned above, 'elites' are not a homogenous group and the competition for resources and support among them create divisions and factions in the community. This has important implications for the allocation of public funds, for example in the case of social protection benefits. (We will examine the impact of factions on social protection benefit allocation in the next chapter). At this stage, it is important to understand the nature of factions in the two case study villages.

Sociologists have taken an interest in the study of political factions in rural areas of India since the publication of Oscar Lewis' (1954) *Group dynamics in a North Indian village*. The studies since then have shed sufficient light on the phenomenon of factions. The chief elements of factions that emerge from this literature can be summarised as follows: factions are temporary groupings, and they change as different issues crop up (Pocock, 1957; Nicholas, 1965); membership in factions is largely a matter of how a wealthy man in the village draws support. There has also been intense debate on whether factions always existed in rural areas of India or whether it is a new phenomenon. However there is no satisfactory answer to this question (see opposing views in Beals [1961] and Singh [1961]) due to a lack of appropriate historical data. However, one useful outcome of this debate is the recognition that new administrative structures and resource opportunities from government have intensified factional conflicts at the local level.

Villages with a dominant caste may have divisions within this caste, and where there is no dominance by one caste, factions may be formed on an inter-caste basis. Caste or even households may be further divided into members of opposing factions. The leaders of factions, in negotiation with elders or leaders of smaller castes, gain the support of all the members or some of the members of smaller castes (Lewis, 1954; Beals, 1961; Berreman, 1963). Factions have a key political role at local level. They are often beyond class and caste

cleavages since the dominant caste and economically independent households may take the lead in this factionalism (Wade, 1988; Fukunaga, 1993), and draw support from villagers of all classes and castes through factional strategy.

Some argue that scarcity of resources is the root cause of factionalism (Foster, 1962; Singh, 1961). In the process of competition to gain scarce resources, the dominant and economically independent castes make various attempts to gain support for their cause. The issue could be deciding a place for a public well, a land dispute about where to construct a road, or a village election. This focus of competition between factions is relevant to this study since the restricted number of social protection benefits has to be distributed among a large number of applicants. When we speak of gaining resources through competition, it is players in the competition and their mechanisms, which are the reference points. Therefore, the structural explanations could be bypassed by the strategies and mechanisms of the individual actor. It is how the structure facilitates or constrains an actor that is of interest to an analyst.³⁵ Studying the Kond tribals in the Indian state of Orissa, Bailey (1969) has shown how an individual was able to break his allegiance from group, caste and structure for his individual benefit.

Social structure, though it has a wide range of interpretations, “refers to the patterns discernible in social life, the regularities observed, the configurations detected. But the nature of the patterns and shapes one can recognize in the welter of human experience depends on one’s perspective” (Blau, 1976: 3). The perspective adopted here is that social structure can be identified by examining the interaction patterns. The importance of social relations lies in the fact that competition for resources is a matter of relations (Burt, 1992) in close-knit communities where there is ‘face-to-face relationship’³⁶.

From a relational perspective, it can be hypothesised that those who interact or network amongst themselves exclusively form a faction. Though similar persons come

³⁵ See Gluckman’s works (1956, 1965) on the importance of ‘process’ over ‘structure’.

³⁶ Some scholars have preferred to call these relationships as ‘back to back relationships’ because of the petty politics that can take place amongst the persons who interact everyday through strategies such as hiding information and ditching one another.

together to form factions, “individuals associate with one another because they all profit from their association” (Blau, 1964:15). Network analysts use the technique of ‘block modelling’ to identify factions. Block modelling is a technique of repeatedly rearranging the data until one observes some patterns (Borgatti *et al*, 2002). Since the errors in each rearrangement could be observed, the model that has the least error and a reasonable number of factions/groups (in this research I have considered what matches the ethnographic knowledge as well) could also be taken as a parsimonious block model. Table 5.8 provides a parsimonious block model for the elites of Bajgaon. This is a rearrangement of Figure 5.1 above. Empty cells indicate that there is no interaction between the two elites.

Table 5.8: Group adjacency matrix of block models of factions in Bajgaon

	Bauu	Raju	Kumar	Ramvilas	Ishwar	Muneer	Kisan	Pramod	Rau	prakash	Suresh	Gyanesh	Sanjay	Naresh	Baba	Kamlakar	Madhu	Mohamm
Bauu	X		X	X				X			X		X					
Raju		X											X			X		
Kumar	X		X								X							
Ramvilas	X			X					X		X		X					
Ishwar					X	X		X	X									
Muneer					X	X	X	X	X				X					
Kisan						X	X							X				
Pramod	X				X	X		X	X			X						X
Rau				X	X	X		X	X		X			X				X
Prakash										X			X		X		X	
Suresh	X		X	X					X		X		X	X		X	X	X
Gyanesh								X				X	X	X			X	X
Sanjay		X				X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Naresh	X			X			X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Baba										X			X		X		X	X
Kamlakar		X									X		X	X		X	X	
Madhu										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mohammed								X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X

Error: 70 out of (18*18)

Density table

	1	2	3
1	0.33	0.10	0.19
2	0.10	0.70	0.16
3	0.19	0.16	0.67

The results point to two competing factions in the community.³⁷ Often, through ethnographic investigation in rural areas, one can identify the faction leaders. But membership of factions is difficult since factions have a fluid, voluntary membership, as explained earlier. This is the chief advantage of network data for community power structure studies.

Both factions have political leaders from the Hindu and Muslim communities, landlords, moneylenders and shopkeepers. In both factions, there are people from *Marathas*, *Marwaris* and Muslim communities. Thus, this evidence shows that in Bajgaon, factions cut across caste and economic activities. The presence of Kamlakar (who is a lower caste *Mahar* leader) in one of the factions is significant, indicating that *Mahar* community is co-opted by *Marathas*.

Ethnographic data shows (this could also be derived by calculating from the network data mathematically [see Pellissery, 2005c]) that Sanjay is the leader of the first faction and Rau is the leader of the second faction. Support for these faction leaders also comes from two different political parties.³⁸ The crux of party politics in Bajgaon is the rivalry between Sanjay Patilkar and Rau Patil. Though both of them belong to the *Maratha* caste, they head two different factions in the village at present. Rau used to be right hand supporter of Sanjay's uncle (ex-MLA), and was made village council president in 1984. Eventually Rau carved out his own support base and by 1998, they parted ways. Kisan Patil (another elite) was installed by the ex-MLA as the village council president. Rau informed the researcher that continuous neglect of Rau's proposals by Patilkar prompted Rau to move towards the BJP, which was taking root in the region at that time. Later, Rau was able to get elected as the *panchayat samiti* president (at *tehsil* level) on the BJP's ticket in 2001. Later as Kisan too started being

³⁷ Though there is a third group (Bauu, Raju, Kumar and Ramvilas), it cannot be termed a faction in itself since the density of this faction is very low at 0.33. These are people who are not in any factions since the number of ties they have with other faction members are low. However, three of them show a strong tendency towards the third faction. Also note that isolates are removed from analysis since they do not have any contacts; they are not likely to be in any faction.

³⁸ The ideological differences of political parties at national level are not the concern at local level. Membership in political parties by the village elites is to gain support from outside the village and higher levels of *tehsil* and district (Lele, 1981). For example, it can be observed that though the BJP, as a national political party, supports Hindu fundamentalism, the leaders at village level have no difficulty in getting along with Muslim members of the village.

neglected by Patilkar, he too moved away and started to co-operate with Rau on certain issues. In this analysis Kisan is connected with both Rau and Sanjay only indirectly (through one mediator).

Let us examine the pattern of factionalism in Saralgaon. Table 5.9 presents a parsimonious block model of the factions in Saralgaon. As mentioned above in the section on the distribution of the power of the elites, there were two leaders with high nomination and reputation ranks in Saralgaon: Mohan and Hanifa. We see that they are in different factions here.

Table 5.9 Group adjacency matrix of block models of factions in Saralgaon

	Kopri	NGO	Sunder	Mohan	Abdul		Hanifa	Milind	Prahlad	Sandeep	Sopu		Ismail	Sopan	Ganesh	Varun	Ahmed
Kopri	X	X															
NGO	X	X	X		X												X
Sunder		X	X	X													
Mohan			X	X	X										X		
Abdul		X		X	X				X							X	
Hanifa							X	X	X	X							
Milind							X	X									
Prahlad					X		X		X		X						
Sandeep							X			X	X					X	
Sopu									X	X	X						
Ismail													X	X			
Sopan													X	X		X	X
Ganesh				X											X		X
Varun					X					X				X		X	
Ahmed		X												X	X		X

Error: 42 of (15*15)

Density table

	1	2	3
1	0.50	0.04	0.12
2	0.04	0.50	0.04
3	0.12	0.04	0.40

This indicates that they are leaders of the two leading factions in the village. However, here is also a third group here. But ethnographic information shows that Sopan and Varun are from outside the village and they are involved in factional politics to the same

degree as the factions of Mohan and Hanifa. Others in the third faction are connected with these outsiders for economic activities. Therefore, strictly speaking there are only two factions in Saralgaon. However, the competition between factions was of low intensity in comparison with that of Bajgaon since the density of relationship between the leaders was lower here. As we have seen above, since the village is geographically dispersed and dominance of a single caste was not evident, power was not concentrated in a few hands. Negotiations took place with smaller castes on issues of special interest to that caste³⁹, and a change in the political equations took place accordingly.

The case of Milind, who was a *Chamar* lower caste elite, was interesting. He often joined hands with Mohan (*Maratha*) in the village elections. However, three years ago when Milind was denied the ownership of the village public distribution centre after he had obtained it with his efforts in the district office, he decided to change sides. This brought success to Hanifa's faction since Milind was able to bring across the votes of the lower castes.

Conclusion

About forty years ago, studying village politics in South India, Beteille (1965: 184) commented about the changing nature of politics as follows:

“The most important feature of the new political order is the emergence of networks of interpersonal relations which ramify in every direction. The creation of new political opportunities and new bases of power has provided congenial conditions for the development of elaborate networks of patronage. Such networks serve to link the village with territorial units of increasingly wider scope, and they also provide interlinkages between caste, class, panchayat and political party”.

However, the aspect of network has not been studied seriously by researchers, though there have been a number of studies on elites since then. One of the reasons for this was lack of analytical and measurement tools for networks, which have been developed recently. It is this new opportunity which this study is using to analyse local politics.

³⁹ How the confidence of the tribal community in Saralgaon was won over by offering a water hand pump in their locality during election, the present village council president was elected by gaining their votes, is a significant example of this process.

In this chapter we have seen, briefly, the wider politics in the state of Maharashtra, and local politics of two case villages in detail. As the chapter is entitled 'power structure', it is evident that the underlying social and economic structures that shape the political processes (not merely electoral politics) are the subject matter of inquiry. The dominant caste of *Marathas* has significant power in local politics. Though *Marwaris* are well educated and economically well off, they are not politically powerful, except through their linkages with *Marathas*. Rather, the economically less important *Mahars* who are better mobilised have more political power. The smaller occupational castes have to depend on the dominant caste, especially *Marathas*, for their political significance.

Though the local level public officials (*talatti*, *gram sevak*) belong to high castes they relied on the power of the dominant castes in the village to exercise their authority. This was the reason for the exclusion of officials from the list of elites identified using the 'reputation technique'. This has important implications for policy implementation, as we will see in the next chapter.

There were many elites from each dominant caste (*Maratha*, *Marwari*). From less powerful castes one single elite was acting as powerbroker on behalf of the caste. Though the elites came from all professions, most of these were landlord-politicians. The key role of elites was not merely because of their resourcefulness and expertise, but their contacts and ability to bridge 'structural holes'. The power and reputation of the elites varied depending on both their personal attributes (ascriptive or education) as well as contacts with other elites in the village, and the contacts outside the village.

Elites, far from being homogeneous, were divided among themselves through factions. These factions were associated with political parties as well. These factions cut across caste, religion and class identities, since faction leaders attempt to increase their support from the sources in the community in the competition to gain resources, to settle disputes or distribute resources in their favour. Even though caste inequalities are deeply rooted even inside factions, these factions provide a platform to collectively bargain for redistribution and for public funds.

What are the implications of these political factions for access of the poorest households to the social protection benefits? Do people gain social protection benefits without the knowledge and support of these leaders? Do all the leaders have the same amount of power to obtain public funds through their contact with bureaucracy? In the next chapter we will investigate these questions and try to see how social protection claimants are included or excluded through these political elites and their networks.

Chapter 6

Process evaluation of the social protection programmes

“The top leadership of the state has limited control or effective authority over their actual operations. The local people on their part approach their encounters with the state at this level with appropriate caution but total malfeasance. Since it belongs outside their moral community, it is just an opportunity to milk the state cow; one has only to be wary that the cow sometimes kicks nasty. The disproportionate benefits, of course, go to those who have the resources, connections and dexterity to manipulate the milking process” (Bardhan, 1997: 190-91).

In chapter four we saw the extent of exclusion of eligible persons in social protection programmes, and in chapter five we saw the differences in power, and possible networks for power among the claimants, officials and local elites. In this chapter, by looking at the implementation processes of the social protection programme we will examine how the different actors in the power structure interact in the process of claiming and receiving benefits. As mentioned in the methods chapter, the effect of unequal power relations is revealed through observation of the processes rather than the outcomes.

The processes of claiming a welfare right and its success involve the claimant interacting with a number of persons. Since the claimant is a poor person almost by the defining criteria for application, these processes tend to take place within a framework of very unequal relationships. Therefore, the processes involved are important for the purpose of understanding the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. It is through detailed observation of various processes of allocation that we will be able to understand how access is structured. These processes of interaction may be based on the underlying social, political and economic interests of those involved. Besides, the actors give *meaning* to their actions, to promote their *interests*, through their interactions and interpretation of the relevant policy (e.g. eligibility

rules, target group, definition of need) during the implementation process.¹ For example, informal care provided to the applicant, or the sharing of the public fund with other household members may crucially affect the way 'need' is perceived. Understanding these interests, meanings and interactions constitutes the chief facet of the politics of social protection.

This chapter is organised in two sections. The first section deals with an income enhancement (public works) programme and the second section the income maintenance programme. Each section will end with critical comments on the process deficits of implementation, and finally at the end of the chapter the social origins of the process deficits will be discussed to understand the way access is structured.

6.1 Income enhancement programmes

In this section we will examine the detailed processes of implementation of the EGS, which we have chosen as the promotive programme of state intervention. We will trace the important stages from registration of beneficiaries, identification of EGS projects, implementation of the scheme, to the payment of wages.

6.1.1 Registration procedures

The EGS Act (8,1) requires a job seeker to register with the *talati* (village revenue officer) or *Gramsevak* (village level worker) through an elaborate procedure. The purpose of this registration is to verify that those who participate in EGS are from the poorer sections, and also to determine the demand for an EGS project in a locality. The EGS officer at the *tehsil* level is expected to obtain a list of registered persons from the village office. The same officer collects the list of EGS works in the *tehsil* from the district collector and he then directs the implementing agency to provide work for the registered workers (GoM, 2003b).

But many officials feel that registration is contrary to self-selection in principle. As a result, in fact registration does not take place². The household survey in the fieldwork villages

¹ According to Braun (1999) by considering both meaning and interests one can meaningfully incorporate rational choice and the ideational approach of policy making and implementation.

² Krishnaraj *et al* (2004:1603) also reports that the registration process has been suspended for the past 15 years since "these registers failed to provide the correct picture of local demand".

revealed that 84% of the labourers, among those who had worked in EGS at least once, had never registered. It is also unrealistic to expect people who are poor and illiterate to be aware of their rights and to register for a programme that may take place in the future (Bhatia, 2000). However, without some sort of registration, it is not possible to show or legitimise the demand for work³ in a locality. Therefore, the village elites with the help of labour organisers (*mukadam*)⁴ produce a list of labourers ‘who seek’ manual labour. The latest available list, when the fieldwork was undertaken, was that of 2001. (Officially, though the *mukadams* are not engaged with EGS projects, we will see that they act as the ‘glue’ between officials, politicians and workers in the implementation of EGS’s in Marathwada).

In Bajgaon, Sakurao⁵, one of the *mukadams*, produced the list. He told the researcher: “I went to each house door by door asking who wanted to work in the EGS programme and convinced them of the need to register. People whose names are in the list are the poorest people of the village”. Sakurao sounded as though he was extending a helping hand to other community members to provide jobs for them. He concealed his interest in the possibility of obtaining a commission from each labourer when the EGS programme started in the village. When I examined the list, which had 143 names, the first nine names were those of different

³ The EGS Act stipulates that EGS work can start if there are 50 workers available.

⁴ *Mukadam* literally means supervisor. But *mukadams* are described in different ways by researchers. ‘Labour-brokers’, ‘labour-agents’ are some of them. The reason for these different names is that their responsibilities are more than that of a supervisor. They are very tactful persons with leadership abilities living in the community. They have good knowledge of each household. They know who from each household is capable of doing what sort of work, who is skilled, who is unskilled, who is a hard worker, who is lazy, who needs money etc. They also are in constant touch with contractors or landlords. According to the work availability from the contractors and landlords, they contact households with suitable labourer. The labourers also go and ask the *mukadam* if there are any jobs for them. There are *mukadams* for different types of jobs (e.g. agricultural jobs, sugarcane cutting, road making, digging), caste and gender. It is the *mukadam*’s responsibility to get the labourers to the work site in time, give sufficient rest to labourers, handle emergencies, motivate the workers, measure the work done by the labourer, handle disputes amongst workers, and dispel any disputes that may arise from payment. A *mukadam* may choose to work as a daily wage labourer with other labourers and remain a leader as well as their supervisor. The *mukadams* are given a commission (often five per cent of the wage of the labourer). Daily wageworkers from the non-farm sector usually attach themselves to a *mukadam* to ensure continuity of employment. Agricultural daily wageworkers need not be associated with a *mukadam* because a regular farm worker for a landlord would inform people of the availability of work. See Rudra and Bardhan (1983), and Rogaly, *et al* (2001) for West Bengal, and Breman [1993] for Gujarat for similar details on *mukadam*.

⁵ Sakurao is a 53-year-old man from the Maratha caste and a distant relative of Sanjay Patilkar, the main village elite. *Sakurao* has strong political connections especially through the Congress Party. However, for the past three years he has not been active since the opposition party is in power in *Panchayat Samiti* and he is not able to obtain work.

mukadams in the village who were economically well placed. This indicates how the process of registration starts. A poor person may be reluctant to take initiative to register his/her name. But, when the list is produced to a poor household with some names already on it, an unemployed person is likely to put his/her name as well on the list with the hope that some benefit may come in the future.

The interviews with people whose names were on the list were instructive. One of these respondents said: “When Sakurao asked me to put my name on the list, I did not hesitate. I paid Rs.10 for putting my name on the list. God knows what benefit may come”. Another respondent showed me the EGS registration card and said: “Sakurao said that you would get work and free grains if you register. He took Rs.10 as a registration fee. But I received neither grains, nor work”. These responses reveal that the measure of ‘labour demand’ in the locality, based on the list, is a mix of enticement and cajolery. Significantly, the list could not be used to sample for the survey, because only two people from the list were currently working on the EGS programme.

In fact, the ability to produce a list of names acts as an informal criterion at the *tehsil* level to make a claim to start an EGS project in a particular village. Usually only a person with some political influence at local level can produce a list of names of those seeking work. At the time of making payment there is no cross-check as to whether the names on the payroll are the names of those who are registered. Because the programme is based on ‘self-selection’, the implementing agency could say that the job was provided to the person who asked for work. Ultimately the ‘list making’ and registration has the role of a ritual (see for a theoretical discussion on this in Chatterjee, 2004: 78) to be followed to meet the legal requirements of the EGS Act and thereby obtain legitimacy for the programme.

6.1.2 EGS project identification

Detailed policy guidelines on how an EGS project should start is provided in chapter four. The mismatch between policy guidelines for the EGS and difficulties of project identification has been reported in previous research (Gaiha, 1996; Krishnaraj *et al*, 2004).

But these studies do not delve into the politics of identification of EGS projects. Rather, these scholars are more concerned with whether the projects which should create durable assets meet the project requirements or not. But, in my view an inquiry into the politics of project identification can serve two purposes. It can identify the reasons for the failure of identifying the projects that create durable assets as well as understand the stakeholders of the projects. It is because the local elites become serious stakeholders in the EGS projects through the politics of project identification that the exclusion of the eligible job seekers happens.

When I inquired how a project is selected one Junior Engineer (JE) stated: “We do not have enough knowledge about the village and where the work should be started. We take the advice of the people’s representatives in this matter”. All the JE’s the researcher came across, had come from neighbouring districts on government posting. This lack of knowledge of the official of the communities helps the local elites to get a serious hold over the EGS projects. In fact, the starting point of an EGS project is typically a local political elite. A member of the local elite, who knows that he would get political backing at district level to get the project granted, identifies a work site where an EGS project could be carved out. One local elite (Ishwar Rai), who was running an EGS project when the fieldwork was going on, revealed the process as below:

“Once I identified the suitable farms, where the percolation tank could be built, I approached the owners of those farms. Through a number of visits I convinced them how the percolation tank can be useful to their farm. For example, I told them they could get more water in the well...This is the most difficult and time consuming activity to get an EGS project started. Once they gave consent, I went to the JE (of the irrigation department) at his home and told him about the project. JE knew I was a party worker. I invited the JE for lunch to my home. I treated him well and showed him the potential site. Then it is the JE’s duty to prepare a suitable project with technical details. The project then comes up for decision making at the EGS collector’s office. Our party’s Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) pulls the strings to get the project granted. The MLA has to do it because when election comes up, it is we, the party workers, who canvas the votes for him”.

Ishwar gives only a small technical role to the JE in his narration⁶, though the JE is actually the implementing agency⁷. He feels he handles two important bottlenecks in the

⁶ See Baviskar (2004: 36) where a contractor is shown as the real implementer and official agency of watershed programme as cosmetic in Madhya Pradesh

implementation process, namely getting consent from the farm owners⁸ and political backing from the MLA at the decision making stage on the project. He knows the JE cannot handle these bottlenecks. Thus, from the start, it is a project over which the local elite has a strong hold.

The policy guidelines on identification of the projects state: “the Collector shall place the blueprints for approval before the District Level Committee, which shall give its approval after taking into consideration the view of the Panchayat Samiti Level Committees” (EGS Act 7.2.iii). Thus the district level EGS committee has an overriding power over both *tehsil* committees and district collector. This is the reason why the district level committee’s decision making pattern becomes important. How the committee is constituted is dealt with in 6.2.2. This committee includes not only the MLA’s elected from the respective constituencies but also the guardian ministers. So, if the MLA of a given district belongs to the opposition party, there will be a tussle with the guardian minister, who is from the ruling party, to obtain projects⁹ for their area. The guardian minister (in charge of a district) wants to give projects to the local elites, who support the ruling party, while the MLA from the opposition party wants to satisfy his intermediaries with projects and to strengthen his own party at local level (for a similar situation from Bihar see Veron et al., 2003. How such conflicts are resolved will be discussed in next chapter).

This account of project selection shows that only those villages where the local elites have contacts with MLAs or district level leaders, could demand projects. Other demands

⁷ In fact, the EGS Act does not specify the JE as the implementing agency. Act 2(d) specifies any responsible government body for carrying out the scheme as the implementing agency. However, for practical reasons the JE becomes the implementing agency since it is he who is required to go to the work site to direct how the work should be carried out according to the blue print. The *tehsildar* is expected to visit the site for supervision purposes and to complete the regular evaluation forms. However, this happens rarely.

⁸ The JE confirmed this when he compared EGS projects with other Public Works Department projects such as roads etc., where there is compulsory acquisition of the necessary land. For an EGS project, the farm owners need to give consent for work to be carried out on their land. There is compensation at the price of local rates and there is corruption associated with these assessments. For example one of the local elites on whose farms a percolation tank was being constructed was given one lakh rupees for his well, which would be submerged, within the percolation tank. He said he (the elite) was happy for the project to go ahead because the well was shallow and dry.

⁹ See the Newspaper report of such a tussle in *Sakal* dated 22nd November, 2003.

were likely to be neglected or delayed by the officials at *tehsil* levels. Local newspaper reports of protests, led by civil society organisations, to start EGS projects in particular villages were abundant (see also exclusion of case study villages in NCAER (2002: 305).¹⁰ Bagchee's (2005) articulation in this regard is worth recording here:

“There were several ways and occasions by which the demand was articulated and assessed, ranging from written petitions (with thumb impressions of more than 50 persons) submitted to touring officers, to protests and arguments in EGS review meetings, to questions, calling attention notices, and no-confidence motions in the legislature on the government's failure to meet its obligation under the guarantee. So ultimately, the need for employment was always politically articulated, and it is true that some pockets and districts with more active politicians, had greater “voice”, than did some others”.

This explains how some geographic areas could be excluded from the EGS projects for years.

Another result of this sort of project selection was turning down quality projects if they came from opposition party. A poor quality project (a road that may be washed away in the next rainy season) may be preferred if sufficient political support could be mobilised. This aspect has not received any attention from the state despite some advocacy to combat this (Desarda, 2001; Bavadam, 2003).

This ‘granting’ of projects as demanded by local elites has not only symbolic value in the form of approval for the local leadership but also involved monetary benefit¹¹. But, for this thesis it is important to recognise that this process of decision-making as described above, gives informal ownership of the project to the local elites. It has been shown by micro-economists that it is the ownership structure that ultimately decides the efficiency of allocation (Mkandawire, 2004: 16) and, in the case of the EGS, who should be included as labourers. We will see this in operation in 6.1.4.

¹⁰ Such public protests were publicity events for small civil society organisations, often culminating in submitting a memorandum to the *tehsildar* or district collector. Such externally induced protests failed to persist in their demands to gain the desired projects. See Pellissery (2006a) for more instances.

¹¹ Often, these local elites are contractors, or have strong links with contractors. Some of them are party workers who assume the role of ‘contractor’ only to carry out EGS projects, obviously, because of the economic benefit involved in it. (A typical percolation tank may cost 1.5 to 2 million rupees. The contractor makes a profit of 10-15 per cent by undertaking such a work).

6.1.3 The implementation of the project

An EGS project has to be directly implemented by the respective department and a government body (e.g. the JE being responsible for a particular project and reporting to the Senior Engineer and co-ordinating the work with the *tehsildar*) according to the statutes of the EGS Act 2(d). Subcontracting is not allowed¹². But a natural question arises as to how the officials (especially the JE) could implement the project when the local elite has a strong stake in the project, as we have seen above in the process of identifying the project. Besides, a JE will have a number of EGS projects under his control especially in the lean agricultural season when EGS projects are carried out in large numbers.

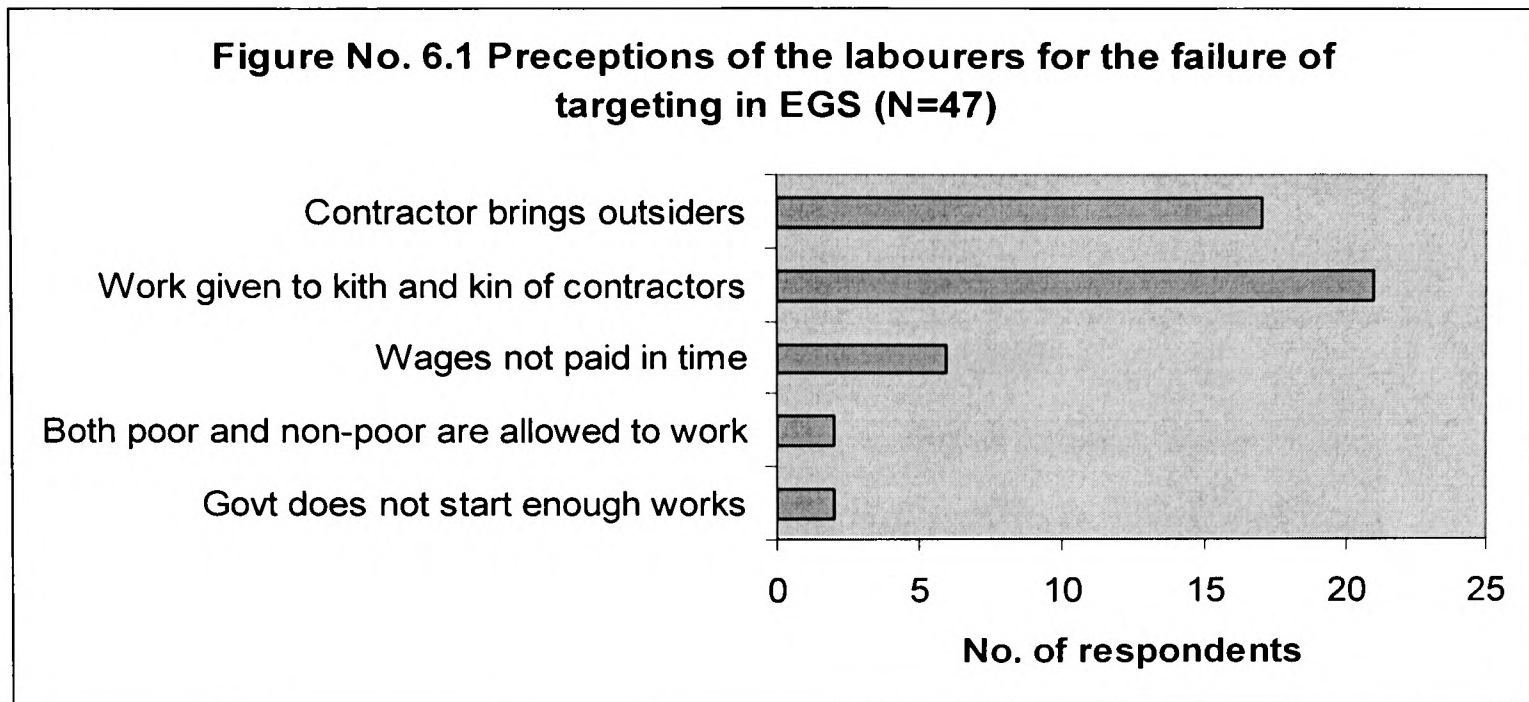
In practice, what takes place is a division of responsibilities between the JE and the local elite when implementing the project. This informal division of responsibilities is one of the strategies of front line public officials to gain compliance from the local elites. Organising the labourers, managing the labourers, distribution of works to labourers and supervision of works are done by the local elite. Keeping the attendance register of labourers, measurement of the work done, obtaining funds, from the government department and the distribution of money to the people are the responsibility of the JE. But there is no hard and fast division of these duties. Often, the local elite does not allow the JE to take his share of responsibilities (especially keeping the attendance register¹³) without the presence of a member of the elite.

In practical terms of supervision of the worksite, too, the JE found the involvement of local leaders to be very useful. In one *tehsil*, there may be 8-12 JE's from all the relevant PWD's. But the number of EGS projects at a given time in one *tehsil* were about 60. This

¹² In similar Public Works Programmes in South Africa it was noticed that the implementing agency was a Non-Governmental Organisation and government officials merely supervised whether guidelines had been observed (Adato and Haddad, 2002). However, the reasons for not allowing subcontracting of EGS are: a) If the job is subcontracted, the contractor may not provide a good number of facilities which are stipulated in the EGS Act; b) Labour market imperfections, which exist in the private sector cannot be mitigated if the public work programmes are subcontracted; c) the poorest sections of workers may not be given the job by the contractors.

¹³ Some studies consider that the State could appoint a middle person to keep the muster rolls (Krishnaraj *et al*, 2004). However, the officials at the *tehsil* level whom I interviewed said this practice was illegal. The EGS Act does not make any mention of this issue.

meant one JE was supervising multiple locations simultaneously. For similar supervision difficulties in Bihar and West Bengal see Veron et al. (2003).



On the one hand discursive understanding of the labourers whether they would be given work, at a project site where the local elite takes the lead, made them hesitate to request a job, had implications for the power accruing mechanisms of the elites which are discussed in detail in the next chapter. On the other hand, labourers mostly perceived the involvement of the *mukadam*/contractor as the chief reason for the inclusion of the poorest people in EGS projects (see Figure 6.1). This aspect of how far the claimants would be able to successfully deal with the officials, without the mediation of the local elites, is an important aspect of income maintenance as well to be covered in the next section.

6.1.4 Selection of workers

The targeted beneficiaries of the EGS programme come into the picture only at the selection stage. EGS regulation, as we have seen earlier, is that workers self-select by demanding work. To facilitate this self-selection, the government is required to publicise the work in advance and put up notice boards at the work site, an activity which is almost never done. As a result rather than self-selection, the person who implements the project also typically selects the workers. If too many workers demand a job, some form of selection has

to be made by the person who implements the project. Thus, selection from a large number of potential labourers becomes inevitable.

During the survey, of the 58 persons who had worked at least once in EGS, 23 of them reported they were given information about the work by *mukadam*. Twenty of them reported they were given information by caste people. Only one person reported he was given the information by JE, and that person was a caste leader meant to organise other caste members. This detail of workers' selection is important to be examined.

During the fieldwork it was observed that in the process of obtaining labour to carry out an EGS project, a local leader may approach people from the village and tell them about the work. But if he has some connections with a *mukadam*, the labourers may be recruited through this route. In such cases the *mukadam*'s commission is deducted from the labourers' wages. The involvement of the *mukadam* in the project is totally dependent on the local elites. The type of contacts the elite has (especially if the elite's network includes a *mukadam*), how much profit the elite wants to make from the project (to avoid sharing the projects' benefits with the *mukadam*¹⁴), whether the elite wants to be perceived by the local people as a direct job provider (by avoiding the *mukadam*) and whether the elite is a *mukadam*/contractor himself are some of the determinants here.

Sometimes, the contractor/*mukadam* who implements the EGS project brings in workers from other regions. Often this is not because there is scarcity of labour in the locality, but rather because it is easy to exploit migrant labour as they have no roots in the locality (Radhakrishnan and Sharma, 1998; Breman, 2003). It is here that the question of who would travel to take up to such hard work, e.g., digging and shifting earth, arises. Castes largely emerge from the division of labour. Harriss-White (2003) describes how the labour market is enmeshed with the social structures; certain castes specialise in doing certain work. For example, *Vadar* is a caste specialising in stone breaking. They would easily take on the EGS work since it is very similar to their specialised caste job. The community leader of the *Vadar*

¹⁴ However, if the elite has a *mukadam* who is able to bring labourers from a distant village, this may result in significantly lower wages and more profit.

caste would negotiate with a *mukadam* and the whole caste would engage in the EGS project. In another village, the *Vadar* caste had captured the EGS work and other castes were virtually prevented from doing the work. The *Laman* and *Banjara* castes, which has found its traditional caste jobs to be declining, and no longer profitable, has found EGS to be a very attractive option. These castes have been neglected by the mainstream politics of the village since they are few in number. Inclusion of them into EGS schemes may be a political strategy to win their support to newly formed parties such as the BJP and NCP. Out of the eight EGS sites the researcher visited much of the work was being carried out by these castes (see the Table 6.1). Of course, the *Laman*, *Banjara* and *Vadar* labourers are not rich people. But, EGS work does not allow them to improve their situation either. Often their labour is exploited by the *mukadam* and the children from these households are also involved in EGS work, indicating that illiteracy and poor quality of life will be perpetuated generation after generation, despite being included in the EGS scheme.

The informal way that EGS has been implemented, shows that inequalities in the rural labour market could also be reflected EGS work-sites. There is ample scope for people to be denied the opportunity to work on an EGS project, evidence for which we have seen in chapter four. However, the observations during the fieldwork showed that denial of work was not a big problem. A more serious problem was people's implicit understanding of the chance of being given work, and their deciding not to try for a job if they perceive the chances of refusal to be high. This discursive understanding of the citizens and its impact on politicians will be examined in next chapter.

Though EGS implementation was informal, a gender bias in wage differences was not found. This was particularly due to the way in which the households (involving both males and females) shared the responsibilities at the EGS work site. This aspect is taken up in more detail in chapter eight.

Table 6.1 Stakeholders and types of workers in Eight EGS sites

District	Type of work	In charge	Relationship of in charge to village	Type of workers
District A with BJP MLA's constituency	Percolation tank	BJP worker	Wife's village	44 Tribal workers from different district (300 kms) brought by a <i>mukadam</i>
-as above-	Percolation tank	Shiv Sena worker	Neighbouring village	53 labourers of Banjara caste from 60 kms away brought by a <i>mukadam</i>
-as above-	Land development	BJP worker	Called in by another BJP worker from the village to execute the project	<i>Vadar</i> caste of the village captured work. 15-20 workers in total.
-as above-	Bunds to prevent soil erosion	BJP worker (professional <i>mukadam</i>)	Own village	Work is divided amongst <i>Laman</i> , <i>Kaykadi</i> and <i>Vadar</i> castes from neighbouring villages. A few <i>Marathas</i> also take part. <i>Mahars</i> of the local village were prevented from taking part. 30-35 workers in total.
District B with NCP MLA's constituency	Road	NCP worker-JE	Surpanch village (elected council president)	All castes of village, but mostly <i>Marathas</i> which is numerically the largest caste in the village (some complaints of exclusion for non-NCP labourers). About 150 workers.
-as above-	Percolation tank	NCP worker	Own village	<i>Laman</i> from 30 kms away and a few villagers especially from <i>Mahar</i> and Neo-buddhists. 28 workers.
-as above-	Road	NCP worker-JE	Neighbouring village	<i>Vadar</i> caste brought by <i>mukadam</i> from neighbouring market village. 20-25 workers.
-as above-	Percolation tank	Congress worker	Neighbouring village	<i>Laman</i> and <i>Banjara</i> castes from nearby villages divided the work. Some <i>Marathas</i> and <i>Mahar</i> also work there. 38 workers.

A note on source: These sites were randomly visited in two districts where field work was being carried out. Some 3-5 hours were spent at each site talking to workers, the *mukadam*, the village community and local leaders. At some sites more than one visit was carried out. Most of the figures were supplied by the *mukadam*. Some are from the muster rolls. The figures in column five may not be completely accurate.

6.1.5 Payment of wages

Though the EGS Act does not specify when the wages should be paid, the informal rule was that the work would be measured every week and payment made every fortnight. However, the delay in payment was often two to three months. There were two explanations provided by the officials. A good number of officials including the JE, who was suspicious of the researcher's motives, stated that money came in time and there was no delay. But, the District collector, who was more frank with the researcher, said: "A delay of two months for payment is natural given the government officialdom. Every one thinks the collector has lot of powers. But, it is so difficult to get the files from the subordinates professionally. The lower level officials have their own union and political backing from the local area. It is not easy to put pressure on them and to get the work done. They do more work if I am good to them". The district collector's (who was drawn from the Indian Administrative Service) reference was to the EGS collector (who was drawn from the Maharashtra Public Service Commission)¹⁵. Observations during the visits to meet the EGS collector showed that the EGS collector's office was busy with local politicians, each spending time getting particular EGS projects sanctioned for their party workers.

In the context of delay in paying wages, the *mukadam*'s presence can be beneficial to the workers. The *mukadam* makes sure that some advance money is given to his workers every week on 'market day'. This is an important strategy to keep the workers in his fold and to gain their loyalty. The JE was aware of the practice and said: "people like to deal with the *mukadam*, because he is one among them and they get their money in time. People know that to get money from the government is not easy. But to obtain money from their own people, is

¹⁵ The appointment of the District Collector from an All India cadre and other officials from the MPSC is very important for the federal nature of the Indian state. But, the relationship between these institutions is not without problems. Commenting on the income maintenance programmes of central government, an official with the grade of Deputy Collector commented: "IAS officials come from Delhi. They are educated in English medium schools and they plan schemes sitting in glasshouses. We are implementing the schemes and we know how unviable the schemes are". Greater co-ordination is a pre-condition for effective implementation of the schemes. Often, this gap between two levels of officials is exploited by the local elites to get their plans implemented and to thwart the objectives of the scheme.

comparatively easy". Sometimes, a *mukadam* goes to the limit of borrowing on interest from moneylenders to pay his labourers. This is his commitment to the labourers, because, a *mukadam*'s efficiency lies in his ability to get labourers whenever he wants, and the way to ensure that is to pay them in time. On the other hand an official is not worried about getting labourers. He merely wants to complete the work if the labourers are available and the work will be stopped if the labourers are not available. The *mukadam* does not settle the account of labourers when the work is finished. He tells the labourers that he will settle the account when the money has been received from the government office.

Often there is two to three months delay in obtaining EGS funds from the government treasury to the *tehsil* office, and finally to the *mukadam*. Labourers who participate in the EGS programme cannot wait for three months. They live on a daily wage. It is here the other options in labour market crucially affect the EGS project, an aspect which is dealt in detail with in the next chapter.

Table 6.2 Process deficits and effects of income enhancement programme

Process deficits	Possible effects
Confused approach to registration, which is against the principle of self-selection	Chance for the elite to manufacture lists of workers and thus to create artificial labour demand
Project identification is largely based on demands made through political representatives	Areas which fail to make demands are likely to be excluded. The persons who make demands and succeed have informal authority over the projects
Informalisation of implementation through the division of duties between official and the elite	Inequalities of labour market are found in EGS sites too
Lack of publicising the work in advance	Uncertainty of work leads people to seek other avenues which may be economically less beneficial
Selection of workers by the informal implementers (<i>mukadam</i>)	Exclusion is possible based on social identities; Advance payment given.
Mechanisms to check the muster-rolls are not used	Profitable business for the elites through bogus muster-rolls
Delay in payment	Could lead to taking up of work by other sources e.g. tied labour
Cash payment is easily manipulable especially in the context of informal implementation	Legitimate payments are not carried out

About 60 per cent of total EGS expenditure is spent on wages for labourers. However, since the payment is made in cash against thumb impression or signatures, the chances of misappropriation is very high. A witness is required at the time of payment. Often, this witness is local elite. Unlike the income maintenance programme, which has been reformed to make payments through banks, after misappropriation through post-office payments in cash, EGS payments are still made directly by the official (in fact through the *mukadam*) to the labourer. Since the *mukadam* makes advance payments on 'market days', it is difficult to be paid through banks.

Table 6.2 summarises the process deficits we have seen so far in the EGS programme. In the next section we will present a process evaluation of the income maintenance programmes and particularly examine whether a similar pattern of elite mediation is found in that programme as well, and whether the reasons for exclusion could be traced to process deficits.

6.2 Income maintenance provisions

This section aims to explore the processes of implementation of the income maintenance programme identifying the key actors and the interaction among them.

6.2.1 Preparing the application

Making an application involves real effort and is very time consuming, through the stages of obtaining the application form, filling it in and submitting it.

6.2.1.1 Obtaining the application form

The application form should be available in the village office and *tehsil* office free of cost. However, this is usually not the case. The places where they are usually available are photocopier shops near the *tehsil* office or with 'writers' (explained in section 6.2.1.2). The photocopying shopkeepers obtain a copy of the application form from the *tehsil* office and

make copies of them and sell them each for Rs.15.¹⁶ The *tehsil* office will not admit to the fact that application forms are not available from the *tehsil* office. I also noticed that the *tehsil* office was officially making announcements (near the *tehsil* office on microphones along with many other announcements on various welfare programmes) that people should not buy the application forms from private agencies, since those forms are free of cost from *tehsil* office. This method of trumpeting the official version and practicing the contrary is very typical of all the processes involved in the implementation of the programme.

In fact, the application form is available to people 'who know how to get things done'. To understand what is meant by 'who know how to get things done' we need to further understand how the officials in the *tehsil* (for that matter in most of the government offices) deal with poor people. The following is an illustration created after observing two *tehsil* offices in the fieldwork area, and drawing on interviews with applicants and officials. When a villager wants to obtain an application form¹⁷ he goes to the *tehsil* office. The person would then be informed that he could obtain the application form from a photocopying shop. If he/she insists to be given an application form from the *tehsil* office, he may be asked a few questions informally. The first question that the official asks is his name. The answer potentially reveals the caste and religion of the claimant. The next question is 'which village is he coming from'. Outwardly these two questions sound neutral and a preliminary to establishing a relationship.¹⁸ However, with the answers from both questions, the official may well be able to place the person within a particular community and his social status and power

¹⁶ There were about 40 photocopying shops near one *tehsil* office, and 30 near another. One photocopier shopkeeper told me that he sells about 60 application forms for IM per month, with significant variations when new eligibility criteria or forms are introduced. These shops are unregistered business firms managed by one person in a single room with tin sheets in public spaces. They regularly bribe police officials to keep going. One photocopier shopkeeper reported an average monthly income from photocopying alone of about Rs.4000. Often these businesses go along with other small businesses such as sale of office items, so it is not easy to calculate their income. The photocopying shops near the *tehsil* also have a good relationship with *tehsil* officials since there are a good number of contract jobs in printing and binding available.

¹⁷ This illustration is applicable not only in the case of obtaining an application form, but for most occasions when villagers deal with the *tehsil* officials.

¹⁸ See Goffman's (1971) *Relations in Public* where he argues that such interactions through customary introduction are a norm in the society.

linkages.¹⁹ The official also takes into consideration the style of dressing and mode of speaking (to understand the economic class and educational background) and makes a decision to provide the application form or not. This differential behaviour by front line officials to classify the claimants has been identified as one of the important strategies in various contexts (e.g. Wright, 2003).

A typical application form contains 16 pages. Most of the pages in the application form are statements to be certified by the village level government officers like the *talatti* (village level revenue collector) or *gram sevak* (village level development worker). Eight pages of the application form are duplicate copies (for the purpose of double checking the information at various sources and to file various copies) of such statements. Rather than reducing the application form fee (photocopiers fix a price for the application form depending on the number of pages) and the burden of filling out duplicates, which officials could do, this responsibility was put on the applicant.

The attitude of officials and political leaders to the lack of application forms from the *tehsil* office is mixed. On the one hand they reveal the official version that 'the application form is available from office'. On the other hand, they point out that claimants could afford a small sum. The real reason would seem to be something else. Since there are various schemes, the claimant is often unsure which benefit he/she is eligible for, and which form is required. This creates an administrative burden of dealing with the same claimant more than once to identify the correct form for him/her. Since the 'photocopiers' charge for the application, they take responsibility for identifying the correct application form for the claimant. This is evident from the fact that *tehsil* officials admitted that they did not make demands for new application forms from the district office. This created an artificial scarcity of application form in the *tehsil* office, facilitating the private business of obtaining application forms through the photocopying shops.

¹⁹ A *tehsil* covers about 100 villages and the official knows who in each village is important and how each caste/religion in each village is connected with the powerful persons there.

The application forms for single payment benefits were generally not available from photocopiers, since the demand for them was low. However, some writers who specialised in application making (especially those who mixed the job of photocopying and writing) kept copies of single payment benefit forms as well.

6.2.1.2 Filling in the application form

Poor people, especially those who are illiterate or even someone with an average level of education, has to depend on someone else to get the application filled in the correctly. There is no one in the *tehsil* office to assist in this process. When asked about this lack of help for poor people, one of the officials said that people do get the help of their relatives or leaders from the village to get their application form filled in. The statement by the official reflects an official version of the state's position. The officials are aware²⁰ that such informal help is not freely available to poor people and what this help costs them. There are two sources of help at this stage: 1) 'Writers' (*karkhoons*) with small offices near the *tehsil* office. 2) 'brokers' operating at village level.

'Writers' are often educated young people acting as para-legal professionals doing a variety of paperwork ranging from land transaction papers to civil and criminal case submissions. (Note that we had identified them as an intermediary class in the second chapter). There are about 40 such 'writers' near each *tehsil* office. Some of them operate with a single table positioned under a tree. Others have a single room for an office. They have most of the necessary forms required for government purposes. The application forms for income maintenance are available for purchase from them. They charge an additional fee for filling up these application forms 'appropriately'²¹. This fee can vary between Rs.50 to Rs.250

²⁰ The Government of Maharashtra has realised the need to help poor people when they deal with government offices. A project called SETU (Bridge) has started at *tehsil* offices particularly for this purpose. But, applicants for income maintenance rarely use these facilities. Though the SETU office is run by an NGO, the space to run these services was given by the government. They function almost in similar fashion to government offices. SETU's service is mostly used to obtain birth and death certificates and land record certificates. Interestingly when SETU was set up, the brokers and photocopiers put up an organised protest with the argument that the State is taking away an income source for educated but unemployed young people.

²¹ The 'writers' from their experience are able to recommend how an applicant should fill in the application. For example, to obtain an old age pension, it is advisable to present oneself as 'no children,

depending on the writer's reputation, the applicant and his/her ability to pay. However, the writer does not take responsibility for obtaining proof of the facts he records, and this responsibility stays with the applicant.

On the other hand, 'brokers' operating at village level do the jobs of 'writers' (selling application forms and filling them in appropriately), and additionally they also take responsibility for getting certification from the village officers. They can be called brokers in a real sense²² because they act as 'go-betweens' by smoothing the transaction between villager and officials who lack access and trust in each other (Marsden, 1982:202). These brokers do not operate in every village. They are usually found only in market villages. The main reason for the presence of brokers in the market village is the potential advantage of a large population and the ability of these village hubs to act as access points for people from smaller villages surrounding the market village. (Thus, we will see later that in Saralgaon most people got their application form completed through the writer at the *tehsil* office, since they had no broker in their home village). These brokers were mostly linked with the main village elite and worked in close understanding with the elite.

What a broker does with a potential applicant is to strike a deal with him/her about the tariff to be paid to the agent. This tariff varies between Rs. 250 to 1000. The more difficult (ineligible) the case, the higher is the tariff²³. The tariff is payable after the success of the application, if an applicant is not able to pay the tariff instantly. Allowing the tariff to be paid after the success of application is the broker's strategy and has twin purposes. On the one hand, it keeps the transaction open ended. On the other hand, the brokerage tariff is increased once the claimant has obtained benefit since the broker's tariff depends on services,

no land and no income', even though the case may be otherwise. Basically the 'appropriateness' refers to how to evade the means-testing procedure set out by the State.

²² However, terming these people as 'brokers' is the researcher's categorisation. No one accepts or says that they are a 'broker'. Sometimes a political elite himself can act as a broker. According to Boissevain (1974) it is an instance of political patrons acting as brokers.

²³ On certain occasions an extraordinarily high fee will be quoted if the applicant is not on good terms with the elite with whom the broker works in tandem. This is to discourage the applicant, because ultimately the elite will not grant the application and there is no point if the broker undertakes the responsibility to obtain benefit for the applicant.

information, status, goodwill, and even psychological satisfaction (Boissevain, 1974). This loose way of defining transaction costs enables the broker to approach the claimant repeatedly, even after obtaining the benefit, to remind him/her of the need to pay some further 'tips'.

Interviews with brokers and claimants revealed another key aspect of the process of application making. Once, the deal is struck, it is the responsibility of the broker to see that the application is successful. The broker does everything including 'clearing' the matter with the political elite in the community to make sure the application is successful. It is this perception by the claimant which prompts him to pay a higher fee to the broker to obtain benefit. As Boissevain (1974) argues "if a broker's capital consists of the actual communication channels he controls, his *credit* consists of what others *think* his capital to be" (159). When one broker was asked why he was doing this work, he presented himself as a 'social worker' involved in helping people. But on my further probing he admitted that during the process of helping people, expenses are incurred such as travel to the *tehsil* office, giving necessary 'kickbacks' and photocopying application forms. By charging a fee to the applicant, he is able to make a living himself.

The main job of the broker involves obtaining certificates from the village officers. There are three major certificates (proof of age, income and residency) needed and additional certificates may be necessary depending on the type of benefit applied for (eg. disability, pregnancy etc). Since these certificates are part of eligibility criteria, they are discussed in detail in Appendix 8. The broker's role is 1) to gain these certificates because of his proximity to the government official who is able to provide these certificates and 2) to manufacture evidence (i.e. produce false information) in the certificate to suit the eligibility criteria.

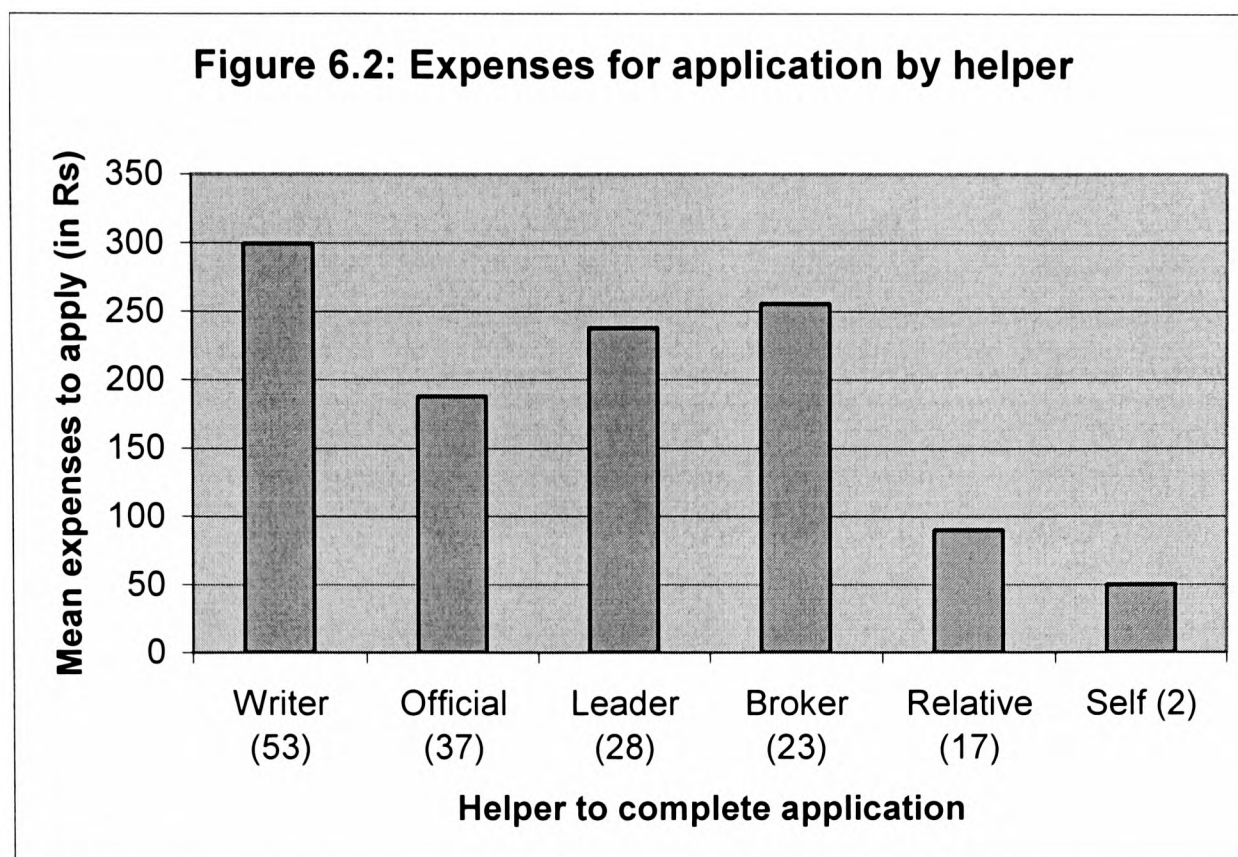
Bailey (1969) speaks of the use of middlemen/brokers as a strategy to 'lighten' the immorality involved in the transaction, and to continue a relationship even if the transaction has failed. The gravity of a lie told to a co-villager and to an official are of very different kinds. In the absence of precise records, what is a lie and what is the truth could be a matter of

bargaining. While the poor villager often stands in a weak position in bargaining with an official, a broker may be able to succeed.

Poor people use the help of the broker because of three factors: 1) If the applicant has to go himself to get the certificates it may take many days to obtain even one certificate. One of the respondents narrated her plight in spending six days trying to meet the *surpanch*, and when she finally found him, he asked her to come on another day. Casual wage agricultural labourers cannot afford to miss a day's labour. Therefore, spending days obtaining certification is very costly. 2) Obtaining certificates from each officer means paying 'kickbacks'²⁴ to them individually. On the other hand, the broker calculates the whole transaction cost and this is presented as a package to the claimant, to accept or not. 3) There is a higher chance to obtain the benefit when applying through the broker, since he usually works in tandem with the village elite.

The total expense of submitting the application was on average Rs.159 (range: 0-1500). This is more than 60 per cent of a month's benefit. The expenses varied depending on the helping agency. Figure 6.2 shows these differences; writers top the list followed by brokers in terms of charges they have taken from the claimants in helping them to complete application forms. The obvious reason for this higher expense with a writer is that they function as a market place to sell and to write application setting a flat rate for their services. On the other hand, community leaders and brokers are selective (looking to the political affiliation of the claimant) in providing their services. Community leaders and village officials have social constraints on charging people since they are part of one moral community in the face-to-face relationships. This is clear when we note that least expense was incurred when a relative prepared the application.

²² The kickbacks may be higher if the individual who makes request is on their own with the officer. If there is another community member, the officer may make a request for a normal 'fee'.

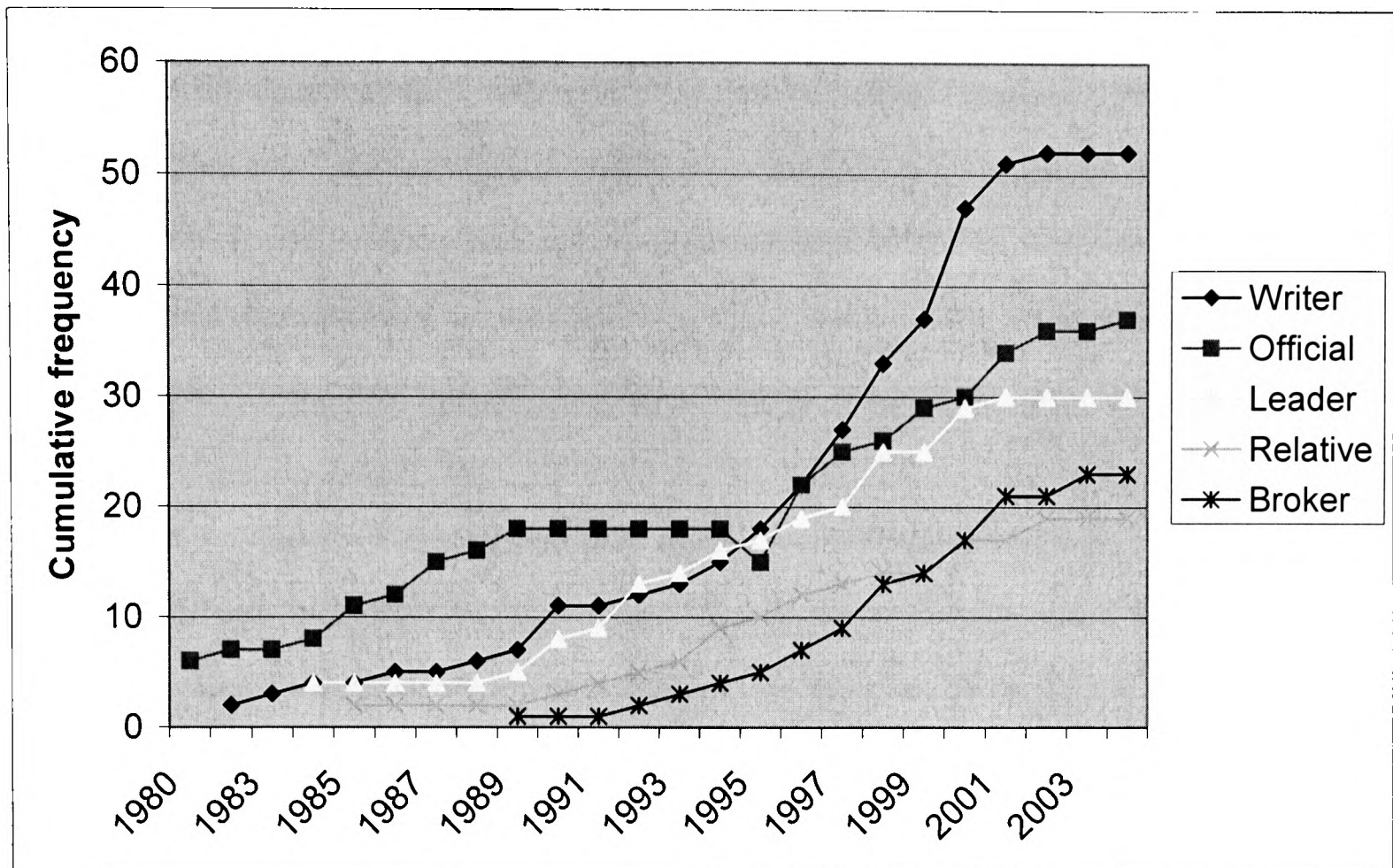


Source: Survey data

Analysis of the survey data showed that the usage of brokerage increased as the programme became familiar (see figure 6.3). Once the programme and its procedures became familiar, the officials, and leaders made the space for brokers.²⁵ During the time of fieldwork, it was usual for a political elite to direct a person to a broker to get their application prepared. Thus, in the Figure 6.3 we see a rapid growth of the brokers helping people to prepare application compared with other actors of officials, leaders and relatives. Some of the respondents, who have been receiving the benefits since the programme was launched, reported they were summoned to the village office and the officials wrote their application. This was to meet the targets required, since there would have been little awareness of the programme at that point. Later the programme received wide-spread publicity among the target population, among whom there is high informal interaction. 65.4 % of the respondents said they knew about the programme through informal interaction. Another 20% said that a village elite had told them about the programme.

²⁵ The officials here mean the village level official, especially the secretary to the village government, who live in the community. Of the 38 respondents who had reported officials helped them to write application, only seven of them said that *tehsil* level officials helped them.

Figure 6.3: The pattern of change of help to prepare application over years



Source: Survey data

6.2.1.3 Submitting an application

The completed applications have to reach the appropriate official at the *tehsil* office. But, it is not sufficient that the application simply reaches the *tehsil* office. On the one hand, there was no system to accept the applications on the counter. On the other hand, if the application were left with any official, it might not reach the particular official who handles the IM programme applications. This situation necessitated submitting the application to the particular official who handles the IM programme. This increases the power of the official concerned and in the process he gets to see the applicant in person. As a result, the official informally discovers whether the application comes through a broker, the applicant himself, or even from a political elite. The officials usually do not accept the application without a small kickback (not less than Rs.10) from the applicant directly. Brokers are very tactful. One of the *tehsildars* stated: “they know when the official is happy, when the official is angry, when it is a good time and when it is a bad time. The brokers approach the officials only

looking at the situation and mood of the official. While if the people directly go to the officials and if the official is in bad mood, their application will be in the dustbin”.

There is little exaggeration in the *tehsildar*'s comment. Several applicants, who had applied more than once²⁶ (29%; n=161), said that their application was not successful the first time, because they were told the official did not receive their application (in other words the officials claimed the application was not submitted). And he/she would be asked to make a new application. (Two contrasting, but illustrative cases of this problem are included in Appendix 9).

There is a clause in the policy guidelines in the government circular to make officials responsible in such circumstances. The official is expected to serially record all the applications received and to provide a written receipt to the applicant, but in practice this is almost never done. One respondent during the survey said that when he demanded a receipt the official in turn asked “Don't you trust me? Why do you need a receipt?” Such informal relationships in rural settings prompt both parties (official and claimant) to ignore the policy guidelines.

Another strategy employed by the officials is not to accept the application. Especially if the applicant is submitting the application directly, the official would glance through the application, point out a mistake and ask him/her to bring the corrected application form later. The applicant, in such instances, thought the incorrectness in the form was a possible reason for rejection of the application and s/he took back the application. Gangubai was a woman of great determination. Though illiterate, she decided to complete the application all by herself for NFBS when her husband died of tuberculosis. Having four small children (with ages ranging between 2 and 9), daily wage labour was the only source to feed her children. It took

²⁶ The survey found that 46 people (28.6 %) of the people who applied for the CIMB (n=161) had applied more than once (32 people twice, 11 people thrice and three people had applied four times). However, for the one-time benefits people did not apply more than once. This is also partly because the decision making on a one-off payment was 'yes' or 'no', unlike CIMB, where the decision was postponed by the committee (and subsequently 'application lost'). So, when an applicant asked the status of his/her application about one-time benefit, the answer was certain, and there was no reason to apply again.

seven months for Gangubai to get the necessary documents signed. Finally when she took the application form to the *tehsil*, the official looking at the application said: “Look, I can’t take this application, because where the *talati* has to sign, *Gram Sevak* has signed”. She took back the application hoping that she might be able to submit it another time²⁷. The directive given by the state to the *tehsil* officials is that the application form should be accepted and the supporting documents should be requested in writing from the applicants if any of the supporting documents are missing.

In such circumstances with the applicant’s failure to furnish documents, claimants opined during interviews that it was their fault not to have completed the application making procedures. The bureaucracy placed the responsibility on the applicant to claim in the correct way. The state’s responsibility to reach out to poor people as a welfare right is neglected on such occasions where there are large numbers of applicants. Significantly, in the sample survey 25.5% of eligible persons who did not apply (n=55) cited the reason of lack of time/too much effort as a reason for not applying.

By refusing to accept the application, the official gains some advantage. First, he reduces the need to face the applicant again (often the applicants became disillusioned and give up their attempt). Second, if the incomplete application form is accepted, there is difficulty in filing the supporting documents at a later point with the original application form. The bureaucrat’s attempts to reduce their workload affecting the rights of the people have been well documented in the literature on ‘street level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky, 1980; Blalock, 1991). Third, it would appear that there were few rejected applications and therefore, the *tehsil* office was meeting the demands from local people. This also could have implications in the allocation of funds for a particular scheme. When the demand is perceived to be low for a scheme, there is little reason to allocate more funds. Besides, modification in eligibility criteria can be made only if the rejected applications are scrutinised. Therefore, by refusing to accept application forms the possibility of a policy change is blocked.

²⁷ It is even more surprising as in fact Gangubai could only be eligible for NFBS if she submitted the application within one year of husband’s death!

6.2.2 Decision-making

The officials are expected to scrutinize all the applications they have received (reminding the applicants with missing documents to present them) and to present the applications to the Social Security Committee (SSC, henceforth), which is expected to meet four times a year. Ideally the SSC should verify whether the applications presented to them meet the eligibility criteria and then inform the applicants about its decision. However, the actual practice of the SSC is very different. We need to understand the composition of SSC to understand the reasons for these practices.

The interviews with officials and other secondary sources showed that the state government in active consultation with the guardian minister of the respective district appoints the members of the SSC. The guardian minister, being from the ruling party, consults local party workers regarding the appointment of various subcommittees at *tehsil* level. In principle, this consultation should result in appointing a group of active civil society members who are capable of checking the *tehsil* officials to make sure of the quality of service to poor people without bureaucratic ‘red-tape’ in processing their applications. But in practice, a group of party workers is ultimately nominated to the SSC with a minority of active civil society members²⁸. However, the SSC had female representation as well as various caste and religious groups.

The first inquiry was how many applications could be granted in a meeting of the SSC. To my question as to whether there is a threshold number for the number of beneficiaries, i.e., the maximum number of beneficiaries, the officials at all the levels – *tehsil*, district and State – stated that there is no such number and ‘we could provide for any number of applications which meet the eligibility criteria’. This suggests a lack of knowledge of the

²⁸ After a few meetings of the SSC, the active civil society members stop coming to the meeting when they understand the real method of selection of the beneficiaries. During an interview, one such member claimed: ‘I know how the decisions on applications are made. I have little role to play there since everyone in the committee is trying to provide benefit for their own clients. So, I stopped going to the meetings’.

policy guidelines, because the funds made available for IM can meet only 50% of the eligible population. But the expression by the officials that they could provide IM to all eligible applications may indicate that the whole fund is not exhausted. However, the SSC did not grant all the eligible applications. The *naib-tehsildar* (secretary of the committee) and chairman of the committee said that they granted about 30 applications every time the SSC met, out of 150-200 applications it had received. However, this number varied depending on whether a new scheme had been announced or new eligibility criteria introduced. But how are these 30 applications picked from the 150 applications received? Were there applications other than the 30 applications selected that met the eligibility criteria? Did the selected applications meet the criteria? Are the applications granted on a first come, first served basis? These were the most important substantive questions to be answered by observing the SSC meeting, and by interviewing the committee members.

At the outset it is good to be reminded of how the applications were submitted. As we have seen above, they were either submitted through writers or brokers. So, the applications typically came through experienced hands. These people knew how an acceptable application should look. Thus, most of the applications looked almost the same. Most of them also had documentation. When, I interviewed some of these writers and brokers they said they often did not include documentation, if the documentation tended to be unsupportive to the application. For example, if a person had land, that application omitted the documentation on the certificate of income. A description of the granting of benefit for a disabled person below shows that SSC members were also aware of this problem of scrutinising a large number of carefully camouflaged applications.²⁹ The officials do not keep a record of the date when the application was received and therefore, practically, a first come first served principle was not possible.

During the fieldwork, I was able to attend and observe one of these SSC meetings. At the beginning of the meeting, a pile of applications was handed over to the SSC chairman by

²⁹ It is important to note here that the term 'camouflaging' does not carry the moral sense of cheating here. I will come back to this discussion at a later stage.

the *tehsil* official who manages IM programme, but it was not clear whether all the applications were handed over³⁰. It is often the case that the officials do not forward the applications for which they had not received a bribe.

I noticed that the Chairman of the SSC had a small piece of paper on which certain names were scribbled. He picked up the applications with the names on his list. Other members of the committee each also picked out one or two of the applications. They asked the chairman, ‘how about granting this application?’. The chairman would glance at them and place them in a separate file (to be granted later). There were two agents as informal observers at the meeting. Through my informal interactions in the village I knew one of them was linked with the vice-chairman (Sanjay Patilkar) of the committee. He had a list of eight people whose application had to be granted. He would ask the vice chairman to pick up those applications. Thus, only those applications where one of the committee members personally took an interest was granted. Some committee members were very persistent. One Muslim member was shouting out four-five different Muslim names and pulling out their applications. The only female member of the committee had brought some female applicants, presumably from her village or nearby villages, and they were standing as a group and arguing with the chairman that their application had been pending for a long time. Thus, the social identity (of religion, gender, caste) of the committee members, not merely their political affiliations, was being used in the bargaining process.

Another SSC committee chairman had said during the interview that his strategy was to allow each committee member to pick up to a maximum of 10 applications that would be granted. But Sanjay Patilkar made it explicit when I asked whether the applications, which did not meet criteria, could be granted benefit: “In a democracy a politician has to satisfy others (committee members). That is essential to keeping your leadership position”. Thus, political utility was the criterion for the decision maker rather than the eligibility of the applicant.

³⁰ Later I understood it was a batch of applications since 2000 when the present SSC came into existence (every time a new government is elected the SSC is reconstituted). The heap of applications included both the new applications and some which were pending from a previous meeting.

6.2.3 Delivery mode of the benefits

Once a decision has been made on the application, it is expected that the *tehsil* officials will inform the applicants in writing. It seems this practice stopped soon after the programme was launched³¹. *Tehsil* officials claim that they inform the selected and rejected applicants through the post. However, two chairmen of the SSC, whom I interviewed, said such letters were not sent. Further, they added that despite their pressure to send such letters, the officials would not send them to reduce their workload.

Survey with the claimants showed that most of the applicants (71.5%; n=104) came to know about the result of the decision of the SSC informally through brokers or village elites, and this information was confirmed when the money was actually delivered to them via the postman. An applicant would repeatedly ask the postman who delivers the benefit whether money had come for him/her. This puts the applicant in a bargaining position with another person in the link to obtain welfare benefits.

Interviews with the officials revealed that from 1980, when the scheme began, the benefit was delivered to the beneficiaries through the post-office. The postman would bring the money orders to a central place in the village and shout out the names of beneficiaries for whom money orders had arrived. He would hand over the money taking the thumb impression/signature of the beneficiaries. It is a normal practice for the postman to take Rs.20 from each person³². In the sample survey 67.3 % of the beneficiaries who actually received benefit at least once (n=104) reported they were given a lower amount than they had expected (eight persons were unsure whether they received a lower amount). All of them reported either the postman or bank official as the person who had taken away some of their money.

³¹ During the survey, I found such letters were sent to the people until 1985 or so. These letters were printed on the letter head of the local MLA rather than that of the *tehsil* office.

³² The postman would charge more than Rs.20 from the beneficiaries whose house was further away from centre, because the postman is able to deal with them individually. He might tell the applicant that there is a mistake in the name as recorded on the money order and it is not possible to hand over the money. The beneficiary being illiterate would not be able to read his own name. The beneficiary would give a small kickback to him to obtain the benefit. When such practices become constant, elites are called upon to mediate the issue.

However, the scope for gaining the full amount or making effective complaints against the bank official/post man was very limited. Wherever such bargaining took place, it did not take place on legal grounds, rather they were on moral grounds and arguments within the community. 35.5% (n=104) of claimants did not even make a request to the postman to pay the full amount. One of them said: “We all decided amongst ourselves that Rs.20 should be given to the postman by beneficiaries”. This may sound as though corruption had entered into the marrow of society and people collectively decided to accept a corrupt system. But, it is also a collective mechanism by the claimants to decide the limits of the bribe for the postman, rather than entering into a bargain every time.

Often, elites were called in to solve the problems especially when a postman demanded more money. On a few occasions (only one case in the survey) when the postman took the whole benefit, formal complaints were made. When I asked the postman about these complaints, his frank opinion was that his salary was too low³³ and he would charge a small commission for the service he was giving to compensate for his low salary. Complaints on postal delivery, especially to the local elites, were so high that the government had to change the delivery system³⁴. Therefore the arguments in favour of the postal system as a more effective delivery method (Farrington *et al*, 2003) cannot be accepted without considering the difficulties narrated here.

On the positive side of the delivery system was the fact that money reached the correct beneficiary (almost all the beneficiaries reported this³⁵) and not someone else in the household. This was something worth reporting. The postman insisted on meeting the beneficiary and would not give the benefit even to a close relative. Given the importance of a

³³ It is often said that postman’s salary is the lowest among the Indian officials. However, the particular postman whom I interviewed was receiving a salary of Rs.3500/- per month. With this income he would be in the top income decile of the village.

³⁴ At the time of field work, the delivery mode was being changed to that of delivery of benefit through banks.

³⁵ A few cases of relatives receiving the benefits were evident. In one case, the beneficiary was not living in the village and his relative had made an arrangement, of course illegal, with the postman to receive it. In another case, one elite was receiving benefit on behalf of his son, who was blind and studying in an institution in the city.

male member in the household within the patriarchal system, money reaching the woman directly from the delivery agency is very significant.

Why would poor people put up with these irregularities in the delivery systems? First of all, it was not easy for people to identify whether they had been given the correct amount, due to two factors: 1) Most of the beneficiaries (91.3%; n=104) did not know how much money they were entitled to receive. This was particularly due to the irregularity of the benefit disbursement from the state and central government headquarters. While Central government disbursed the money once a year, the state government disbursed the money every three months. People would not be able to calculate the sum for three months and understand their entitlement. So, most of the beneficiaries ‘trusted’ that the money given to them was the correct sum that was sent to them. This ‘trust’ came from the fact that there was no way to check or argue about the true situation. 2) Illiteracy: Many were not able to calculate and to determine the correct amount. However, this could often be overcome with the help of educated people from the community. Often beneficiaries would compare the money they received with another beneficiary and, if it were a similar amount, they would be content.

Given these limitations in identifying irregularities, people were willing to part with a small amount of money, because they knew if they insisted on full payment of the amount (including Rs.20, which was given as a ‘kickback’) they would stand to lose the whole amount. Therefore, they made complaints and collective protests only when the postman stole the whole amount³⁶. One female claimant said: “You are getting something. Why ask for the full money? Is this money from our home or ancestor’s home? The government is giving something and you should be thankful rather than fighting”.

Community elites and officials perpetuated this view. The head official of the IM at the *tehsil* office said: “It is so difficult to manage this office. All kinds of people come to this

³⁶ There were at least 10 such incidents of a postman stealing the whole amount of one or two beneficiaries in a given month. He would simply tell them he had not received any money order. Later when the beneficiaries inquired at the *tehsil* office they discovered that postman had stolen their money and they would lodge a complaint. In the village during the study a few of the beneficiaries pointed out the postman and his house as that of thieves!

office. People are getting free money and everyone gathers there like flies on jaggery (sugar cane)". The response from the official and that of the beneficiary complement each other, suggesting the official is undertaking the tedious task of distributing 'free money' (which is in high demand) and the beneficiary should accept whatever is given without giving any trouble to the official. The beneficiaries perceived the benefit given to them as 'free money' from the government rather than a welfare right.

Table 6.3 Process deficits and effects of income maintenance programme

Process deficits	Possible effects
Obtain application form from informal sources	Additional expense. Easier to obtain than from government sources.
Complex application form	Dependence on middleman to complete the application.
Demand proof of identity and certificates	Excludes the poorest people who are unlikely to have certificates/documents.
The specific official accepting application rather than the office	The individual and his/her affiliations become more important. No objective treatment of the applications.
Non-acceptance of partially complete applications	Given the difficulty of providing certificates, non-acceptance of applications blocks the chances of rethinking the criteria for benefits or methods of application. Administration is able to show that it meets demand since there are few applications.
Receipt of the application not acknowledged	Results in officials being able to discard applications from those who have not paid kickbacks.
Political body controls officials	Exclusion of eligible persons who are supporters of opposition parties.
Visibility of meeting to the applicants	Mechanism for drawing loyalty to political elites, so that they can further exercise power over officials.
Political backing for the successful application	Increases 'clientelistic' politics in the community. The poor may be exploited to provide favours or labour for the political elites.
Lack of review of the applications at district level	Complete discretion is given to the local authority, and this supports local politics.
Not informing the result of the application	Power of informal stakeholders further strengthened.
Lack of mechanism to review the reason for stopping a benefit	Blocking the benefit by a political elite through an official in order to settle scores on the basis of personal rivalry.
Infrequent delivery of the benefit	Dissatisfaction to the claimants since they are unaware whether they received the total benefit; postman is able to take advantage of the illiteracy and inability to make complaints by poor people.

The processes traced in this section reveal that the poor people are excluded from benefits not only because of implementation deficits, but sometimes through enforcing the letter of the scheme rather than the spirit. Both together are to be understood as a process deficit. Table 6.3 summarises the various process deficits identified and their effects on poor people.

Conclusion

When a policy is introduced, the policy makers may have in mind the steps that have to be taken to achieve the policy aims. However, details of these steps or processes are not spelled out in the policy documents/guidelines. A process emerges depending on the policy context and interaction patterns among of the key actors. This process, practised over years, creates informal rules. Most often, the social origins of the processes that create informal rules are not studied. Rather, the powerful actors point out the informal rules emerged as ‘need based’ practices.³⁷ The argument of need based policy changes is appealing to the policy makers since they are trying to respond to the social situation. Therefore, when one policy cycle is complete, some amount of deviation from the policy aims occurs by not studying the social origins of the processes of implementation.

How people experience the social protection programmes at various stages of claiming their rights, decision making and delivery of the benefit has been the focus of this chapter, through detailing the processes of implementation of income maintenance and public works programmes. Though these two programmes have different geographical locations for the decision-making (district for public works and *tehsil* for IM), the role of elites in acquiring access to both programmes is striking. Their role is primarily to influence the officials in various ways (through referrals, bargaining and decision). Thus, the informal rules and means

³⁷ There is a body of literature of New Institutional theories which studies how rules are formulated and modified. I tend not to take this line of thought since it tends to externalise power to those institutions or rules. Rather, power is conceptualised as the property of actors and their networks in the framework of this thesis.

of access that the elites created are the routes to gain the social protection benefits by the poor people. However, these informal rules coexist with the formal rules, legitimizing the former. Those claimants who are suitable with the informal rules, particularly on the basis of social identity rather than their vulnerability, are given a 'fit' into formal rules by the local elites along with officials. When the informal rules and means prevail, relying on formal channels is like looking for legitimacy that does not have power. Power has to be exercised if it is to exist, and the power that is exercised is that of informal rules. Unexercised power of the legitimate means of formal rules creates a policy vacuum.

Targeting principles, which are applied for these programmes (means-testing in IM, and self-selection in public works) are tools to categorise people. However, the tools are unclear to the applicants, in the context of their *practices*. For example, the IM benefit is so low that a generally well-off household would not self-select for such a programme. If a household self-selected for IM, it is often interpreted by the elite as being in genuine need. However, the reasons for such a claim could vary, and we need to look at the *logic of practice* (Bourdieu, 1990) rather than the logic of targeting principle. When these practices are looked at from the perspective of exercise of power, they may not match the need of the person. Therefore, when the concept of power is brought into the analysis of redistribution "poverty, disability, discrimination, it seems, are not facts but interpretations" (O'Brien and Penna, 1998:196). Therefore, the claimants without strategic contacts to interpret their 'need' to make them eligible for benefits are often excluded from the IM public funds. Therefore, studying how these strategic contacts are built is essential to understanding how the access is structured. The strategic contacts could be built up in a setting of informal interaction in the non-state arena. As we have seen in chapter four, this non-state arena of the community is organised into factions that compete for resources. The faction leaders, who are political elites, also have private interests in gaining benefits for some clients rather than others. This basis for differential allocation will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Differential allocation: power and legitimacy of local elites and bureaucrats

The lion and other beasts formed a party to go out hunting. After they had killed a fat stag, the lion nominated himself to divide the stag into three parts. Taking the best piece for himself, he said, 'This is mine in view of my official role as king, and the second I'll take as my own personal share just for participating in the hunt. As far as the third part is concerned, let him take it who dares.' (Aesop's Fables)

In the previous chapter we have seen how the process deficits in the administration of the social protection programmes have been caused by the informal interaction between bureaucrats and poor people, whereby the bureaucrats dominate, creating space for the local elites to act as intermediaries between poor people and bureaucrats. In this chapter we will examine the social, economic, and political interests of bureaucrats and local elites in their various roles during the allocation processes of social protection.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, we will examine in the nature of bargaining process over public provisions between bureaucrats and local elites. We will also try to understand why they bargain by examining how the private interests of these actors influence the allocation of public resources. In the second section we will examine how the factional strategy of elites is at work in the villages in the process of the allocation of social protection benefits. In the third section we will be exploring the alternatives to challenge this method of allocation.

Section I

7.1.1 The constituents of a public service bargain

The distinction between bureaucrats and politicians (local elites) has been a subject matter of the discipline of public administration since at least the time of Max Weber. Bureaucrats are appointed experts or professionals, with limited direct accountability to the people. Their chief asset is their impartiality (Peters 1978), and their accountability is directly to the hierarchy of their administration. On the other hand, politicians have direct accountability to

the people since they are the elected representatives. Their decisions are likely to appeal to the electorate, especially in a democratic setting, and they rely on bureaucrats for expertise. How these potentially conflicting systems could remain together has been subject of many investigations (Beetham, 1996; Page, 1992). Such investigations have largely been in the contexts where the boundaries between state and society are clearly observable (e.g. typically Western countries). But, the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy could be very different in rural settings such as that of India, where the authority of the bureaucrats is exercised in conjunction with the power of the local elites (chapter five). The end result of any allocation process could be a result of a bargain between them.

The concept of a ‘public service bargain’ was first used by Bernard Schaffer (1973: 252) to indicate how the British bureaucracy developed in the 19th century by an implicit settlement of fixing entitlements and duties between senior civil servants and politicians. Feigenbaum and Henig (1993) extended the concept by disaggregating into ‘systemic’ (constitutional settlements) and ‘pragmatic’ (convenient arrangements) bargains. Recently, Hood (2002) has examined how such bargains may take place in different systems, and argued that in socially divided societies¹ (e.g. India on the basis of caste and religions) public servants may increase social cleavages through the process of bargaining. I will be extending this idea to include the economic interests of the local elites in this framework, and will examine how social identities (of both bureaucrats and elites) interact with political and economic interests in the bargaining process.

Before detailing the interaction, a short introduction to the Indian bureaucracy is useful (we have seen the details of political arrangements in chapter five). Indian bureaucracy has a British colonial legacy,² and its administrative hierarchy has four layers of bureaucrats.

¹ This is based on Lijphart’s (1977) theoretical framework of ‘consociational democracy’, the key characteristics of which are: “1) Grand coalition governments that include representatives of all major linguistic and religious groups; 2) cultural autonomy for these groups; 3) proportionality in political representation and civil service appointments; and 4) a minority veto with regard to vital minority rights and autonomy” (1996: 258).

² It is not that prior to British arrival there was no bureaucracy in India. See Das (2001) for a critical review of how British bureaucracy was different from other bureaucratic arrangements of pre-British Kingdoms in India.

In this dissertation most of the bureaucrats referred to are class II and class III officials, who have supervisory and day-to-day managerial responsibilities respectively. It is often these officials who interact with local elites and citizens. Class IV officials are peons, messengers and sweepers; Class I officials are district collectors and other higher levels of administration. Access by a village level elite to Class I officials is indirect, and often through a politician at the *tehsil* or district level. Thus, if they have to be successful in the bargain the rules of hierarchy within the bureaucracy have to be respected by the politicians.³ In chapter two (section 2.3) we have seen how the nature of the state and politics affects the bureaucracy in India. There, we have seen, following Wade (1985), that rent-seeking practices are very widely practiced whereby the bureaucrats are in a subservient relationship to politicians e.g. for their transfers (to a desired place, often to their home town, or to stop a transfer), and promotions by paying bribes to politicians.

Thus, where the features of relationship involve corrupt practices, the traditional 'role theory' (Aberbach *et al*, 1981) takes a different dimension, and interaction becomes more informalised.⁴ In such informalised situations the social identities of religious and caste affiliation, regional identity and gender become crucial aspects of interaction in addition to the political connections. It is in this context that the argument of 'representative bureaucracy' becomes relevant.

The concept of representative bureaucracy was used first by Kingsley (1944) to show how the class divisions in British society were reflected in its bureaucracy. Public administration scholars have applied this concept to various countries since then.

³ The power of the official could be used only in conjunction with the political actors at a given level. One village official said to the researcher: "If I decide to hold the fort against corruption and to provide the benefits to the 'real needy', I won't be effective. There is a superior official to whom I report. The village elite could influence my superior through a politician, and my superior would ask me to comply with the village elite".

⁴ As Gupta (1995) notes, in rural areas the middle range bureaucrats are willing to discuss administrative issues in the tea stalls or even in the house of a local elite or bureaucrat. My field observations corroborate this. The paper/official documents are still maintained in the office, but decisions are often made informally outside the office. This *modus operandi* is also to avoid any vigilance by the anti-corruption bureau (which is widely used by the public to save themselves from bribe-demanding officials). As Visvanathan and Sethi (1998) comment, demarcation between public and private, office and home is essential to understand how corruption takes place. See also Goetz and Jenkins (2005).

Subramaniam (1967) applied this concept to the Indian context, where caste is a more precise category than class divisions. The demand for representative bureaucracy from Muslims and non-Brahmin groups dates back to the rise of the nationalist movement in 1880s (Subramaniam, 1990: 395). But, the Constitution of India, after independence, provided reserved quotas in civil service only for SCs and STs. The purpose here was to improve the situations of these historically oppressed groups, rather than ensuring a representative bureaucracy. Though until the late 1960s these quotas were unfilled due to lack of applicants from these poor communities, during the 1970s and 1980s quotas were filled as the pool of eligible applicants increased as a result of the spread of formal education. In 1989, when the proposals by the Mandal Commission for special reservations of jobs for backward castes were implemented, there were violent clashes.

These administrative and political realities, in which various ethnic groups are embedded both in formal structure and informal settings, provide the setting for public service bargains.

7.1. 2 Public service bargain for social protection

Street-level bureaucrats/lower level officials are given a significant amount of discretion in translating policy into programmatic format and responding to human situations. How this discretion is used is the crux of any differential allocation. Their use of discretion is influenced by various factors such as, on the one hand, expectations from citizens, claimants, local elites, co-workers and their own supervisors, while on the other hand they are expected to comply with legal and policy guidelines, and the expectations of the state (Vinzant and Crothers 1998). The use of discretion is regulated by the 'law of hierarchy' (Downs 1967), which is against the economic forces (Casella and Weingast 1995), and able to resist the exclusion of the poorest persons.

From the description of the processes of claiming in the previous chapter, we understand that the service bargain for EGS between bureaucrats and local elites takes place at two locations. First, with a JE, at the *tehsil level*, at the time of persuading the JE to prepare

an EGS project. Second, at the EGS collector's office at district level, which co-ordinates with the EGS committee to approve the projects for implementation. Once the projects are approved, the bargain for work is at village work site, often between the community elite (or *mukadam*) and workers.

On the other hand, for IM benefits there is very little collective bargaining.⁵ The process of means-testing, being central to whether a person can receive or not receive such benefit, brings individuals and households to the bargaining arena directly. As we have seen, the bureaucrat in question could be a local revenue officer who determines the income of the household, a medical doctor who certifies the age of the person or even an official at the IM office who accepts the application form. These street-level bureaucrats, with a wide range of discretion could directly influence the chances of individual claims for IM. It is to bolster their bargaining power that poor households take assistance from intermediary local politicians. Why do the claimants need intermediaries to bargain? What is the nature of bureaucratic action that may be preventing or facilitating their access to social protection?

In each of the *tehsil* offices, where the fieldwork was conducted, there were four class III officials who managed the IM applications. One of these officials was female, and her responsibility was to manage the scheme of IGBMY, since only females were eligible for this benefit.⁶ Among the eight class III officials five of them were lower-caste officials. This high per cent of lower caste officials involved in the management of IM applications was an administrative arrangement, since a large number of claimants for IM came from lower castes. But, does the state's rationale for appointing representative bureaucrats in this manner increase the social responsiveness of state services in the area of IM provision? As mentioned earlier, in the process of means-testing, village level doctors and revenue officers were particularly involved. In both villages these officials were high-caste, and it was village high

⁵ At the time of fieldwork newspapers reported a few collective protests for IM benefits since benefits of a large number of IM were stopped, following a court order. These protests were organised by NGOs, and often a memorandum was submitted to the tehsildar or district collector at the end of a protest rally. The demands in these memoranda often included the abolition of SSCs, revocation of the benefits cancelled and payment of IM without delay. But such collective protests were much more visible and prevalent for the EGS.

⁶ This raises the question of the gender embeddedness of state institutions.

caste leaders who often dealt with these officials. Therefore, social responsiveness in the sector of social protection is not just a matter of appointing representative bureaucrats in the IM office alone. Rather, it is about bringing professionalism to the behaviour of all its bureaucrats.

In the case of EGS the JEs were all high-caste; EGS collectors in both districts too were high castes. All of them were male. The people who often dealt with them to bargain for an EGS project were male *Maratha* politicians. Here too representative bureaucracy was informally maintained. Unlike the IM programmes, the interaction of lower caste claimants or elites with high caste officials in the bargaining process was not observable in the EGS process. This bargain took place at the work site between the *mukadam* and workers. Thus, EGS projects were bargained for and gained by *Maratha* elite, mostly with *Maratha* officials; and the projects were brought into the village in which mostly lower castes put their labour. This argument is consistent with Osmani's (1991) 'triangular explanation' for the success of the EGS (p.337).

Table 7.1 provides evidence of the mutual perception by officials and local politicians, of various social identities, in the context of interacting and bargaining for IM claims (as mentioned above, in the case of the EGS this heterogeneous interaction does not occur). What is most interesting from the table is the contrast of the outcomes when similar castes interact. From their perceptions and other secondary data we can understand why this contrasting outcome of interaction occurs. Let us take the first row of high caste interaction. The official knows that the high caste community elite is acting as an intermediary, most likely, for the lower caste claimants. There is no additional incentive for the high caste official for interacting with the lower caste claimants, when the same work can be done by interacting with a high caste politician (not only cementing friendship, but also pledging loyalty to the politician). The bureaucrats acknowledge the legitimacy of the *Marathas* to represent their village constituents and this can result in a collaborative outcome. On the other hand, when low caste interaction (last row) takes place, the outcome can be friction. First, these lower

caste elites are emerging elites (opposed to ascriptive *Maratha* elites), and the bureaucrats question their power to represent their constituents. These emerging elites, whose chief tool of

Table 7.1: Nature of interaction between actors of different social identity

Official	Community/ political elite	Nature of interaction
High caste: “He is doing something good for the village people.”	High caste: “The senior administrators don’t have direct contact with villagers. They have to take our reports seriously if the administration is to be good”.	Collaborative
High caste: “He is making money for himself and obstructing our work”	Low caste: “I am good to them, and if a politician is using tactics these officials will get in our way. If they don’t let us do what we want, we have means for that (meaning the high caste politicians could pressurise)”.	Dominant-Subservient
Low caste: “What can I do? These leaders can do what they want. If I say ‘no’ to them, they will pressurise my boss and finally I have to say yes, so, it is better to say yes to them and be friendly with them”	High caste: “He is a lazy person, and not efficient. He does good things to a bad person, and bad things to good person. I have to be behind him and correct him”	Subservient-Dominant
Low caste: “He is a small leader, and uses his own community for personal benefit (<i>jathi ka baath/politics karta hai</i>). He talks as though the government money is his right. Let the people come directly to me, I will do their work”	Low caste: “He is not of our own caste. He considers himself to be a Brahmin, and is very proud if I approach, and unhelpful”	Conflictual

Note: These are actual quotations taken from the interviews. A question was asked about a particular individual, rather than identifying a caste. The division of social identity into high-low caste is for the purpose of creating a manageable matrix. The lower caste here includes SC, ST and OBCs. The rest are considered as high caste.

mobilisation is caste identity, do share a similar ideology on the caste question with lower caste bureaucrats. Lower caste bureaucrats, often living in small towns and interacting with other high caste bureaucrats in their day-to-day interactions, undergo a *sankritisation* (imitating the high caste for social mobility reason) process. The lower caste bureaucrat also may be aware that for rent seeking purposes, contacts with a high caste politician may be more useful since such politicians are likely to have contacts at higher levels. This conflicting interaction is the crucial reason why lower caste elites may have to network with high caste elites to bargain with a bureaucrat. Thus, the third row is the most commonly observed scenario to occur in the bargaining over IM benefits. This has three important outcomes: first, lower caste elites fail to politically mobilise village people around the issue of social protection. Second, high caste elites are able to continue their traditional power over lower castes in the domain of social protection. Third, the high caste elite from the community is able to dominate a lower caste official, perhaps appointed for social responsiveness to lower caste claimants, and therefore, political interests prevail over bureaucratic interests.

This pattern of interaction, based on the power-equations of the social identity of the bureaucrats and politicians, has its outcome in the inclusion and exclusion of citizens based on their caste identity. As the table 7.2 shows, more people are excluded from benefits in the lower caste groups. The chi-square difference between these groups in receiving the income maintenance is significant (Pearson Chi-Square=5.6; $P < 0.05$; $df=1$). It merely indicates that group solidarity, on a caste basis, will prompt the high caste elite to bargain for a high caste claimant. This is indicative of a system where 'voice' is the primary mode of gaining welfare rights. The voice for different social groups also differed significantly depending on their power base and political connections.

Let us take an example from the survey findings. Of the 45 Muslims in the sample survey, 40 were excluded from the IM benefit. The five Muslims, who were receiving benefits, belonged to a higher caste (*Pathan*). There were no elites from lower caste Muslims to help to express their needs. On the other hand, the politically conscious *Mahar* lower caste had their own leader. Of the 47 *Mahar* persons in the sample, 23 persons were receiving

benefits. Here 'voice' (in the Hirschman's sense) is the only factor that has had crucial importance for the inclusion of the *Mahar* households. As Wood (2004) suggests, for poor households who depend on intermediaries for their voice, non-exit is the only realistic option.

Table 7.2: Exclusion and inclusion in IM and EGS according to caste

	Income maintenance				EGS			
	Not in receipt		Receiving IM		Has not worked recently		Worked recently	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
SC, ST & OBC	106	64.6	58	35.4	37	54.4	31	45.6
Other castes	23	46	27	54	5	35.7	9	64.3
Total	129	100.00	85	100.00	42	100.00	40	100.00

Note: For EGS worked recently is operationalised as whether the person has worked in the past two years (2003 & 2004).

Table 7.2 also shows the exclusion from the EGS programme according to caste. The pattern of exclusion is similar to that of IM. The differences however are not statistically significant, particularly due to the small number in the sample from the high caste for EGS. At the same time, it is important to note that in the programme of EGS where lower caste workers participate in large numbers *Maratha* local elites were involved in the public service bargain. Thus, both social protection programmes at local level are dominated by the *Maratha* caste through their political networks. However, cases of exclusion are in both high caste and low castes, and we need a further explanation for this, which is undertaken in the next section.

The exclusion of labourers from the EGS could also be explained by showing how the state's policies favour certain castes, through social inaccessibility of the type of work provided. The poorest households excluded in this way were the Tamboli (backward caste), Khatic (SC), Theli (oil sellers) and carpenters. The professions of these castes were mostly non-agricultural and trade related. One of the households excluded from the EGS in this way suggested that 'even if we starve to death' they would not apply for the work of digging earth. Therefore, the choice of different labour opportunities, though the State's capacity to provide a wide variety of choices may be limited, is essential if the guarantee is to be meaningful, according to a more sociological understanding of rights (Turner, 1993). Providing a mere

legal guarantee and being unconcerned whether this meets the needs of society is washing one's hands of responsibility. Such recourse, though giving legal legitimacy to state action, reduces its legitimacy in the long term and produces disaffection among citizens.

This pattern of exclusion of some eligible claimants could be due to the economic interests of some actors in the society, facilitating a policy deficit. This needs a detailed examination by looking non-state sectors.

7.1.3 The role of non-state actors in shaping the state's allocation⁷

As we have noted in chapter two, the study of state provisions in a state-in-society framework requires us to look at non-state actors, and how they affect the state's allocation. An important reason for this in the context of social protection is that if the local elites are acting as effective intermediaries, it is most likely that non-state sectors (market and NGOs), in which these elites have a major stake, could benefit from state provision.

The survey revealed that the poorest households, without land and regular income had very little access to banks, money lenders and private insurance (the reasons for which we have seen in chapter two), which were often sources for income maintenance and enhancement for better-off households. The non-state sources of support for poor households were limited to those such as shopkeeper, landlord and reciprocal loans from friends and neighbours. We will examine the first two in detail since local elites dominated these two arenas. Thus, a detailed understanding of each of them would be useful to see the overlapping interests of the local elite in their roles as shopkeeper/landlord, and as politician, acting as intermediaries with bureaucrats.

7.1.3.1 Shopkeeper

A loan from a shopkeeper is one of the lending sources most neglected by researchers on informal credits in rural areas. For example, in the painstaking study of Walker and Ryan

⁷ The aim of this section is not to examine alternative means at the time of income shocks, which has been done elsewhere (e.g. Jutting, 2000). I will limit the examination to those sectors that are likely to influence state allocation.

(1990), though they recognise shopkeepers as providers of loans with an assurance from *mukadams* (p.111), while explaining the financial markets (pp.196-218) they limit themselves to professional moneylenders, tied labour-credits, relatives, friends, chit funds and the formal sector, despite their own data showing private shopkeepers as being larger credit providers than employers (p.199). This tendency not to recognise the credit source that may be the sole source for the poorest households can be found in other studies as well. This is one reason to conclude that existing research on informal rural credit may be biased against landless poor households. The underlying reason for this bias could be that the credit obtained from a shopkeeper is a mix of cash and kind, in a complex relationship of customer-shopkeeper-resident in the same community.

Shopkeepers turn out to be an important source of informal lending for the poorest people. This is due to two factors: First, the poorest family can sell grains⁸ (often obtained as wage in kind) to a shopkeeper. When a poor family has no grains to sell, they make a request, giving the reason (e.g. hospital visit). Such credits are normally very small in amount. Second, since the poorest family buys goods, the shopkeeper is obliged to give credit in kind to a great extent⁹. 68.1% of households, in the survey, reported they had drawn credit from a shopkeeper. 30.1 % of people who had credit from a shopkeeper said they obtained less than Rs.100. Only 7.7 % reported they obtain more than Rs.1000 from a shopkeeper. This variation is due to factors such as the asset base of the individual customers and the trust built up over the years with the consumer. However, what is significant for this study is the reliability of this source, though meagre, for a large number of people.

A shopkeeper's methods of recovery of credit are not as stringent as a moneylender's. He uses the tactics of persuasion, and threat not to provide any more credit in kind or cash. Everyone in the village knows a shopkeeper's links with the local politician, and this can act

⁸ Often, this turns out to be a very profitable exchange for the small shopkeepers since they buy grains from the poorest people at a very low price.

⁹ It is a usual practice in the villages that the shopkeeper keeps a credit book and he makes a note of the items purchased with dates. He settles the account whenever the consumer has some money. It can be weekly, monthly or in six months. It is common that shopkeepers overestimate these credits, exploiting the illiteracy of the people. Political elites often step in to settle such controversies.

as a further implicit method to force recovery. The relationship of the shopkeeper to the political elite is mutually beneficial.

During the fieldwork the observation of the case of Kethan Shinde (*Mahar*), who used to work as a regular farm worker for Rau Patil (*Maratha*) is interesting. As a defaulter, the shopkeepers from where Kethan used to take credit refused to provide credit at the time of the marriage of Kethan's daughter. When Kethan approached Rau Patil for help, rather than providing help himself, he was directed to Pramod Oswal's (*Marwari*) shop. As Pramod expressed unwillingness to provide credit for a relatively new customer, Rau Patil himself came to assure Pramod of his guarantee. Here the advantage for Rau is to avoid the hassles of bargaining with a poor person when recovering his debt. Pramod is emboldened to use the strength of Rau's political power to recover the credit. (At a later date Kethan started to be given IM benefit though he did not fit any of the eligibility criteria).¹⁰

A shopkeeper is particularly concerned with assetless poor older persons, who rely on social protection benefits for repayment. On the first visit to the shop by these old people after the receipt of the benefit, the shopkeeper will demand to settle their account.

The survey results do not explicitly support the argument that credit from the shopkeeper is dependent on the state IM benefit. Of the households who did not receive benefits, 62 households (47.7%) reported they were not given credit by a shopkeeper despite requesting it. However, there seems to be a connection. The response from the beneficiaries (those who at least received benefit once, n=105) showed 67.6 % of them used not to be given credit by the shopkeeper before they got IM benefits. 95.2% (n=99) reported they experienced a change after they began receiving benefits (beginning to get credit) or when the benefit was stopped (stopping a credit that used to be given). This is important since the benefit amount is

¹⁰ The blurred boundaries of state and society, created a situation where the poorest people approach the local political elite at the time of household shock. This was further evidenced during the elite interviews when they reported that elites had suggested IM as an alternative source when people demanded bank loans or housing. There were many people who had requested such public resources. Sometimes, it was the opposition party that had the power to distribute them. Such struggles over scarce goods create cleavages in society (Beteille 1998). Political decentralisation brought these cleavages home to the local level geographic unit, and often they were manifested as village factions.

generally found to be small. Though the benefit is small, the help that comes with this small benefit tends to be timely.

This finding was further confirmed from the responses of the beneficiaries about the use of benefit. 62% of the beneficiaries (n=65) reported they used the benefit primarily to pay their credits (a good number of them reported the benefit amount would be exhausted once they paid off their debts). If anything was left, it was used for grocery expenses (50.5%). For most other expenses such as hospital, travel, clothes the benefit was reported to be insufficient.

Especially in Saralgaon, the connection between IM benefit and the shopkeepers was very evident. Abdul Kasam, being the main shopkeeper, also acted as a helper to write application forms for many potential beneficiaries. He also had good contact with the NGO that worked in the village. He uses this contact to prompt the NGO to gain benefits for potential beneficiaries. The NGO also discussed with Abdul as an 'informed person' to work out to whom the NGO should provide its own IM benefits (see more on 'NGO intervention' in section 7.5.1). In Bajgaon, I noticed Javed Nasir, the shopkeeper, who was accessible to the poorest people, had kept the IM receipts of a regular customer, a poor widow, whose account he used to 'manage'.

7.1.3.2 Landlords

As we have seen in chapter three, on the background information about rural Maharashtra, there is significant number of population who are landless labourers depending on other landowners for their livelihood. During the fieldwork it was observed that most of the poorest households gained their livelihood through daily wages. Many of the community elites being landlords come into the bargaining process with daily wage labourers, especially over social security issues. Bargaining is not significant in terms of wage or job.¹¹ Rather than discussing the details of agrarian relations in totality, I briefly touch upon how this is directly

¹¹ Here, bargaining is referred to as an individual bargain with the employer. Collective bargaining with employers for wage increases is a constant issue. A good number of agrarian struggles in post-independence India were based on increase in wage (see Deasi, 1986; Lerche, 1999; see Weller and Guggenheim (1982) for international comparison). For details on individual bargaining, see Breman (1993).

related to the public provision of IM. Bargaining is very significant in terms of social security issues. Bargaining for increased wages or demand for more jobs will be seen as a threat to the power of the landlord. Another labourer may rapidly be employed to replace the labourer since labour supply is very high. The labourer, being aware of this situation, may try to gain benefits by making demands in a non-threatening ways. This could be by requesting assistance from the landlord at a time when a member of the labourer's household falls ill, or at the time of marriage in the household or pregnancy and delivery, or when the labourer becomes old. These are non-threatening requests, because the labourer communicates to the landlord non-verbally (implicit in the type of request and subordinate posture) that he/she is at the mercy of the landlord in such a situation. Verbally, the labourer says that he would pay the requested amount at a later point of time or that amount could be deducted from his wages.

Are these requests granted to every labourer? We need to understand the different types of agricultural labourers to answer this question. Marathwada has a version of the *jajmani* model of agricultural labour organisation. Under this, there are broadly two types of agricultural labourers¹². The first type is termed regular farm worker or *ghadi* ('the man') of the landlord¹³. Only males are appointed to this post. The landlord (often with the advice of the *munim*, the manager) personally handpicks them at the beginning of the agricultural

¹² There can be various types of contracts in agricultural labour. One study in West Bengal on types of agricultural contracts estimated these to be 12 (Harriss-White, 2003). See generalised structure of village labour market in Walker and Ryan (1990: 109).

¹³ Often, they are called *sal ghadi*. *Sal* means 'year', and *sal ghadi* means, a man for one year. I noticed that Sanjay Patilkar, with 300 acres of land, had appointed 20 *ghadis*. However, the *ghadis* do not remain with the landlord throughout the year. Sometimes, the landlord is not happy with the *ghadi*, or at other times, *ghadis* become dissatisfied with the payment calculation of the landlord. The contracts between *ghadi* and landlord are always unwritten and the researcher came across a number of cases where *ghadis* were cheated without payment and accused of stealing or improper work. *Ghadis* are aware that given the unequal power relation between landlord and labourer such incidents are bound to occur and legal resources are almost always in favour of the landlord. The reduction of the number of *ghadis* is also a strategy of the landlord, because more *ghadis* are required when the agricultural season requires preparation of the land and to undertaking various tasks. The work falls as the crop grows and the landlord systematically avoids the *ghadis* whom he does not want or whom he perceives as lazy. The researcher came across *ghadis* who have remained with the same landlord over the years. One of the landlords said to me: "the *ghadi* has been working with me for the past 20 years. He began to work with me when he was 45, and now he can't do hard work. However, he comes everyday to the farm and supervises other workers, and I pay him some money" (see Walker and Ryan, 1990; Ramachandran, 1990; Binswanger and Rosenzweig, 1984 for details on the activities, contractual arrangements and power relationships between employer and regular farm workers).

season every year¹⁴. They are given half of the contractual amount (it was Rs.20000 for a year¹⁵ when the research was carried out) when selected. Part of the payment comes in grains. The worker is expected to carry out all kinds of work in the farm, and sometimes off the farm, as instructed by the landlord. He also organises the daily wage labourers if additional workers are needed in the farm. This is a job in high demand, despite its hard nature, because of the certainty of labour for a year and establishment of a bond with the landlord¹⁶. The landlord often chooses to stick with the same *ghadi* year after year, if the person is a reliable and careful worker. This in turn increases the loyalty from the *ghadi* to the farm and to the landlord.

The second type of labourer is the daily wageworker. They are employed on a day-to-day basis and they are paid on a weekly basis¹⁷. It is the responsibility of the *ghadi* to bring sufficient daily wage labourers to the farm. However, the landlord interacts with the daily wage labourers and supervises the work. Many of these casual labourers may be engaged in the work on a piece-rate basis depending on the type of work available.

The financial requests at the time of income shock and need would be often granted to a *ghadi*, because of the continued relationship and the possibility of offsetting the credit from the wages, but this does not apply to the daily wage labourer (sometimes very selectively their requests too were granted). These are mechanisms through which landlords ensure the steady availability of labourers (see for similar findings from other rural areas of India, from Rajasthan in this instance, in Agarwal [1991]). Most of the *ghadis* (and their wives, sometimes both) when they stop working for the landlord are able to gain a state

¹⁴ This is the month of April, and money is given to the *ghadi* on the day of *Gudi Padva*, the Maharashtra New Year.

¹⁵ This is expressed as 'Rs.10,000 and *man bhar Jowar*'. It means half the contractual amount comes as cash, and half as kind. 'The kind' is measured by landlord as '*man bhar*', literally, 'as you wish' or 'as it pleases your mind'. But the worker knows how much he will be allowed to take. This was 10 sacks (about 500 kg) of *Jowar* (Sorghum) at the time of fieldwork. One sack of *Jowar* costs about Rs.900 (see the estimates for 1990 in Walker and Ryan [1990: 113]). However, there are different qualities of *Jowar* (important varieties are local and hybrid) and workers often express their disgruntlement that they were given only lower quality. Scott (1998) has elaborated on this politics of measurement.

¹⁶ Traditionally this used to be done by the Mahar caste. Breman (1993) elaborates on how this farm work became dissociated from caste after the 1960s.

¹⁷ At the time of the fieldwork, it was Rs.25 per day for a female and Rs.50 for male. This varied between types of work substantially. For example, cotton picking was often paid on a piece-rate basis and two rupees per kg was the rate in 2003-04.

pension through the landlord's influence, especially if the landlord himself is a political elite or close to a political elite. Besides, the prestige of being a *ghadi* for a powerful *Maratha* enhances the prestige of a lower caste person (see Breman [1993] for similar relationship between lower caste labourer and upper caste employers in Gujarat). Therefore, there are more people who are ready to work on the land of the political elite. The political elite also pays Rs.2000 or so less as the contractual amount compared with other landlords¹⁸. But workers are willing to forgo this amount given the higher chance that he might be given the IM benefit. A good number of them start gaining the benefit when they are too young, by lying about their age. Out of 10 regular farm workers, nine were receiving IM (There were 30 persons in the survey, where there was at least one labourer from the household working with an elite on a regular basis, and 27 of them were recipients of IM).

These are in fact benefits for the landlord. Earlier under the patronage system of landlord-labour relationship, the landlord was expected to pay an informal pension (taking care of the labourer in old age). This has disappeared in recent times (See Breman [1993] for reasons, particularly in the context of Gujarat. This is applicable in other areas of India). Public benefit has taken its place. Kumar Pandith, the Brahmin landlord said: "Times have changed. Earlier I used to provide for my *ghadis* in their old age. Today there are provisions from the government. They should obtain those benefits. Farmers are in a poor condition today. How could we provide for our workers generously?". Thus, state benefits have provided a rationale for the elites to stop the informal pension they used to provide under the patronage framework. Development literature distinguishes this behaviour of political elite, privately benefiting from public funds as 'prebend'¹⁹ rather than patronage (Lemarchand, 1988).

For females a similar work opportunity was undertaking washing and cleaning jobs in the house of high caste elites. Often, such cheap female labour was an integral part of the

¹⁸ Calculating how much less is given is difficult since the adjustment is done through a mixture of cash and kind.

¹⁹ Max Weber's original use of the term meant 'socio-economic system which combines private perquisites with public office' (Riggs, 1964: 303).

elite's comparatively luxurious life coupled with leisure. Out of eight females engaged in such jobs five of them were already receiving IM, and the other three were actively bargaining with their employers. The network data shows that on many occasions though the high caste elites (especially for Marawaris) did not have a direct relationship with bureaucrats at *tehsil* level, they were able to network with *Maratha* elites in the village, and bargain for benefits for their female workers (see section 7.4 below).

Having seen both formal actors and informal actors, we can summarise the networks of actors. The observations from fieldwork network data are presented in Figure 7.1. All the actors involved in the processes of making an application, decision-making and delivery mode (which I explained in the previous chapter), and the informal actors are represented in this interactive diagram. The actors in the oval shapes are formally mentioned in the policy directive for the state's IM programme. The actors in square shapes are either informal providers or very active at lower levels of policy implementation. It can be observed from village level interaction that, except for the delivery agency, the political elite and brokers interrupt the village officials' (*talati*, *gram sevak*) link with the *tehsil* officials. This is the crucial point where elites take advantage of a 'structural hole' between the societal structures (village community) and the state structures (lower level bureaucracy). The dotted line between household and *tehsil* officials indicates a weak link. As is clear from the survey, some individuals through their relatives were successful in submitting applications directly. A broker's link with the political elite, and the absence of a writer's link with the political elite, as we will see later, have significant impact on the outcome of an application. In addition to the broker and writer, the direct links that a household possesses are usually in their immediate neighbourhood. These sources from the neighbourhood are the market provisions of private insurance, rural banking, shopkeeper, landlord, relatives and moneylender. What this network of formal and informal actors shows is that the network of informal actors is able to structurally weaken the hierarchy of administration. Abiding by the rules of hierarchy is essential for the success of administration, but informal networks are able to weaken this

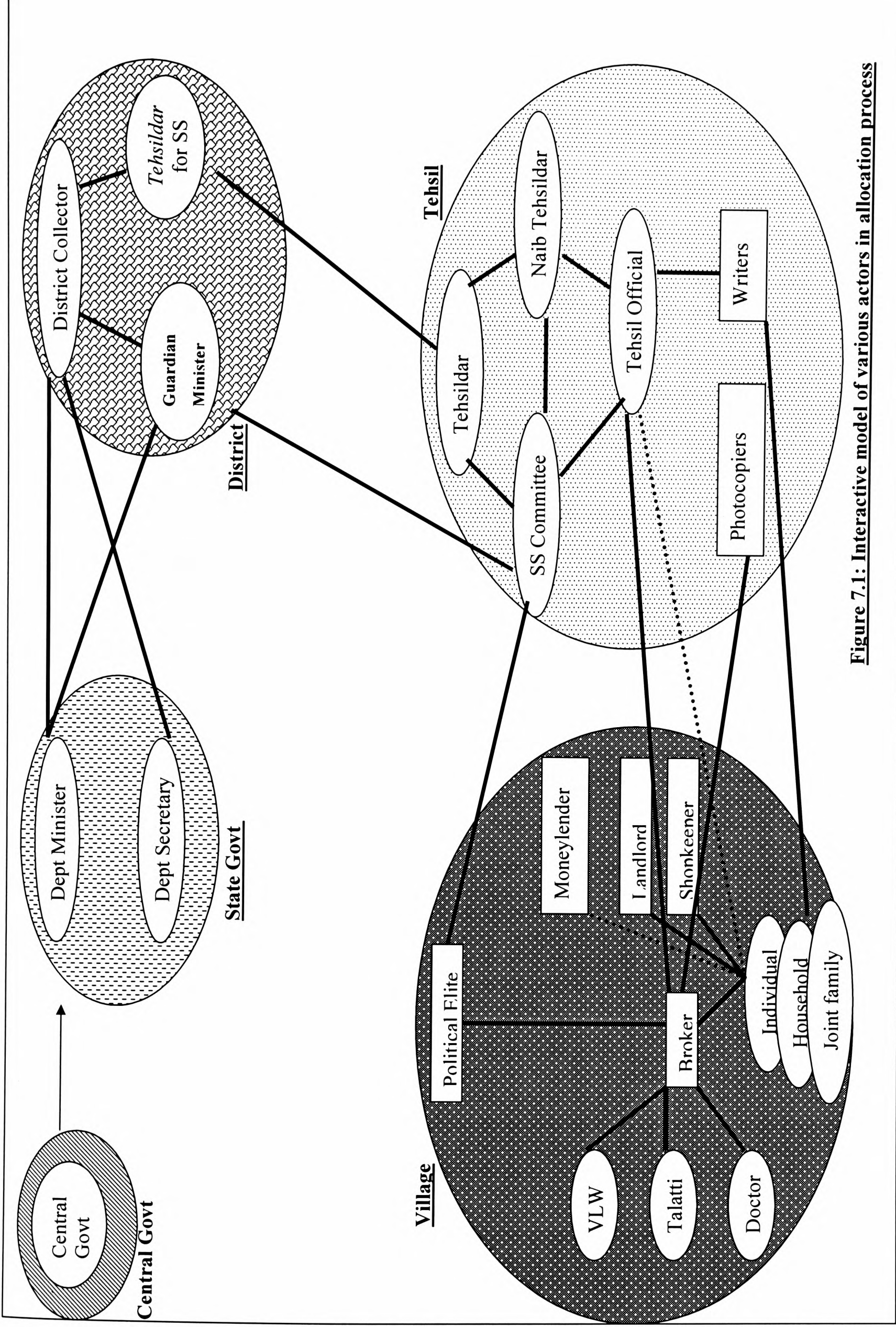


Figure 7.1: Interactive model of various actors in allocation process

hierarchy. In such a context, *practices* of the actors take precedence over policy guidelines. Thus, informal implementation comes to existence.

So far, we have been looking at some of the non-state institutions that may influence the allocation pattern of IM. Let us now look at how the non-state institutions may affect the EGS programme.

7.1.3.3 Labour market inequalities and the EGS

The key utility of the EGS for a landless labourer is primarily to save the household from income shocks by obtaining some labour opportunities. Thus, benefits from the EGS are complementary to IM. Another important utility is local development through projects such as percolation tanks or rural roads. However, the utility of such projects are skewed towards landed rich villagers.

When a poor household needs money, there are a few other opportunities in the labour market. Table 7.3 shows the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options. For households, which are chronically poor, it is the urgent need for money, which becomes the critical factor. The case of Rushmabai is illustrative: “It is difficult to obtain rice and wheat from a Public Distribution Shop (PDS). Someone says that rice has come into the shop. It is then I start going to friends/relatives to borrow some money. If I am lucky, it may take 3-4 days to get sufficient money to buy grains. By the time I reach the PDS shop with money, the rice would be all gone”. Rushmabai’s account indicates the urgent need and desperate attempts to get credit from different sources. The intensity of this desperation becomes even higher when the amount is large and in the face of needs such as marriage or ill health. A person cannot afford to wait to get work on an EGS project and wait for the money to come in after 2-3 months.

On such occasions a *mukadam* who is ready to provide some credit becomes a big help. It is here that the *mukadams* working in sugar cane cutting²⁰ come to the aid of the chronic poor. The poorest persons in the village pledge their labour (which may be their only

²⁰ This was specific to the Marathwada region. In Western Maharashtra poorer people were given advances to work in brick kilns (Krishnaraj *et al.*, 2004).

resource) and promise that they would be available for next season's sugar cane cutting. If the *mukadam* finds this pledge to be trustworthy²¹, he takes a photograph of the person and money will be given to the potential labourer in two or three days. A labourer may get an advance of up to Rs. 5000. This is a mechanism to tie up labour for next season's sugarcane cutting, which begins in November every year. Entering into such tied transactions is also a strategy deployed by the poor households to ensure continued labour availability (Stiglitz, 1986; Ellis, 1988; Basu, 1989). The *mukadams* are given advances by the sugar co-operatives²² to bring the labourers in groups.²³ For details of this transaction, see Breman (2003).

During the fieldwork the workers reported the nature of hard work involved in sugarcane cutting. It takes place near the sugar factories, to which worker may travel between 200-1000 kms. Often, the whole family with children move to the work site for 3-5 months, depending on how good the harvest is. The biggest losers in this are the children whose education is lost. Elder children take care of the younger members of the family. Some of them start working with their parents in sugar farms at the age of eight. Often, the family is

²¹ These are mostly unwritten contracts. As a matter of fact, the *mukadam* will give money to a person only if he is introduced by a known friend or relative. But increasingly the *mukadams* are employing lots of strategies to make the labourer feel that they are legal contracts. Some of these strategies include: writing on a paper and getting a signature or thumb impression, giving the money in front of a third party or taking a photograph of the advance being given to the labourer. But, above all what helps the *mukadam* to enforce these contracts are his 'muscle' and money power. If a new person demands money, the *mukadam* asks him to bring a pledge from a friend, whom the *mukadam* knows. Even if the person who takes money fails to turn up, the *mukadam* can force his guarantor to do the work. In the region where the fieldwork was conducted, one *mukadam* had caught a labourer who had disappeared after taking the money. The gang men of the *mukadam* traced and brought in the labourer who had fled. He was killed and hung on the tree on the road side to be a lesson for labourers who try to cheat the *mukadam*. However, this is an exceptional case with a *mukadam* who had lot of political power.

²² There are 177 sugar co-operatives in Maharashtra. The politics of Maharashtra are connected with the sugar lobby and these sugar co-operatives have high subsidies and other privileges (see Jugale, 1997 for details). How the sugar lobby capitalists are able to invest the money in advance to draw upon the manual labour is a subject matter of another inquiry. Every time the labourers, under the instigation of the leaders of labour unions (organised by Marxist political parties) protest for a wage increase, there would be a series of discussions between union leaders and factory owners. Workers, whom I interviewed, suggested the union leaders would never take the worker's side when an issue arose between factory owner and the worker. Interestingly, while the fieldwork was taking place a protest was being organised by the union leaders to stop the plan by factory owners to import sugar cutting machines from Australia.

²³ 10 people, often five couples, form a group. How these groups are organised is another important area to be studied. The researcher observed on various occasions that there are caste *mukadams* or family *mukadams*. If a family has 6-8 adults, by including two other persons from neighbourhood or relatives they make a group. There are also established *mukadams* who have political linkages.

not able to work to earn sufficient money, which was given to them as credit. That means they would have to pay back the difference with interest, or commit their labour to the next harvest season. Thus, they fall into a cycle of debt. The researcher through informal interaction learned that some families have been working for 20 years in this debt trap²⁴ with *mukadams*.

Table 7.3 Advantages and disadvantages of different labour opportunities for poor people in Marathwada

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Daily wage labour in the farm sector	i) Work is close to home ii) Money is paid weekly iii) Better social life since one can interact (and get information) from other community members.	i) Irregular/seasonal work ii) Gender wage inequality iii) One can offer labour only if contacted by landlord or regular farm worker
Non-farm sector	i) Money is paid weekly ii) Better pay than farm sector (especially for women). iii) Work is in nearby villages	i) Very irregular work ii) One can offer labour only if contacted by contractor or a <i>mukadam</i> .
Sugar-cane cutting	i) Money comes in advance ii) Lump sum money is useful for investment iii) Continued work for a certain period is ensured iv) One can go and ask for money from the <i>mukadam</i> when in need and offer labour as repayment	i) Hard work day and night ii) Poor quality of life during work away from village. iii) Education of children and other social life is affected iv) Falls into a vicious cycle of debt.
EGS	i) Gender wage equality ii) Work is in residential village iii) Since part of the payment is in the form of grains, there is food security. iv) Since it is piece-rate a good worker can earn more money quickly.	i) Money does not come in time ii) Little work is available iii) Information about work depends on contacts with officials or leaders/ <i>mukadam</i> .

²⁴ In a practical sense it is bonded labour. However, this is not bonded labour in the sense that the worker is free to leave the *mukadam* if he/she pays the money. In many cases labourers take the money from a different *mukadam* and pay off the earlier debt to avoid the interest. On many occasions *mukadams* cheat the labourers with false accounts. Thus, the labourers become disgruntled and regularly change their *mukadam*.

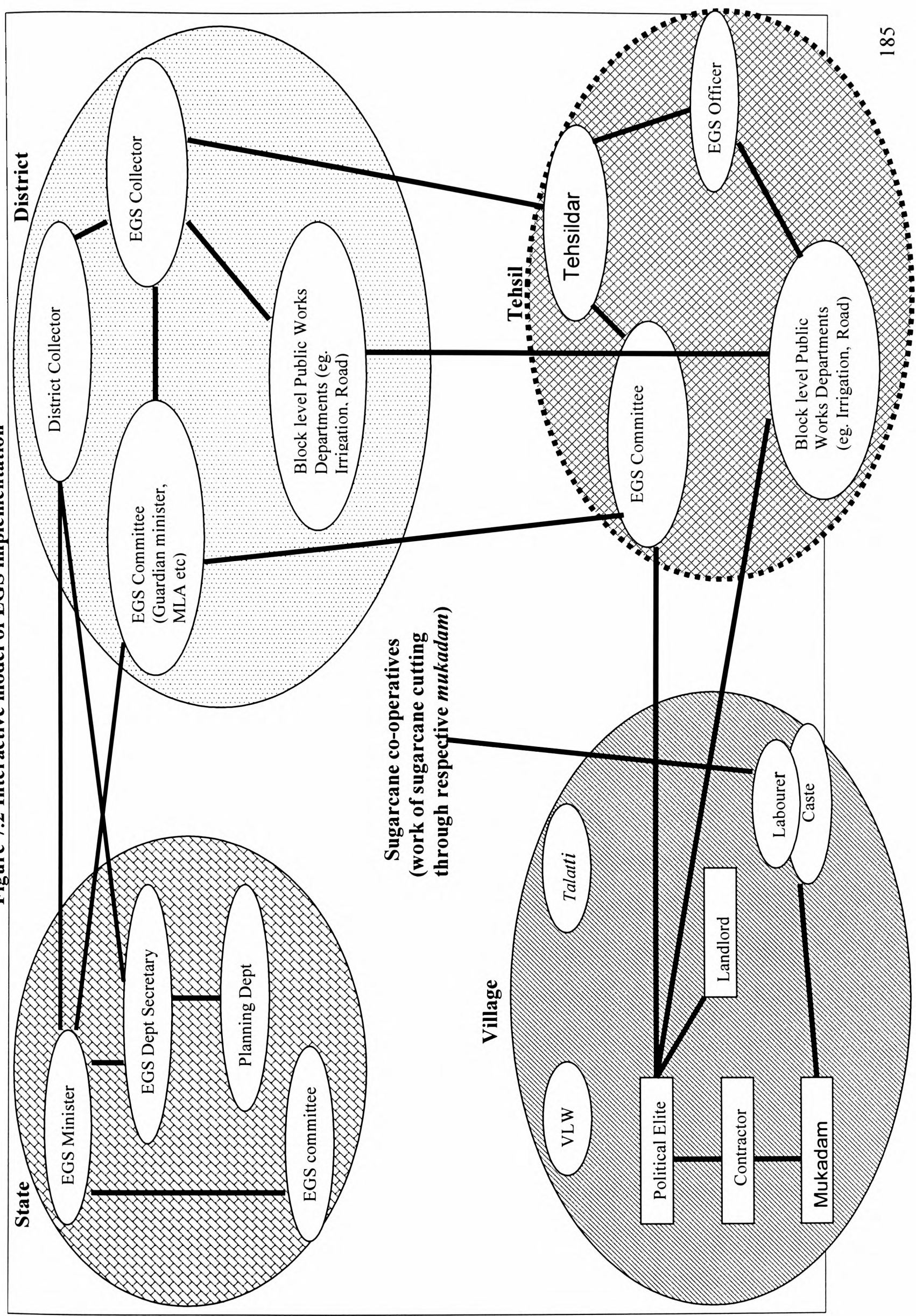
The people who have taken money are driven to the sugar cane factories in sugar factory vehicles coming to the village. This exodus takes place in November, and workers come back in March or April. It is estimated that there are about one million sugarcane cutters in Maharashtra and eighty per cent of them come from Marathwada. They go to Western Maharashtra and the neighbouring state of Karnataka. By the time they return the EGS work will have started in the village (the EGS-year is from 1st October to 30th September). The work is taken up by less poor households in the village, who might have other assets to pledge such as land or gold in case of emergency/need. These households, which are less poor, can afford not to migrate for money and can wait for the government funds to come from the EGS work. The exodus from the village in fact may increase the scarcity of labour in the villages, requiring the *mukadam* to pay higher wages to labourers. Rather, the *mukadam* may use such labour scarcity as a justification to bringing in workers from *Laman*, *Banjara* and other tribal workers.

Though neo-classical economists have argued that the method of tied-transaction is beneficial to the efficiency of allocation (Stiglitz, 1986), empirical studies among Indian farmers in agricultural markets have shown these transactions to be exploitative. Bhaduri (1973, 1977, 1983, 1986; see also Olsen, 1991; also Harriss-White, 2003 for the understanding of coercive elements of contracts) has called them 'forced commerce' where a poor household is forced to sell off its agricultural products at a lower price as a condition for the consumption loan the labourer gained in the lean season. The labour market is no different in the case of the tied-transaction. The poorest Marathwada households lack the power to work against the forces of the labour market, and enter into exploitative labour of sugarcane cutting, and thereby get excluded from EGS work, which could have enabled them to remain in the locality and to earn better wages. As described above, a number of factors force the labourers to sell their labour: uncertainty of availability of EGS work in their village, uncertainty of being included even if the work were available, delay in payment of EGS work even if they work, and finally no other opportunities for credit other than the *mukadam*.

In the context of abundant labour force supply, self-targeting (see Chapter four for details) could be like a game of musical chairs. The chairs may not be socially and physically accessible. As we have seen above, the choices of many poor people are limited by the capitalist forces of sugarcane factories, since the labour of potential EGS workers is tied to sugar cane cutting. The state's action does not take such private spheres of opportunities into consideration. As a result, the state's action for promotive social protection becomes ineffective. Implicit political consent for the weakness of such public action becomes visible when we recognise the political connections of the *Maratha* sugar lobby, which requires cheap rural labour. This is a case of success for the elites in the 'pragmatic' public service bargain.

As we plotted the informal and formal actors in the IM allocation, we can plot them for the public works programme as well, as in figure 7.2. The key difference between the two figures is that while there are more networks and activities at the district level for the EGS programme, for the IM programmes such intense activity is at *tehsil* level. As we have seen, this difference is because the decision-making locale for the programmes are different. Apart from this, both figures are similar and the phenomenon of informal networks weakening the structure of the administrative hierarchy can be observed here as well. The EGS project implementation is much more informalised at the village level since the project management is directly carried out by one political elite, acting in the 'collective interests' of the workers.

Figure 7.2 Interactive model of EGS implementation



Section II

The informal implementation of both social protection programmes calls for a political analysis of dynamics at the community level. These community dynamics may be crucial to determining the exclusion and inclusion of claimants. We will examine a number of pairs of ‘similar’ cases and ‘different’ cases to understand why some people are excluded or included in the welfare benefit. In chapter five we have seen the crucial importance of village factions in the local political environment, as well as their implications for public service provision. We also undertook an analysis of the power structure of the two case study villages. Therefore, we know that these power dynamics are going to affect the allocation patterns. Gaining insights from the comparison of cases and the account of the political factions, we will attempt to create a generalisable model using the survey data.

7.2.1 Comparison of cases

The aim of this section is to find out why one person is excluded and another person is included. We are relying on Mill’s (1888/1970) method of difference to identify the reasons for different outcomes of persons in similar situations of vulnerability. Then we will employ the method of agreement to see whether the people who agree on the key independent variable, but differ on other variables, can have similar outcome. As we know from the previous discussion that in the context of informal implementation of the programmes and the local political elites acting as intermediaries for gaining welfare rights, we will be particularly looking at the relationship of the claimant to the local elite. The purpose here is to identify what explains the differential allocation of cases. More details of the types of vulnerability, and its extent (e.g. how many persons in the sample were disabled) are taken up for discussion in the next chapter.

7.2.1.1 Disabled persons

Table 7.4 provides two ‘most similar’ cases in terms of their socio-economic background. While Kushal is slightly more disadvantaged since he has no eyesight, and is without a partner living with him, he does not receive disability benefit. From the same

village a person (Parthav) with partial eyesight receives disability benefit because he is able to work for a local elite. Parthav is able to work and his pension is an additional income. In the case of Kushal, the only income he gains is at the time of festivals. It was not his inability to

Table 7.4: “Most similar” cases from disabled individuals

	Parthav (J33)	Kushal (J4)
Age:	62	55
Gender:	Male	Male
Caste:	Mahang (SC)	Mahang (SC)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 8,500	Rs.5,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Works in the village elite’s farm doing the traditional job + pension	Sings with a musical instrument during festivals
Type of house:	Kutchha	Kutchha
No of adult children:	3 (male); 1 (female)	3 (male); 0(female)
Type of disability	Blind in one eye since he was 5 years of age	Blind in both eyes since birth
Nature of informal support:	All three sons live with him. Two of them migrate seasonally for sugarcane cutting. His wife lives with him.	Two adult sons live with him and migrate seasonally for sugarcane cutting. Another son is married and lives nearby and is engaged in recycling. Wife is separated.
Number of times applications made:	One	Two
<i>Relationship with the local political elite:</i>	<i>Works for the elite person in the agricultural farm</i>	<i>A portion of the piece of land on which his house was built, was taken away to build a community hall. This created tension between him and the elite.</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	No

work which was the reason for rejection of the application. Kushal reported that he was asked to sign some documents, which he did in good faith since he was blind. Based on this document some of his land, where his house stood, was acquired to build a community hall. Kushal learned about this when his son returned to the village. He protested about this and questioned the village elite, which had become a bone of contention between him and the elite. Thus, these two cases vary on the critical factor of relationship with the elite, which seems to determine the different outcomes.

Table 7.5: “Most different” cases from disabled individuals

	Zaveribai (S2)	Gopan (S30)
Age:	48	40
Gender:	Female	Male
Caste:	Varik (OBC)	Gosai (ST)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 6,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Pension	Pension
Type of house:	Pucca	Mixture of pucca and kutcha
No of adult children:	0 (male) 2 (female)	2 (male); 1 (female)
Type of disability:	One leg was totally paralysed when she was trapped when the wall of the neighbour collapsed (three years ago).	His hand was cut off while operating a machine of harvesting working for an elite (12 years ago)
Nature of informal support:	Her husband lives with her, and is engaged in the traditional job of hair cutting. Her daughter lives in close proximity with her family.	Wife and two adult children live with him and work as daily wage labourers
Number of times applications made:	One	One
<i>Relationship with the local political elite</i>	<i>The relative who is in the village council member took the initiative to gain the benefit</i>	<i>The elite on whose farm the accident took place has taken initiative to gain the benefit</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	Yes

If the cases are similar on the crucial variable of relationship with the elite, and differ on the socio-economic data, what would be the outcome? Table 7.5 provides two such cases to examine this. Here, two persons differing on gender, caste, and economic conditions, but both of them able to establish a relationship with the local elite, are presented. Both of them had survived an accident in recent times. Gopan revealed that he was able to gain the IM because the accident took place on the farm of an elite where he was employed. Such initiatives by the landlords were observed in four other cases during the fieldwork. As we have seen in the section 7.1.3.2, legal recourse against landlords are not often taken by the labourers, and help to get welfare benefits from the state is provided by the landlords on compassionate grounds to compensate for the losses incurred to the household. In the case of Zaveribai, it was a

relative who was able to influence the allocation process. Thus, it is not the claimant's socio-economic background, but the relationship to the elite that determines the outcome.

7.2.1.2 Elderly persons living in the household

Let us take two 'most similar' cases from the elderly persons. Both the cases presented in Table 7.6 are from Saralgaon, and from same caste. Raghu has been receiving the old age pension for the past eight years, and at the time of survey he was just 60. He must have created a false certificate for his age with the help of a doctor. Since he is employed by the village council, his connections were useful in this regard. On the other hand, Shyamlal, when he was young, had fought vehemently against the local elites by organising the lower castes for the rights over land. Later Shyamlal left for Mumbai, where he worked in various informal jobs. He returned to the village about 10 years ago, and was able to gain the pension

Table 7.6: "Most similar" cases of the elderly persons living in a household

	Raghu (J41)	Shyamlal (J94)
Age:	60	67
Gender:	Male	Male
Caste:	Mahang (SC)	Mahang (SC)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 5,000	Rs.3,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Kothwal of village council + pension	Unable to work
Type of house:	Kutchra	Kutchra
No of adult children:	2 (male); 2 (female)	4 (male); 0(female)
Partner status:	Lives with him but unable to work	Lives with him but unable to work
Mobility:	Walks around himself, but unable to do manual work	Walks with the help of a stick, unable to do manual work.
Nature of informal support:	Two male children live in close proximity. They seasonally migrate for sugar cane cutting.	Two male children live in the same village at a distance. However, they are not on good terms.
Number of times applications made:	One	Four (received the benefit for some time, later it was stopped without giving any reason)
<i>Relationship with the local political elite:</i>	<i>Good relationship through his work on the village council</i>	<i>He led fight to gain land for the landless lower caste persons against the village elites.</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	No

with the help of a political leader outside the village. However, at a later point, his pension was stopped by the village political elite in collusion with a bureaucrat.

The two 'most different' cases presented in Table 7.7 are also from Saralgaon. Though their caste and income are different, the primary reason why they are able to gain pension was their ability to relate to the village elite in a special way. In the case of Lakhuba it was by providing political support through his caste identity, but in the case of Devaji, it is through personal friendship with the elite. The case of Devaji is clearly ineligible since his income level is above the poverty level specified by the government of Maharashtra (Rs.14,000). However, in the context of informal economy, it is not difficult to produce evidence to show a lower income.

Table 7.7: "Most different" cases of the elderly persons living in a household

	Lakhuba (J75)	Devaji (J63)
Age:	65	69
Gender:	Male	Male
Caste:	Mahar (SC)	Maratha (High caste)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 6,000	Rs. 18,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Livestock care + pension	Share cropping with a landlord, who is also a political elite + pension
Type of house:	Kutcha	Pucca,
No of adult children:	2 (male) 2 (female)	2 (male); 2 (female)
Partner status:	Lives with him; goes for daily wage labour	None (dead)
Mobility:	Goes with livestock for feeding them everyday.	Goes to the farm every day and directs the workers there
Nature of informal support:	One son and his family lives with him. Other son stays near by.	One son and his family live with him. Son has 10 acres of land.
Number of times applications made:	One	One
<i>Relationship with the local political elite</i>	<i>During the village election his daughter in law was made to stand on behest of the upper caste elite for a reserved place for the SC.</i>	<i>Sharecropping with the political elite for past eight years.</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	Yes

7.2.1.3 Elderly people living alone

As we will see in the next chapter, people who live alone stood a higher chance of gaining a pension. However, there were many persons who despite living alone in old age were not receiving pension. The cases of Kalitha and Surajithai taken from Bajgaon (Table 7.8) provide insightful comparison for this. Both of them stood a good chance to gain a pension for the rest of their life since their husbands were employed as RFW with local elites. However, Kalitha's husband was accused of stealing some plastic pipes used for irrigation while at work. This had spoiled her household's relationship with the elite. Though she had applied for benefit once, she reported she was not allowed to meet the elite when she went personally to his house.

Table 7.8: "Most similar" cases of the elderly persons living alone

	Kalitha (S14)	Surajithai (S8)
Age:	68	68
Gender:	Female	Female
Caste:	Dhangar (OBC)	Maratha (High caste)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs.4000	Rs. 5,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Worked until two years ago. Now daughters who visit her give some money	Pension
Type of house:	Mixture of Kutchha and pucca	Pucca
No of adult children:	4 (female)	1 (female)
Partner status:	Died nine years ago	None (dead)
Mobility:	Can move around with stick	Partly attends farm to complement the pension.
Nature of informal support:	Daughters live in different village after marriage	Daughter lives in different village after marriage
Number of times applications made:	One	One
<i>Relationship with the local political elite</i>	<i>Her husband used to be regular farm worker for landlord. But was accused of stealing certain goods from farm and thus lost the relationship with the elite and work.</i>	<i>Her husband used to be regular farm worker for the landlord (political elite as well), and died in an accident during work. In turn, pension was gained for her</i>
Whether receiving pension?	No	Yes

In two different cases of females living alone in their old age (Table 7.9) we see that while the elderly *Maratha* woman was getting a pension since she was personally working for the village elite as a housemaid, the lower caste woman was receiving a pension since her

husband was RFW. In all these cases out of four treated in this section we see that their husband's job was a crucial pathway through which a relationship with the local elite was possible. Thus, labour market participation affects the public resource allocation indirectly as well.

Table 7.9: "Most different" cases of the elderly persons living alone

	Akkathi (S15)	Santha (S13)
Age:	70	73
Gender:	Female	Female
Caste:	Mahang (SC)	Maratha (High caste)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 3,000	Rs. 5,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Pension	Household works for the political elite + pension
Type of house:	Kutcha	Mixture of kutcha and Pucca,
No of adult children:	2 (female)	None
Partner status:	Died 13 years ago	None - deserted when she was young
Mobility:	Can move around independently	Walks with the help of a stick, and goes for work
Nature of informal support:	Both daughters are married and live in cities. Lives close to brother's house	No children; she lives with another pensioner who is also alone on rent.
Number of times applications made:	One	One
<i>Relationship with the local political elite</i>	<i>Husband used to work as regular farm worker for landlord (as well as village council vice-president)</i>	<i>Works for the political elite as a housemaid.</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	Yes

7.2.1.4 Female headed households

Compared to the elderly female households, young women who are head of household are in a particularly difficult position of caring for themselves as well as their children. Their chances to build up a relationship with local elite through their husbands working as RFW may be limited since their husband may have died or deserted them at a younger age. In chapter six we also have seen the difficulty faced by the younger females to access the elites, who are mostly men. In Table 7.10 we see the case of Sumathi who

continued to work with the landlord after her husband, who was RFW for the landlord, died. However, Vanduthai from the same caste and in a similar vulnerable condition is unable to gain the IM because she is working for an elite in the opposite faction to the village elite who have the power to allocate public provision.

Table 7.10: “Most similar” cases of the female headed households

	Sumathi (S26)	Vanduthai (S36)
Age of the head of the household:	40	34
Caste:	Maratha (High caste)	Maratha (High caste)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 7,500	Rs. 5,000
Land possession:	None	None
Chief means of personal income:	Daily wage agricultural labourer + IM	Housemaid in a <i>Marwari</i> 's house
Type of house:	Kutchha	Kutchha
Dependent children and age:	10 yrs (female); 8 yrs (male)	7 yrs (female); 6 yrs (male)
How long has she been head of the household?	2 years (husband dead)	5 years (husband dead)
Nature of informal support	None	None; has slight disability of arms
Number of times applications made:	One	One
<i>Relationship with the local political elite</i>	<i>Husband used to work for the elite as ghadi; Now she works as daily wage labourer for the elite (Sanjay)</i>	<i>Works for Marwari elite, but the elite belongs to opposite faction to Sanjay.</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	No

Two contrasting cases of a lower caste Hindu and high caste Muslim are provided in Table 7.11. Though socio-economically placed at two different levels, both are able to gain the IM. Saruni had to make the application thrice since her connection was through her mother-in-law who works as a housemaid for an elite. Rosthambai, on the other hand, though single, does not have dependent children. However, she was able to gain the benefits using the influence of her brother.

Table 7.11: “Most different” cases of female headed households

	Saruni (J72)	Rosthambai (J90)
Age of the head of the household:	40	43
Caste:	Mahar (SC)	Pathan (High caste)
Religion:	Buddhist	Muslim
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs. 4,500	Rs. 20,000
Land possession:	None	Five acres
Chief means of personal income:	Daily wage agricultural labourer + IM	Assists in the shop of her brother + IM
Type of house:	Kutcha	Pucca concrete
Dependent children and age:	12 yrs (male); 11 yrs (male)	None
How long has she been head of the household?	12 years; husband dead	18 years (husband deserted)
Nature of informal support	Mother-in-law, 75 years old, lives with her	She lives with her brother (40 year old)
Number of times applications made:	Three	One
<i>Relationship with the local political elite</i>	<i>Mother-in-law works for Maratha elite as a cleaner</i>	<i>Her brother is an elite</i>
Whether receiving pension?	Yes	Yes

7.2.1.5 Potential participants in EGS

Now, let us turn to the reasons for inclusion and exclusion from the EGS works programme. As we know from the discussions in chapter four, there are collective issues underlying this programme, as some villages may be totally left out of the programme. We are interested in considering the reasons for the inclusion of individuals when EGS work is in progress in a village. We have seen in Section I of this chapter, the reasons for exclusion from EGS is partly denial of access by the mukadam, and partly because the poorest people are engaged in sugarcane cutting (through tied labour). Therefore, the reasons for exclusion from the public works programme are different from that of IM. Relationship to the elites does not completely explain exclusion from the public works programme. Pension or disability benefit is primarily an individual benefit. Building a connection with an elite can be critical in gaining IM. Bargaining is on an individual basis in the case of IM. On the other hand, the public works programme has some elements of collective action.

Two ‘most similar’ cases presented in Table 7.12 are from lower castes, and in the context of not having land of their own, gaining agricultural labour or public works is crucial for both of them. However, the person from the *Mahar* caste is denied work. As we know from chapter five, the *Mahar* lower caste support the Congress Party and that could be the reason for exclusion. The other person who was given work supports the BJP party, and the exclusion is on party lines rather than an individual basis.

Table 7.12: “Most similar” cases of potential EGS workers

	(S140)	(S147)
Age and gender of the head of the household:	43 (male)	41 (male)
Caste:	Mahar (SC)	Laman (backward caste)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs.11,000	Rs.10,000
Land possession:	None	None
Type of house:	Mixture of pucca and kutcha	Mixture of pucca and kutcha
No of adult persons in the household	2	2
No of dependents in the household	Wife; two daughters and one son	Wife; three daughters and one son
Chief means of household income in different seasons	Whenever work is available non-farm work is done. Otherwise casual agricultural labour.	All the year round non-farm labour of digging, particularly EGS works. The family also have livestock (goats) business.
Registered with EGS?	Yes	Yes
<i>Reasons for working or not working</i>	<i>He requested work, but was told by the mukadam that there were already many people at work, and no more work was available.</i>	<i>The mukadam is from the BJP party of the Maratha caste close by village, and this caste do this work round the year for this mukadam.</i>
Participation in EGS?	No	Yes

On the other hand, let us take two very different cases (Table 7.13). While, the *Vadar* person migrates with his family to Bombay, the Maratha person does not have to migrate since he has a small piece of land. Thus, their primary livelihood strategies are different. However, they both take up EGS when their primary livelihood is not available to them, using their special connections with the *mukadam*.

These comparative cases reveal that relationship with the elite could be built through a variety of means. In the case of IM, the most common relationship is that of employer-

employee. This could either be the beneficiary directly working for an elite or a member of the household working for the elite. In the case of the EGS, it is the informal labour market arrangement of relating to a *mukadam*.

Table 7.13: “Most different” cases of potential EGS workers

	(S60)	(S183)
Age and gender of the head of the household:	45(male)	39 (male)
Caste:	Vadar (ST)	Maratha (high caste)
Religion:	Hindu	Hindu
Self-reported annual household income:	Rs.13,000	Rs.10,000
Land possession:	None	Three acres
Type of house:	Mixture of kutcha and pucca	Mixture of kutcha and pucca
No of adult persons in the household	5	2
No of dependents in the household	Joint family: Mother; Wife; two daughters and one son: brother, brother’s wife and two of their children	Wife, three daughters and three sons.
Chief means of household income in different seasons	Joint family migrates to Bombay for casual work in the rainy season. Mother remains in the village throughout the year. The family returns to the village for EGS work in summer	He does some work on his own farm in the rainy season. In the summer he goes to various other villages to do EGS works. He says works other than EGS are not profitable.
Registered with EGS	No	No
<i>Reasons for working or not working</i>	<i>The Vadar caste leader is associated with the mukadam of the village and the mukadam gives information in advance as to whether work is available that year and asks them to come from Bombay.</i>	<i>He has a special connection with a mukadam (Maratha) in the local area. The mukadam arranges work for him whenever required.</i>
Participation in EGS?	Yes	Yes

7.2.2 Probability modeling using survey data

The case studies above could be criticised for ‘picking up’ cases to suit the arguments. Therefore, to create a generalisable model controlling for various variables a model can be created. We can do this by using the survey data. However, as the EGS data set is small (n=82), the modelling is not very likely to produce any significant results. Here, a probability model is presented using the survey data from the income maintenance

beneficiaries. But, while modelling, the persons who have not applied for the benefit are excluded from the logistic regression analysis. We have seen in chapter six that the key reason for not applying for the benefit is the applicant's knowledge that their application will not be successful. Therefore, the relationship issue with the local elite is evident for the people who have been excluded by not applying.

Table 7.14 presents the findings after creating a model controlling for four sets of variables. (The distribution of the variables, and other assumptions associated with these models are presented as Appendix 10). The first model examines whether better economic conditions (measured as possession of land, and type of house) is an explanatory variable for determining the outcome, whether a person is receiving IM or not. Though land as an asset does not show any significant impact, the type of house is found to be a significant explanatory variable. Those who live in lower quality houses (kutchha, small pucca houses built with government scheme, and mixture of pucca and kutchha) compared to pucca built houses are less likely to gain IM. This indicates targeting to reach the poorest households is relatively ineffective.

In the second model, we examine whether social status (as measured by caste) controlling for the variable of assets has any explanatory power for the outcome of IM applications. In the third model, controlling for the variables of asset and social status we look at the level of education and its impact on the outcome of IM applications. The chi-square change in these models as the variables are added is not significant. This quantitative result for the variable of education was in perfect consonance with the qualitative data. There was one case in which despite having a son educated up to law degree, he was not able to successfully gain an old age pension for his mother. The power of the bureaucrat-local elite nexus was strong enough not to be unsettled by educational standards. However, from the discussion in the earlier section we know that caste differences in gaining IM are significant. We know that local politics is often based around caste issues, and often this ascriptive identity determines access to welfare benefits. Why is caste not significant in the probabilistic

Table 7.14: Probability of receiving continued income maintenance (n=161)

Variable	Model 1 (Assets)			Models 2 (+Social status)			Model 3 (+Education)			Model 4 (+mode of claiming)		
	ExpB	SE		ExpB	SE		ExpB	SE		ExpB	SE	
Possession of land	More than 8 acres of Land (base)			More than 8 acres of Land (base)			More than 8 acres of Land (base)			More than 8 acres of Land (base)		
	Land 3-8 acres	.00	.27	Land 3-8 acres	.00	.27	Land 3-8 acres	.00	.27	Land 3-8 acres	.00	.27
	Land 1-3 acres	.00	.27	Land 1-3 acres	.00	.27	Land 1-3 acres	.00	.27	Land 1-3 acres	.00	.27
	Landless	.00	.27	Landless	.00	.27	Landless	.00	.27	Landless	.00	.27
Type of House	Pucca big house (base)			Pucca big house (base)			Pucca big house (base)			Pucca big house (base)		
	Pucca but small	.04**	.85	Pucca but small	.04**	.86	Pucca but small	.04**	.93	Pucca but small	.04**	1.1
	Mix of K & P	.32*	.44	Mix of K & P	.31*	.45	Mix of K & P	.32*	.66	Mix of K & P	.41	.62
	Kutchra	.21*	.53	Kutchra	.23*	.54	Kutchra	.25*	.56	Kutchra	.48	.76
Caste				Upper caste (base)			Upper caste (base)			Upper caste (base)		
				Middle caste	.45	.41	Middle caste	.38	.46	Middle caste	.34	.64
				Lower caste	.58	.52	Lower caste	.59	.38	Lower caste	.65	.49
Level of education				Above 10 th grade (base)			Above 10 th grade (base)			Above 10 th grade (base)		
				Some schooling			Some schooling	.38	.74	Some schooling	.20	.95
				No schooling			No schooling	.57	.82	No schooling	.34	1.0
Who helped the person to apply												
				Through leader/broker (base)			Through leader/broker (base)			Through leader/broker (base)		
				Through writer Relative/self			Through writer Relative/self	.05**		Through writer Relative/self	.05**	.56
Chi square change												
		22.82**										
-2log likelihood												
		200.07		197.39			195.23			35.99**		

*P<0.05 **P<0.01 Dependent variable: Whether a person is receiving or not the continued income maintenance (Receiving =85; Not receiving= 76)

model? It is most likely that caste differences are absorbed by the variable measuring the type of house, as caste differences were often reflected in economic conditions of the household. It further indicates that well-off households from the lower castes were able to gain the IM benefits first.

In the final model where we examine the mode of applying, we look at who was the intermediary that helped a person to apply for IM. This final model shows a significant improvement from the previous models through its significant chi-square change (35.99). The persons who apply through 'writers' (n=53), compared with those who apply through local elites/brokers (n=51), are 95% less likely (1-0.05) to receive IM, controlled for economic condition, social status and education. The effect of applying through relatives/self is not significant particularly because the number of people who applied through this mode is small (n=20). The persons who applied through government officials (n=37), compared with local elites are 77% less likely (1-0.23) to receive IM, controlling for economic condition, social status and education. With its comparatively smaller number of maximum likelihood value (159.23), and better model fit, we can conclude this is the most parsimonious model to explain the differential outcome for IM. However, it is important to be cautious about this conclusion. The final variable of 'mode of applying' could interact with the other variables of caste, education and economic condition. For example, a person who has better education is more likely to write the application by him/herself, rather than approaching another person for help. Therefore, these interactive conditions are to be borne in mind when considering the final model as the most parsimonious.

7.2.3 Village political factions and differential allocation

As we have established that the relationship with the village elite is one of the key independent variables, the possibility of gaining benefit can be dependent on with whom the claimant has the relationship. During the survey, 61.9% of the people who received benefit (n=65) were ready at least once to acknowledge the name of the elite who helped them to obtain the IM benefit. This provided vertical network data (between people and elites),

compared to the horizontal network data (among elites) which we analysed in chapter five. Ten elites from Bajgaon, and seven elites from Saralgaon in total were reported to have been chiefly influential in getting these benefits. As expected, the names of elites who were both landlords and political elites topped this list from both villages. Sanjay Patilkar (13), Baba Patilkar (3) Madhu Patil (5), Rau Patil (4) from Bajgaon, and Hanifa Khan (7), Mohan Chandkar (5), Sunder Chandkar (4) Ganesh Chandkar (1) from Saralgaon featured in the list of acknowledged elites who were highly influential persons in obtaining IM benefit (the number of benefits obtained are mentioned in brackets).

There were some elites who did not have significant political power, but were able to gain benefits for their clients. These included the *Marwari* elites (who did not have political influence) who recommended the female cleaners/workers in their house for IM benefit. The three such *Marwari* names that came up were Gyanesh (1), Pramod (3) and Ramvilas (1). All of them had direct links with one or other faction leaders (see appendix 12 where the network map in chapter five has been elaborated with the allocation of IM benefits) helping them to gain benefits for their clients.

Two lower caste elite leaders (Kamlakar from Bajgaon; Milind from Saralgaon) also appeared in the list of elites instrumental in gaining benefits for people. They also had direct links with one or other of the faction leaders.

The only exception to having political power or links with political leaders to gain benefits was that the broker, Raju Shinde (*Mahar* caste), was reported to have been the key person by eight persons. It may indicate that that broker was acting on his own by recommending a name to Sanjay Patilkar (see network socio-diagram Figure 5.2) for which he may have charged a higher fee. If a person, not having direct contact with an elite, fulfils all the criteria for receiving benefits, s/he might approach the agent without going to the elite. On such occasions it is the indifference or at least the neutrality of the claimant to the political party of the elite¹, which is going to be crucial. It is worth reflecting on why a lower caste

¹ Often, the poorest people do not identify themselves with one political party. The caste leaders negotiate with other leaders and ask the caste members for votes. Therefore, it is easier for the people

person was given the role of broker in the community. Often, it is the lower caste persons who are landless and becomes eligible for the IM benefit. Therefore, if an upper caste person took the role of broker, it would have been difficult to negotiate with a large number of lower caste claimants. Rather, a lower caste broker can act as a person with 'inside' information from the same caste (This is similar to the administrative arrangement of representative bureaucracy which we saw in 7.1.2). On the other hand, all the writers operating in the *tehsil* were *Marathas* or high caste persons who were capable of affording a small space to work from because of their contacts with officials in the *tehsil* area.

Except for *Marathas*, there seem to be limited examples of cases of obtaining benefits for their own caste people (see Appendix 11), because it is an upper caste person who often employs lower caste person as regular farm worker or housemaids. Obviously, no upper caste person (*Marathas*) would acknowledge that they obtained IM through lower caste people. *Marathas* directly gained benefits through their own caste connections. Rather than a caste-caste connection in obtaining benefits, the first determining issue of inclusion was whether an employer is a member of the political elite or not, and capable of ensuring access for the poor person to the state structures. The second determining issue was whether the person's caste group (if not on group basis, on individual basis) supported the political elite.

Surprisingly, the elites from both factions of villages appeared in this list. But when the dates of gaining benefit were examined, it corresponded to the historical period when these elites were in power. For example, in Bajgaon, Rau Patil had been successful in gaining benefits only until 1997, when he parted company with Sanjay Patilkar and lost control over the links with the *tehsil* officials administering IM benefits. This indicates that political

to pretend to be apolitical to obtain benefits. During the survey, when the people were asked which party they would vote for in the next election, most of the responses were 'we will see when the election comes'. This prompts leaders to distribute money, especially during village elections. This may suggest that poor people are not involved in factional politics. The fact is they are forced to take sides if they have to prosper or sometimes even to survive. The example of Velu, a Mahar caste worker for a Maratha, is significant. Velu's employer had been antagonistic to Patilkar, and during the village election both Velu's employer and Patilkar decided to nominate two different castes for a 'reserved post'. Velu was asked to file a nomination by his employer. This was a symbol of Velu's public dissent to Patilkar's power in the community (though instrumental through another Maratha – Velu's employer). In the election Velu was defeated. After the election Velu's employer mended his relationship with Patilkar. However, Velu has no access to Patilkar, who controls the activities of the village government.

legitimacy at the local (village) level (Pickvance and Preteceille, 1991) is used as a chief tool in bargaining with *tehsil* officials.

A good number of women who were given the IM benefit through the political elite expressed their loyalty by regularly working as cleaners for a meagre salary of Rs.200 per month. Some continued to work with such small remuneration in the hope of obtaining benefits in the near future. Thus, it is not only the political elite who were using 'prebendary' practices, the other elites too resorted to 'prebend' if their networks allowed them to do so. What was more specific was that all the names that were acknowledged as elites in helping to obtain benefits had a direct relationship with the factional leaders of both village (Sanjay Patilkar and Rau Patil in Bajgaon; and Mohan Chadkar and Hanifa Khan in Saralgaon). The only exception was Kisan Patil who had obtained benefits while he was in power and who was not associated with any factions when the study was carried out.

The differential ability to gain benefits for their clients by the elites creates a serious problem for Burt's (1992) argument of 'structural holes', to be applied to the community elites. If the elites were strategic players who took advantage of a structural hole between state and society, why were all of them not able to take the advantage in similar ways? This can be answered in two ways: First, not all elites acted as links between state institutions and society (see Appendix 12 for these networks between village elites and the *tehsil* level state institutions). Political elites had more resources to act in this way. Other elites undertook this role as long as they networked with political elites. Second, the elites themselves were divided into factions and competed for popular support. They proved their ability through symbolic efforts such as gaining benefits for poor people. Let us consider the case of Bajgaon where factional politics were more intense. Table 7.15 indicates that those who were either part of both factions or not part of any faction were generally not able to gain benefits for their clients (Kisan is the only exception who had some political power through his own ability and connections with the *tehsil*).

What is of interest here is column three, elites who have ties with both faction leaders. Naresh and Suresh, as described earlier, are the leading moneylenders of the village.

Mohammed and Muneer are leaders of the Muslim community. As described in chapter five, the Muslim community has internal divisions and they are forced to align with both factions. In other words they benefit from their relationship with both leaders of the community. There are two opposing interpretations for such categories of people who have connections with both factions. Opler (1959) has called them ‘neutral compromisers’, trying to make a pact between two contestants in the same communities. This could be of benefit to a smaller community, which neutral compromisers represent, to reach peaceful solutions and to avoid deadlock on issues. The opposing interpretation to that of Opler is by Michael Kalecki, who termed such persons ‘proverbial clever calves that suck two cows’ (in Sawyer, 1985: 223). Kalecki’s (1976), theory of an ‘intermediary class’ in developing countries has been empirically interpreted by Harriss-White (2003) in the Indian context where shopkeepers fund both political parties and support both parties equally to maintain their economic prospects. In the context of Bajgaon, the case of Muslim leaders is what Opler terms ‘neutral compromisers’, and the case of moneylenders it is what Kalecki terms ‘proverbial clever calves’.

Table 7.15: Grouping of elites according to the ties with faction leaders

Ties with Sanjay	Ties with Rau	Ties with both Sanjay and Rau	No ties with Sanjay or Rau
Sanjay (13)	Rau (4)	Naresh	Bauu
Gyanesh (1)	Ramvilas (1)	Suresh	Kumar
Madhu (5)	Pramod (3)	Mohammed	Javed
Prakash	Ishwar	Muneer	Jaiswal
Baba (3)			Kisan (2)
Kamlakar (1)			
Raju (8)			

Note: The numbers against the names of elites indicate the IM benefits that each elite had obtained (as acknowledged by respondents of the survey).

Faction leaders are interested in claiming exclusive support for themselves. They discourage people who keep contact with both factions. Therefore, those who show ‘group closure’ should be rewarded. It could be argued that faction leaders, by meeting the demand of IM for their clients (other elites in the faction), were giving a social reward with a political

content (as we have seen above, gaining IM is a political activity). This social reward is to reciprocate with a group closure. Inability to comply with group closure (like Suresh, Naresh, Mohammed and Muneer) indicates less likelihood of obtaining benefits. This has intended and unintended effects on community cohesion.

A very similar allocation process takes place in the case of EGS. The political linkages needed to gain an EGS project have been widely reported (Bagchee, 2005). In fact, the EGS committees, at *tehsil* and district level, have the role and duty to identify the development needs of the locality and to encourage such projects since they are the peoples' representatives. But, the committee members use their power in order to grant projects to their intermediaries – the local elites - in the villages, to strengthen a process that can be termed 'proxy politics'. These local elites at village level do not have the power to reach the decision making process directly at the district level (Weiner, 1962: 13; Mitra, 1992; Corbridge *et al*, 2005). They depend upon Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Members of Parliament (MP), ex-MLAs or ex-MPs who operate at district and state level. On the other hand MLAs and MPs are themselves also relatively powerless without these local elites since 'vote banks' are directly under the control of the local elites.

In Saralgaon a road was apparently incomplete. This prompted the researcher to ask Mushtaq Khan, who undertook almost all the public construction works associated with the village with the active support of the *surpanch*, why the road was incomplete. He said: "this road is being built under the EGS, and I can't do it. Only the MLA's contractor will be allowed to do this work. The MLA's contractor has various works and he will come when he has time to complete this work. In fact, I would like to do EGS projects, because they are profitable since you don't need to pay normal 'per cent' [bribe] to the department. But you need good contacts to gain EGS projects". The villagers' own term for Mushtaq Khan was 'pocketmar guthedar' (petty contractor; *pocketmar* literally meaning pick-pocket) meaning his contacts were limited to village leaders and small projects. Big contractors often used

machines to complete the work, and local newspapers reported the practices of bogus pay rolls facilitating the practice of using machines.²

At the district level, the EGS collector's office was a place busy with local politicians whenever the researcher visited. More crucial was the role of the district level EGS committee (the composition of which we have seen in section 6.1.2), where decisions on projects were taken. In the previous chapter we have seen how the tussle between the Guardian minister of the district and the local MLA (if they are from different political parties) takes place in the process of identifying EGS projects.

In the case of such a tussle, it is the district collector who mediates in the conflict. One of the state level EGS committee members described such resolution of conflicts as 'district collectors bartering EGS projects for peace'. If the MLAs are dissatisfied with the administration or district collector in the allocation process, they have the opportunity to point out that the implementation of the project was legally incorrect and to file a complaint against the official in his/her capacity as a committee member. This powerlessness of the official adds to the reason why officials cannot check the corruption committed by the politicians. One of the *tehsildars* said: "it is good to obey and go according to what the elites say, because the system is so complicated and they could easily trap you by pointing out a small mistake. If you give in to their demands, they do not make trouble, and also you can share the benefits [money]". The politicians are emboldened by the fact that the officials are from outside the district and do not 'know the locality' (see also Weiner, 1962; Kohli, 1987) and therefore the officials do not have the power to make decisions on matters that affect the lives of the people by whose votes the politician has gained power. We have seen above, in the case of IM as well, that political legitimacy at the local level is the key tool for politicians in bargaining with officials.

² One NGO, which monitored the practice of using of machines for EGS work, reported that a contractor made a profit of Rs.15 per 'brass' if the work was done using machines compared with the work by labourers. ('Brass' is the most commonly used unit of measurement in the complicated method of measuring EGS work, to ensure the minimum wage is paid to a person who works diligently for seven hours. A brass is equivalent to a *ghanmeter*, 1m x 1m x 1m). A hard working labourer may be able to do one to one and half brass a day.

The decentralisation process in India has given power to the local politicians to demand public funds, putting themselves forward as spokespersons of local communities. In such a decentralised context of decision-making, the perception of need is likely to be biased (Ravallion and Wodon, 1998; Ravallion, 1999). The ability to bring such public funds to their communities is also one of the important instruments reinforcing their legitimacy (Ward, 1989). Such local leadership is the only means through which the poor people may be able to gain access to welfare benefits, breaking the administrative impasse (Chatterjee, 2004). But, on the other hand, there is a need to exert checks on these powers to differentially allocate the public funds they were successful in gaining.

Once these projects arrive in the village, they are often implemented informally (as we have seen in section 6.1.3). As the project has been brought by the local elite through a bargain, an informal ownership is created.³ Though the project is *de jure* (in law) public, it is *de facto* (in fact) a private project belonging to a political elite. This could imply that some workers, who do not belong to the faction of the political elite could be excluded from participating in such public works. Can the excluded persons approach the opposition party leaders at local level and ensure their inclusion? The survey showed that in Bajgaon many job seekers from the *Mahar* caste were denied work on EGS. This prompted the researcher to ask why they had not approached the elite of the *Mahar* community for redress. The responses were very enlightening. People knew where the boundaries of the elites were drawn. They pointed out that BJP workers were carrying out the EGS work, and the *Mahar* community leader supported the Congress-NCP political alliance, and had nothing to do with EGS work. This confirms how local communities had given informal ownership status over the EGS projects to certain local elites. First, they doubt whether their leader would go and demand work for them from an opposition party leader. Further, they hesitate to pursue their own case,

³ It was interesting to observe this dynamics of informal ownership in Saralgaon on an unrelated issue. One lower caste elite (Milind) using his connections at the district level (with the MLA) gained permissions for a public distribution shop to be operated in the village. Milind wanted to operate the shop himself. However, in the village level bargain, Milind could not dominate and Maratha leaders gave permission to operate the shop to another Maratha villager. This offended Milind and he joined hands with Muslim leaders of the village to defeat the Maratha leaders in the next village election.

because violence may be the result if two leaders were set against each other. A poor household does not want to be labelled as an instrumental cause of this violence. Rather they settle for some benefit which the local *Mahar* elites are able to offer to them in their own capacity.

Another difficult option would be to relinquish the relationship with the *Mahar* elite and to express solidarity with the party which carries out EGS work at the present time. However, this is an unrealistic option given the context of caste politics at the local level, as the costs of exit may be high for poor households to bear. Given these limited options, Wood's (2004:50) phrase 'No exit, little voice and tainted loyalty' seems to be very suitable to describe the situation of the poorest labourers.

As we have seen, the most important reason for not getting benefit is not that the potentially eligible person fails to meet the eligibility criteria. Political reasons within the community leads to them being excluded from the welfare benefit⁴. The story of factions shows that these power networks are in constant flux. How else could claimants be included and then excluded as the power equations change? The elite-official nexus has the potential implication that a claimant can be removed even after the benefit is granted. The researcher came across a number of beneficiaries who were victims of this practice. In fact, there is a provision to stop benefit that was granted at a previous point. For example, when a young widow is granted an income maintenance benefit, her benefit can be revoked when the children are over 18. But in practice what happens is a neighbour points out the fact that there is a son who is over 18, and therefore, the benefit should be revoked. The case of other children who are below 18 and whose income maintenance she is eligible for is not pointed out. In such cases an elite directly asks the officials to stop the benefit. The law states that the *talatti* should make an investigation on such occasions and report to the *tehsil* official. But, as a matter of fact, the *talatti*'s first point of inquiry is the elite and the elite's decision prevails

⁴ Shocking was the case of a few blind persons in Saralgaon, all of whom received benefit at some point of time and whose benefits are now stopped. The common cause is their inability to caste votes confidentially. They depend on someone to cast their vote and 'someone' reports the political tendency to the elected representative. On a few occasions personal rivalry was settled by stopping the benefit.

even if the *talatti* inquires into the matter. This inquiry is also legitimized by the policy which reads: “the list of claimants means-tested should be sent to the village council, which in turn approves such a list”. Though, in practice, such a formal sending of the list does not take place, the local level official consults informally with the elite over the selection of the claimants.

This was confirmed during the interview with one of the *tehsildars* who replied, when asked why the post of assistant *tehsildar* (who should check the eligibility of the applications) was still vacant, that the post did not make a difference since the assistant *tehsildar* did not have much control over what the *talatti* writes in consultation with local elite.

When there is a change of government, or when the SSC changes, or when the village *surpanch* changes, those belonging to the opposition party are vulnerable to being removed from the list of welfare beneficiaries. The easiest report that an elite could give to the official is that a particular beneficiary is dead. It is an almost impossible task for the ‘dead person’ to prove that he is alive (Debroy, 2003). What is forthcoming from such cases is the fact that officials are extremely subservient to the elites and do not demand any proof, such as a death certificate that might protect the rights of the beneficiaries.

Section III

7.3 Can this differential allocation continue unchallenged?

The allocation of public provisions according to the principles of social justice is an essential criterion for the effectiveness of public policy as a tool for social change. But, how can accountability be brought into public institutions? Mookherjee (2004) has reviewed three oft-given answers to this problem: 1) bureaucratic reforms to challenge the corrupt 'patronage' practices of politicians; 2) political decentralisation to give power to people's representatives to meet the needs of the people and 3) citizen empowerment. In general, this thesis examines the problems associated with the second answer, political decentralisation, which is the current method of social protection administration. In this section we will be looking at the other two answers in detail.

7.3.1 Administration as a countervailing force

The role of administration (rational-legal authority) in challenging the discretionary behaviour or malpractices of elites (traditional authority) has been very little practised in the context of rural India. Even when bureaucrats performed this role of countervailing force, they were 'taught lessons' by the political elite. There is one example of one of the *tehsildars* who narrated his experience of challenging a political elite early in his career. He had filed a court case against a village elite, who kept on receiving the old age pension in the name of a dead villager. Though the *tehsildar* won the court case and was able to stop the benefit, the village elite organised collective strikes against the *tehsildar*, and was successful in getting him transferred to a different *tehsil*. The *tehsildar* commented on his defeat: "neither the administration nor my colleagues supported me. My defeat was complete when the corrupt village elite was successful in the next village election". This incident reveals how fragile the administration is in giving check to the corruption of politicians. Even among the lower level officials, there was contempt for corrupt politicians, and these lower level officials reported that they preferred dealing with the claimants directly. However, their own behaviour with

poor claimants was such that the claimants felt that intermediary help through politicians would increase their chances of accessing public provision.

One of the mechanisms used by the government to check the corrupt nexus between officials and politicians was to appoint 'squads' to check the records. Both for IM benefits and EGS such squads were inefficient in the sense that information about the arrival of the squad to check would be leaked in advance and records would be amended. Often, politicians were able to stop such checking. A widespread and good example was fabricated muster rolls of EGS labourers. First, let us examine how and why record fabrication can take place. Then we will examine the possibility of 'voice' by people against corruption.

There is evidence to show that the *mukadam*, in co-operation with the local elite, fabricated the muster rolls, which has been reported elsewhere (Bagchee, 2005). This freedom to fabricate documents might have been a result of the informal ownership of the project, as a result of the public service bargain. As explained earlier, these actors feel they have a right to make a profit since they are carrying out important functions in the project. They realise that the JE and other EGS officials earn a salary without taking the pain of the most crucial part of implementation (actually organising the work at village level). This discontent was expressed by one of the *mukadams* as follows: "Per cent (bribe) is distributed to the key officials in each level of administration from village to Mumbai (the state capital). At the end, only about 60 to 70 per cent of the project money is given to me for doing the work. That money too comes months after completion of the work. I may have to take a loan on interest to carry out the actual job. If I don't make a profit of 10-20 per cent, why would I do this?". This sense of 'injustice done' by the higher officials, who are legally responsible for the same project, to *mukadam*, who is not the legal implementation agency for the project, is the moral basis for fabricating the records. Baviskar (2004: 35) provides a similar experience in Madhya Pradesh. The *mukadam* becomes a link between the legal implementation body and the beneficiaries of the project. While the legal body cheats the *mukadam*, he in turn cheats the labourers with implied consent from them – that of providing continued labour.

Further, his job is to complete the work with the available labourers. On various occasions it was noticed (and the workers complained to the researcher) that a *mukadam* employs five labourers, while on the attendance-record there may be more than 60 labourers listed. Labourers on the scheme do not object to this fabrication, because doing the work of 100 labourers by 10 persons ensures they have continued work. If an excluded member protests, he may either be included in the work or he may be threatened. Bargaining with the elites at this stage by the claimants is on moral grounds (requests citing the needs or poverty) rather than on legal grounds (making written requests). Besides, appealing to a higher authority is challenging the local power structure, which a poor claimant cannot very often afford. This power-structure also enables the local elite to use the poor person to provide evidence that corruption did not take place.¹

The reputation of the EGS² was another major source of legitimacy for the programme. There were systematic attempts on the part of the officials at all the levels of bureaucracy, to discourage any possible damage to its reputation that could be done through litigation or research. One official of the rank of Sub-district Magistrate said to the researcher: “I could give you all the details of mal-administration, and its roots. But, I would request you not to write about it since this is a reputable programme of the Government of Maharashtra, and I am a government servant”. In a similar manner, the officials asked the politicians to mediate with rural workers or civil society activists, who might attempt to bring litigation over the project implementation. During one of the visits to an EGS site, the local politician, who was implementing the project, kept inquiring whether the researcher was a journalist, who had come to find out the implementation ‘deficits’, and to publish it in local newspapers.

¹ Often, money is paid to the poor people when the squad/higher authority to check the muster rolls visits the village. The villagers are asked to keep silence about corruption. Villagers act according to the directives of the local elite since the villagers have greater advantage in acting in consonance with the moral community than providing information to an authority from outside the village.

² This reputation is even at international level through research. We have seen in Chapter Four how the quantitative outcome figures were produced from the worksites and provided to the researchers. As a matter of fact many officials admit the programme was implemented in an orderly fashion benefiting the poor people till the early 1990s.

This legitimacy, gained through a manufactured reputation, helped in the misappropriation of funds at the local level and in accumulation of resources by the politicians.

It is in this context of the inability of the administration to check political corruption, this does not imply that bureaucrats, especially senior bureaucrats necessarily always are non-corrupt, that we can look for other mechanisms for social change. The third solution of citizen empowerment and increased accountability has been a subject of serious debate especially in the context of international organisations promoting local NGOs to act as agencies of ‘voice’ and empowerment for poor people. While some (e.g. Clapham, 1990; 1996) are sceptical of the effectiveness of such external interventions on the local political culture, others, especially the proponents of civil society movements, have argued such interventions to be an essential ‘watch dog’ tool. There are very few studies that report the interaction of local governments with such civil society institutions, though most of the theoretical works on governance suggest how important such collaborations may be.

7.3.2 Civil society at local level and accountability of state institutions

In Saralgaon and Bajgaon there were Self Help Groups³ (SHG) set up by government initiative with the co-operation of NGOs. However, these groups were primarily interested in financing ‘promotive’ aspects, such as income generation. The co-operative society of agricultural landowners was not interested in protective provision. The secretary of the co-operative society said: “If a member is sick or is about to die, we can’t provide monetary help. We may try to recover any credit he is due to pay to the society”. These collective organisations of the particular villages where fieldwork was done seemed not to be sensitive to protective concerns. Evidence from other parts of India, especially the story of the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) is encouraging (Chatterjee and Ranson, 2003; see also Ahuja, 2003). This may indicate that the way these SHGs are directed, priorities set and incentives provided for, can make a difference.

³ Micro financing is an entirely different topic of research into which I don’t intend to delve deeper.

There were two friendly associations (*mitra mandal*) in Bajgaon but they did not have any significant activities. The caste associations were significant only for the *Mahar* community, and their activity was limited to celebrating the birthday of Ambedkar. Though collective efforts in the name of associations were not significant, 'giving' with a religious motive was significant, especially for poor households from the Muslim community (see also the role of *Zakat* for social protection in Iran [Messkoub, 1999] and Indonesia [Schroder-Butterfill, 2004]). Some of the poorest Muslim households were given clothes and grains sufficient for survival for almost a year during the season of Ramadan. Worth mentioning was the case of Moosa, who was disabled with a spinal injury since he was 15 year old; he had a wife and three children. The rich Muslims in the village provided him with grains and clothes during Ramadan. Mohammed, who was a contractor and an elite, gave cooked food for his household everyday. (Moosa requested Mohammed to help him gain IM from the state for his disability. Mohammed directed him to contact Raju, who was a broker, and since Raju asked for a high tariff, Moosa abandoned the claim.) However, these practices were far from perfect arrangements for social protection, and widely biased in favour of those who adhered to the principles of their community (in the case of Muslims, those who were actively religious were preferred).

NGO operation was dependent on its discretion. For example, there was no NGO operating in Bajgaon, but there was one in Saralgaon and it provided protective benefits for seven persons⁴. This NGO operated in three *tehsils* of the district and it provided benefits for 149 beneficiaries in total from 27 villages. (State benefit was provided to 2566 persons in one *tehsil* alone). Interviews with the NGO officials proved that these programmes were run by NGOs to obtain projects from international agencies, and to continue the relationship with the village by providing some services.

⁴ This particular NGO has been working in the region since 1975. It had been active in Saralgaon for the last 10 years. Its important activities were promotive aspects of poverty reduction such as digging wells for small farmers, encouraging group formation of farmers to finance credits for them, skill training for young women etc. Earlier, they had carried out a public works programme during the period of 1988-98.

The selection process for the NGO benefit showed how the NGO is implicated in the power structure of the villages.⁵ The NGO's field officer in the village contacted the 'informed persons' (Mohan Chandkar and Abdul Kassam) and explained the scheme. The village elite would then suggest needy persons and the NGO official would confirm their 'need' by personal visits. Though there was no application expense, often the benefits only arrived five to eight months after completing the application procedures, since the funding agency insisted on their own field visits to determine the eligibility of the applicants. This decision-making procedure was extremely dependent on the discretion of the official. Though many respondents in the sample survey said they had requested the NGO official to provide benefit for them, the NGO official had not maintained a waiting list of eligible persons from the village. The NGO official, who manages this programme, merely said: "When one beneficiary dies, we will replace the dead beneficiary with an eligible beneficiary whom we feel suitable at that time".

Though the amount of benefit was meagre (Rs.500 for three months in kind and cash), the recipients appreciated the personal form of delivery such as visits by the NGO official. The beneficiaries perceived these benefits to be charity. For example, when one of the beneficiaries asked whether she could get a different kind of grain than that being distributed as part of the benefits in kind, the response from the NGO official was "this is the kind of grain that NGO head has decided is to be given". Thus, the resource constraints, and the role of NGO 'acting on behalf' of a funding agency considerably affected the type of services they provided.

All the seven beneficiaries of NGO benefit in Saralgaon were females, and two of them were not receiving benefits from the state, since one of them was below the age of 60,

⁵ Note in the section on factions in Chapter Five that the NGO officer had a differential way of interacting with village elites, and he could be seen as part of a village faction, though he would deny that. The field officer reported during the interview that there was an internal debate within the NGO whether to work with the local power structure or to fight against it. While, the field officer and some other activists preferred an 'action model' of intervention, the head of the NGO had prevented them from initiating this and wanted an 'institutional model' of developing projects and working with the villages to implement these projects. It is also important to note that the head of the NGO was a high caste person while the field officer and many of the low-paid field staff were from lower castes.

and other was prevented from getting benefit after the village election for political reasons. These two beneficiaries had repeatedly pleaded with village elites to ensure state-benefits for themselves, citing the reason that they were getting NGO benefits.

NGO officials were aware about the state IM provisions, and their activities to improve access for such public provision are worth recording. One of the important services that the NGO rendered was to write applications for the claimants. NGO personnel did not charge anything (unlike the writers and brokers) for this service. But the government officials (reported by one *tehsildar* during interview) did not recognise this as a service to improve access, since the bureaucrats felt these were strategies by NGOs to increase their popularity in the selected villages. However, NGO personnel claimed this to be an important service since they wrote applications only for those persons that met the eligibility criteria.

However, the survey among the claimants showed that most of the applications written by the NGO were turned down, particularly because the NGO staff had not bargained with the local elites to ensure the success of the applications. This indicates that the NGO's actions for improving the access was not completely successful, since their actions were within the local power structure rather than challenging it.⁶

A similar approach of not challenging the local power structure was found in the sphere of the EGS as well. On inquiring whether the NGO had done anything to stop the corruption in muster rolls and use of machines for EGS work, the director of the NGO commented: "We have carried out public works programmes with funds from international NGOs, and we have used only human labour. EGS money is public money. How this money is to be used cannot be dictated by us. There are government officials to check it". During the same interview, the director reported that they had put up a long fight against a sugar cane factory that exploited the labour of poor persons by paying lower wages and not providing basic amenities. The contrasting responses from the NGO can be explained in terms of

⁶ In another state of India (Jharkhand) where Helpage India (an international NGO) was trying to improve the access by challenging the local power structure, its efforts were met with stiff opposition, especially by threatening and physically breaking its offices (personal discussion with Mark Gorman, Director of Policy Development, Helpage International, London on 22/02/2006).

response to market institutions and state institutions. As the NGO wants to keep its ties with state government and politicians, it is difficult for the NGO to act against the local power structure. On the other hand, the state would provide protection for the NGO in its fight against market institutions (as long as the market institution did not have strong ties with a politician who might be connected with the ruling political party).

Another important civil society institution is the media. Local newspapers were especially important means through which the protests against differential allocation were expressed. Local newspapers reported EGS work being done using bulldozers and machines at night. A good number of them also reported the irregular meetings of the SSC, lack of impartiality by the SSC members and reports on protest meetings and submission of memoranda to politicians/government officials (*tehsildar* and collectors). When wide-spread corruption was reported in media, 'squads' visited the *tehsils*. However, as mentioned earlier, the bureaucratic-politician nexus was strong enough to foil the purpose of such squads.⁷ However, sometimes, such 'voices' were picked up by politicians and expressed in the Legislative assembly meetings and formal redress was gained. It is important to examine how such discontinuities were made possible.

7.3.3 Change in policy process

One direct possibility to change the course of implementation is pressure from discontented beneficiaries. In a democracy, elections have been often pointed out as the key institutional mechanism to bring accountability. But, the effectiveness of elections to achieve political accountability has been rightly questioned (Przeworski et al, 1999) in the context of lack of voters' ability to appreciate good policies (and a general tendency of anti-incumbency

⁷ For an example of how numbers were reduced see the newspaper report of the change in muster roll at district level from 94000 workers to 74000 workers when a supervisory committee was visiting the district on corruption charges (*Lokmat*, 18, May 2004). Even during my field visits to EGS sites, I could see the *mukadam* (thinking that I was a government official/squad, sometimes even a press reporter) would ask the labourers from different villages to tell me that they were from the locality. However, they had no hesitation to disclose the truth when they knew I had no intention of harming them.

vote) in developing countries.⁸ There are at least three other possible avenues: first, taking a legal action through the courts/judiciary. It has been shown in the Indian context that courts are accessible only to the elites (Moog, 1998) and therefore, this is not a realistic option. However, public interest litigations (where a third person could litigate) is one of the options to use court. However, such litigations are hardly ever used to improve delivery of services. The second option is expressing discontent directly to administrators. As we have seen this access is very limited and such expressions often take 'everyday forms of protest' (Scott, 1985) through destruction of public property (one incident of locking the *tehsil* office to disrupt official activities, and destroying the furniture because some eligible beneficiaries were denied benefit was reported in local newspapers during fieldwork), violence and use of abusive language (one assistant *tehsildar* was beaten up for not making the EGS payment in time, also reported in a local newspaper during fieldwork), and non-cooperation such as tax evasion. But these 'weapons of the weak' did not produce systemic change. They were rather perceived as incidents of individual frustration.

The third method, which was most widely practiced, was to express discontent indirectly to administrators through local elites. How this option works selectively needs more detailed scrutiny. Wade (1988), studying the practices of collective action in Indian villages, has shown that such actions may emerge only if the elite benefits from them. An interesting event during fieldwork is worth reporting. As I was talking to Sanjay Patilkar, the most powerful elite in Bajgaon, one person (whose father was a recipient of old age pension) came and started complaining to Sanjay how Raju (a broker) was collecting small amounts of money from all the current beneficiaries of IM. The immediate response from Sanjay was that if the person who was complaining could get a list of persons from whom Raju has collected money, this problem would be dealt with. The power of Sanjay to command such a solution is

⁸ Contrast this macro level study with the phenomenon of local elections. Studies from Bangladesh show that elderly persons regularly voted in village council elections, and the groups of elderly people were able to bargain with the local elites to provide old age pension if their votes were cast in the elections. But a similar strategy did not work in various villages of India since village level elections were not regularly conducted. Even when such elections were conducted, village elites requested a show of 'consensus' without breaking village cohesiveness. As a result, dissenting voices could not get expressed.

the absolute confidence that poor people themselves cannot create any collective action without one elite (as we know from our network sociogram, Sanjay and Raju were close friends and Raju's illegal activities had the political support of Sanjay).⁹

At the same time, it is interesting to note that during 2003-04, the delivery system of IM benefits was changed from post offices to banks due to wide-spread complaints. The main complaint here was that the postman would take a share of the IM (which we have seen in chapter six). Here, a lower level bureaucrat enjoyed the benefit of petty corruption; but it could be corrected through political pressure. But in the case of the EGS, despite demand to change the mode of delivery of the public works programme, the delivery still continues through government official and the *mukadam* (as cash), because the agency that benefits from this corruption is close to the political elite.¹⁰

Delivery of the wages (which is the major bulk of expenditure) to the EGS workers is a cash payment in the presence of a witness. This has been repeatedly pointed out as a major cause of misappropriation (Krishnaraj et al., 2004). Often, a local leader, acting as a 'witness' during cash payment to workers, is able to publicly demonstrate his connection with the official. At times, when the official is unavailable, the distribution is done by the local leader himself. Farrington et al. (2003) has argued for using a 'new technology' information system and existing infrastructure for faster transfer of funds, such as pensions. That could increase the legitimacy of the state by directly delivering welfare benefits to its citizens. Such measures could curtail the incentives for the local leaders to compete for EGS projects in a way which results in the exclusion of eligible job seekers.

Often, the opposition parties in the village do not challenge these differential allocations for many reasons: First, the opposition is often weak and often divided, if a single caste dominates the village. For example, in Bajgaon the opposition has found a 'voice'

⁹ See the work of Wade (1988) where he studied the origin of collective action in the villages for irrigation. He reached the conclusion that collective action originated only when the elite benefited.

¹⁰ One additional reason for the change of delivery mode could be that in the case of the EGS, the labourers did not understand the extent of corruption since the amount of money is not clear within the complex measurement system. The money also varies for different people depending on the amount of work done. But in the case of IM, similar categories of claimants are expected to receive similar amounts of money.

through a political party (the BJP) only since 1998. Second, the opposition party may not have the necessary linkages with the *tehsil* officials to challenge the removal of an eligible beneficiary. The social security committee does not have a member from the opposition party, and therefore, officials would be likely to take the side of committee members. Third, the moral authority of the opposition could be weak since they themselves were engaged in corruption and differential allocation when the opposition party was in power. One party worker expressed his disappointment with the system as follows: “Most of the top people cooperate to conceal the corruption. Once I tried to point out the corruption involved in the EGS. But I was instructed by the district level leader of our party not to make trouble”. While a local level party worker may perceive exposing corruption as an instrument for local mobilisation, the wider principle of ‘peace’ with the ruling party to gain benefits at district level is often the aim of the party leaders at district level. This also has implications for project selection at the EGS collector’s office. The EGS collector would ask the relevant political leader ‘to keep his intermediary (local elite fighting against corruption in the village) quiet’ and offer an EGS project.

One key source of change in the policy course is discontent over the policy process within the political parties. An instance of policy change of IM in Maharashtra is worth analysing in this context. In Nandurbar *tehsil*, it was the *tehsildar* who filed a case (172/2001/Aurangabad) against the SSC chairman (who belonged to the NCP) on the ground that he distributed funds to claimants who had produced fake certificates. At the outset, it may look as though countervailing forces of legitimacy were working against the unscrupulous politicians. However, the real story was that Congress party members (which was part of a coalition government with the NCP in Maharashtra) had emboldened the *tehsildar* to file a case (a matter which was taken up to the chief minister by NCP workers after the arrest of the committee chairman¹¹).

The inquiry by the sub-divisional officer found that there were 747 ineligible beneficiaries. This resulted in the High Court ordering an inquiry throughout Maharashtra.

¹¹ Reports in *Indian Express* September 19, 2002; *Times of India* September 22, 2002.

1.66 lakh beneficiaries out of about six lakh beneficiaries were found to be bogus in this state-wide inquiry. (Newspaper reports during the controversy suggest that the state was able to remove 2.5 lakh of other beneficiaries from the list when the inquiry was about to be ordered by the court¹²).

This legal battle indicates the importance attached to prebendary practices by politicians. The ruling parties in coalition felt they had equal right to public funds, and while one party was differentially benefiting, the other party was able to challenge it in the court of law. The intent of the litigation was not to challenge differential allocation per se, which would go against prebendary practices. Rather, the intent was to make sure the prebendary benefits were equally divided between the coalition parties.

Conclusion

We have examined the role and interests of elites in two different social protection programmes, and found critical similarities in the interaction among the actors during the implementation of both programmes. The most important conclusion that we can draw is that the inclusion of claimants in the social protection programmes is critically dependent on the local politics and the relationship of the claimant with the local elites. The role of informal agents (a *mukadam* for the EGS and brokers/writers for IM) is critical in this regard. The *agility* of these informal agents combined with the *power* of the local politicians creates a dynamic network to weaken the administration. It seems that a market of public resources is made through this informal implementation. In this market, it is not the eligibility rules that determine the entitlement but the identity of the claimant which acts as the force to gain the public resources.

But, the critical policy challenge here is ‘will the state take informal agencies into consideration in its framework of implementation?’ First, we need to reflect why these actors emerge or what their functional equivalents are in other welfare states. The role these actors

¹² *Indian Express* December 1, 2003 September 19, 2002; *Times of India* September 22, 2002.

take (improving the access for their clients) is done by formal agencies (e.g. job centre plus in the UK) in advanced welfare states. However, in developing countries, the State cannot afford to respond in similar way due to the overhead expenditure involved there, and the lack of resources to socialise the costs. Thus, the state leaves space for informal agents to take this role.

These informal agents, who have power and reputation in the community, bring the component of social identity (since often they represent social groups) when they interact with the street-level bureaucrats. As we have seen, the consociational arrangement of the bureaucracy also has social identities. Thus, an interaction based on social identity becomes possible. This reveals that officials were bargainers as well in the process of implementation (Torenvlied and Thomson, 2003). Thus, contrary to the official hierarchy, the network of elites penetrates to various levels with the administration, and exerts its influence to take over the discretion exercised by the bureaucrats. This 'political reasoning' by the local elite was more powerful than the 'legal reasoning' of complying with formal policy aims. What is implemented is a result of "political calculus of interests and groups competing for scarce resources, the response of implementing officials, and the actions of political elites, all interacting within given institutional context" (Grindle, 1980: 12).

In theory, bureaucrats and politicians have different valuation methods when resources have to be rationed. While fairness and individual need should dominate the concern of the bureaucrat, the politician is more concerned with deservingness and contextual (ecological) preferences (Fisher, 1998). Thus, a healthy interaction between these actors would ensure that a balance of values would prevail. But, the network explanation shows that these interactions are far from healthy, resulting in the exclusion of a large number of eligible persons based on their social identities. In the case of officials, the network between different levels of the governance structures was not strong. They could be isolated and picked off by politicians. This perception of the power networks emboldened the elites to flexibly interpret the eligibility criteria using their own 'deservingness' principles.

While the official's behaviour leads to diffuse responsibility at various levels of the bureaucracy, the elite's behaviour helps them to draw loyalty solely to themselves. The elite's responsibility is limited since he acts as a catalyst working through the officials. As a result the legal interpretation of officials does not reach the village level since the informal rules created by the village elite prevail ultimately. These informal rules serve the interest (both material and ideal) of the dominant sections of the community rather than the needy.

Though this differential allocation, biased in favour of local elites, is visible to all the actors in the community, the ability to respond in ways that could challenge the situation is limited. The poorest household's inability to materialise the aspiration, however strong it is, has been succinctly put by Gurr (1970: 14) "however intense and focused the impetus to violence is, its actualization is strongly influenced by the patterns of coercive control and institutional support in the political community." What is the outcome for the quality of life of the people in the context of such differential allocation and limited capacity to respond? This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 8

Inclusion and exclusion from social protection: The Impact on individuals and household

“Government does not give anything to the hardworking, it favours those who steal the well¹” (Kuntithai –62 year old, female)

In the last two chapters, we have seen the processes of exclusion and inclusion at work in the state’s social protection programmes, and how non-state actors influence access to these programmes. We have identified some key political determinants of access and how, at local level, state social protection programmes can add to the legitimacy and power of the local elites. In this chapter, from the meso-level we have been seeing so far, we will turn to the household level and examine the effects of exclusion and inclusion. We need to bear in mind that by the time state policy reaches the village through the local elites, it has to a great extent been informalised. The household is a private arena, where the use (or unavailability) of social protection benefits may create intense dynamics among the members of the moral community. Thus, the policy may be ‘beyond any recognisable shape’ (Kaviraj, 1986) here. Here, the agency of individuals (‘knowledgeability and capability’ following Giddens, 1987) may not only transcend the class and caste structures, but also the household. This intra-household competition and co-operation for social protection is the subject matter of this chapter.

In most Indian languages the term for ‘house’ also stands for ‘home’. For example, in Maharashtra, the term *ghar* can be translated “equally well as ‘house’, meaning the habitation; as ‘household’, meaning the socio-economic living arrangements; and as ‘family’ meaning the network of power and emotional attachment” (Glushkova & Feldhaus, 1998: 5).

¹ ‘Stealing the well’ is an expression to indicate those who break the rules particularly to obtain government funds. The expression comes from the infamous targeting failure of grants for digging wells. People would obtain money and did not dig a well. Later they would use the money for some other purpose. They may obtain money at various times showing the same barren land as evidence of eligibility, obviously with the help of corrupt officials. If an official is caught providing money for the same plot for a second time to dig a well, it was said, the official and the beneficiary would claim ‘the well was stolen!’.

There is a variety of arrangements for habitation, socio-economic living and power relations. For example, it has been pointed out that adult sons, after their marriage, often live apart in adjacent premises as separate households for privacy; all such separate households together are also referred to as 'home' (Vera-Sanso, 2004).² Recognising this heterogeneity of the types of households is the key to understanding power relations among household members (Bruce and Lloyd, 1997). In this context, one of the key aims of this chapter is to analyse the role of social protection (how formal pension and informal care interact) among the members of different types of households.

Such 'household politics' may be based on gender, age, earning capacity, relationship with earning member, disability, marital status and other moral considerations (Curtis, 1986). We begin this chapter with an analysis of the gender differences in social protection, an aspect that pervades all forms of vulnerability. Then, we will examine various forms of vulnerability and how these vulnerable persons are provided with social protection in different types of households. This will be followed by a section where the household dynamics related to gaining and use of social protection benefits will be discussed. Finally, we will link these individual/household experiences to the meso-level description in previous chapters, through the linking concept of citizenship.

8.1 A gendered analysis of exclusion from the state benefits

A gendered analysis aims to understand how the provision of welfare benefits affects men and women differently. This inquiry into the gender dimension is an essential feature of the local political economy since the differences in power and status within households and communities on a gender basis greatly affects the way the benefits are claimed, gained and used. Nevertheless, this question cannot be separated from the way production and reproduction is organised within the household. Both the earning patterns from labour outside

² The average Indian household size is 5.3. However, the Census of India does not collect information on types of household in which people reside. Therefore, small surveys are important to estimate these facts.

the household, and ‘care economy’³ become important aspects in this analysis if the politics of social protection within the household is to be understood.

It has been pointed out generally that the state’s welfare policies are typically designed on the basis of ‘male earning households’, neglecting the ‘care and earning by females’ (Lewis, 1993). However, this applies more to income related benefits in the formal sector. In the case of non-contributory social assistance and self-selecting public works programmes, in principle, both males and females have equal opportunity. However, in practice, access may be determined by various aspects of household dynamics and contacts that a person has with elites outside the household.

Table 8.1: Recipients of SP benefits according to gender

	Receiving IM		Not receiving IM		Participated in EGS recently		Not participated in EGS recently	
Female	58	38.4%	93	61.6%	18	46.2%	21	53.8%
Male	27	42.9%	36	57.1%	22	51.2%	21	48.8%

Source: Survey data

A cursory (Table 8.1) look at the pattern of exclusion and inclusion, on the basis of gender, indicates important distinction in the two different programmes. While the proportion of exclusion is even in both programmes, the absolute numbers for female are high in protective income maintenance programme. We require a detailed explanation for this based on household dynamics.

As we have seen in chapter six, the standard argument is to explain through labour market inequalities. Women are paid lower rates for their labour in private markets, and therefore women are more attracted to work in EGS, where gender discrimination in wages is absent. During the field observations this explanation appeared to be correct as there were more women (compared with men) working on EGS projects. The survey results also could

³ The care economy refers to “the economic costs and benefits of care, the division of labour involved in various types of care, and the contribution of care to economic growth and development” (Ogden et al., 2004: 4). This is an important aspect, which is often considered to be ‘informal provision’, since the contribution of both the state and the private sector is only a small fraction compared to the unpaid, non-market work done by women in their homes (Lund, 2005).

not reveal anything beyond this common understanding. But, the qualitative data based on the observation of work-sharing revealed an intriguing mechanism. We have seen that the EGS operates on a piece-rate basis, and therefore, work could be done collectively, which was often the case (e.g. one person to dig the earth and the other person to shift the soil). In the survey results of the 40 persons who had worked in EGS in the last two years, nine persons reported that only one person from the household worked on the EGS projects. The amount of work is calculated by measuring the earth dug by a person to whom the *mukadam* has contracted out the work. The *mukadam* often has an agreement with a male member of the household (if the household is female headed this agreement will be with the female). The male member, in turn brings his wife and children to work on the project. On certain occasions the male member also works along with his wife and daughter. But, almost certainly, if the male member had the opportunity to work in the private labour market, he would leave the female members to carry out the EGS work. This work sharing was a method of maximising household income since both female and male member could gain an income unaffected by gender. However, at the time of measuring the work, the male member of the household is required to bargain with the *mukadam*, since disputes on measurement are common. The male member collects the weekly payment on behalf of all members of the household. Therefore, though the survey and field observations may imply many females participating in the EGS work, the money may be controlled by the male member, unless it is a female headed household. We will see how this money is used in section 8.3.

On the other hand, the large number of women from the survey sample in the protective programmes should be read with the understanding that it is easier for women to fall into the 'eligibility' criteria, since they are more vulnerable to 'shocks' affecting the household. For example, household disintegration during extreme poverty such as famine affects women much more drastically (Agarwal, 1991; Harriss-White, 1999c) since the primary and sole responsibility for childcare is traditionally borne by women.⁴ But, as Table

⁴ I am aware of the argument of women refusing to accept the child support that may be forthcoming from their ex-husbands so as to deny them sexual favours or to protect their autonomy (Jackson, 1996;

8.1 shows, their exclusion is higher than men whose primary route to becoming eligible for IM is by being old or disabled.

A woman becoming eligible for IM at a younger age is much more common than men. Of the 73 people in the sample below the age of sixty, 57 were women (78%). On the other hand, women's life expectancy is higher, making more of them 'eligible' to continue receiving the old age pension than men. Of the 141 people in the sample above the age of 59, 65.9% were women. Therefore, it is important to recognise the increased probability of women requiring IM at a younger age as well as in the older age group.

Central government's policy was not particularly sensitive to this very real vulnerability of women. Two of the NSAP programmes, namely maternity benefit and benefit on the death of primary breadwinner, were designed specifically for women. But the eligibility for the third programme - the old age pension (which was most widely known) was the same for both men and women. However, the Maharashtra state programmes (and that of many states in India) were sensitive to the gender dimension through the programme of IM benefits for estranged women, benefits for wives when the male head of the household was in the prison, women rehabilitated from prostitution, and women marginalized through anti-social activities such as rape. However, these programmes did not take account of the costs incurred by women in taking care of the household, especially the number of young children. But, these considerations were an important part in the local determination of 'need'.

The key question why their increased vulnerability was hardly addressed can be answered when we recognise that "gender is institutionally structured, as it refers not only to the relations of the sexes at the individual personal level but also to the complex array of values and norms that permeate the organizational systems..." (Hartigan, 2001:8). This understanding of how gender permeates through all the institutions implies that both informal care and formal state benefit are likely to be affected by gender discrimination.

Chant, 1997). But during fieldwork, I did not come across any such household where males offered their estranged wife child support.

Let us take the issue of women surviving longer and the nature of household dynamics over informal care. There were 106 households in the sample with more than one person. In 44 of these households led by men who were older than 60, the next significant person in the household was the wife in 43 households. On the other hand, of the 62 women householders over 60, only 23 had a husband as the next person in the household. The rest of the 39 elderly women were living with other significant persons (son=21; daughter=8; mother=1; daughter-in-law = 3; sister =3; brother=1; brother-in-law=1; grandson=1). Thus, where the men lived into old age, they had the support of their wives in the household dynamics. But, women in old age had less of such support from their husband. These informal support systems had important implications for the care a person received. Often, decisions on where a person has to sleep at night,⁵ who could take leisure without child care responsibilities or who should draw the water, were some of the contentious issues.

In the realm of formal provision, as the implementation of the social protection programme is informalised, access is determined by gender rules in the community. A woman's difficulty in claiming benefit is summarised by Kochubai, whose husband was dead and had two young children: "This is government benefit. You need to be after the local leader to get his approval, so that he would persuade the official to approve my application. I am young, how many times can I visit a man's house to request the benefit? Others in the village will say bad things [implying a sexual relationship]..." As this comment reveals, if there was an adult male member in the household, gaining access to the state benefits might be easier. It is in this context, the household dynamics of gaining IM becomes important.

Therefore, in the analysis on how households facilitate and limit access to social protection benefits and their use, we need to distinguish two important categories for analysis: 1) type of household (composition in terms of number of members and gender of persons) and 2) nature of vulnerability experienced by the individual. As we have seen, IM and EGS may be useful for households with different types of vulnerability. If the vulnerability is caused by

⁵ It was noticed during fieldwork that elderly parents were often pushed (to sleep even in winter) to the outside 'kota', a place to keep agricultural instruments and sometimes even to keep livestock.

ageing or disability, the EGS is not applicable to such persons. But, other members of the household may participate in the EGS, or a single mother, who is eligible for IM, could also participate in the EGS. It could also be the case that income shocks (e.g. hospitalisation) may require the household to seek additional income by seeking a new opportunity/EGS for work.

We will examine the households in terms of the key vulnerabilities (of loss of partner, ageing and, disability⁶) that require social protection. For each form of vulnerability, we will examine how different types of households may respond.

8.2 Individual vulnerability and household behaviour

The concept of vulnerability originated in studies of natural environmental disasters. In the context of social protection and that of the vulnerability of individuals, it can be defined as “the result of the inter-related risks of being exposed to a particular threat, encountering that threat, and lacking the resources to respond in such a way as to avert serious harm” (Schroder-Butterfill and Marianti, 2006:4). The threat could be manifested in various forms such as loss of income, loss of partner or networks, loss of ability to gain income or even loss of assets. But, the effects could be different depending on the role and status of the person in the household hierarchy. The coping strategies adopted in vulnerable situations could also benefit some members rather than others. Understanding this household behaviour is important to gain a full understanding of how the formal social protection benefit may be claimed and used as one of the coping strategies.

8.2.1 Single mothers and estranged women after marriage

Becoming head of a family, though not of a household (as joint or extended relations living together as a unit), by becoming a widow or being separated from a husband at a young age is not unusual in rural areas. Often, this happens due to the death of the husband in work related accidents, other accidents⁷ and disease. Separation from a partner due to estranged

⁶ ‘Income shock’ (e.g. a person falling sick and requiring hospital admission) is another key vulnerability that a household may face. We discussed in chapter six how the household deals with it through labour market participation and credits.

⁷ As mentioned earlier, since enforceable social security arrangements in such hazardous labour conditions are absent in the informal sector, the state’s provision is the sole source of protection.

relations can also force women into difficulties. Feminist writings, while describing the situation of lone mothers (e.g. Mehrotra, 2004), have emphasised the autonomy and independence the single mothers enjoyed compared to the subjugated position at the *sasar* (husband's home) relative to both husband and mother-in-law. At the same time, studies from various parts of India have shown female-headed households (FHHs) are poorer (Dreze and Srinivasan, 1995; Panda, 1997).⁸

From a social protection perspective the question in focus is how the state could assist these vulnerable households. To identify the needy families from FHHs, the state makes a number of assessments. These include whether other members in the household are able to contribute to the income of the head of the household (e.g., having an adult male son), whether the female has resources to provide for the dependent children etc. But, in this process of judging the household, though the end-result, being head of family, was the same whether through separation or widowhood, the social responses to these two situations in women's lives was different, and as a result there is differential access to social protection.

Widowhood is best described as 'social death' in the Indian situation (Chakravarti, 2004). Most of the widow's networks break down with the death of her husband, her authority decreases in the household and she is considered inauspicious in the community (Bhai, 2004). Rather than receiving help from informal sources at this difficult point of time, the relatives, especially those of her late husband, often hold the woman morally responsible for the death of her husband, and use such an accusation as a pretext to take away her assets (Chen, 1998). Whatever help she receives is on compassionate grounds and such gifts are often sources of exploitation. Widowhood affects women differently at different life stages. Typically, though not always, a young widow and elderly widow may experience different types of exploitation. While a young widow is exploited more by the wider community and relatives, and less by her own household (since the children are young), the elderly widow may be exploited by her

Besides, the reduced access to the judicial system for poor people, and the remote possibility of a lower caste person taking a high caste person to the court, explains why compensation is often not paid (see Moog [1988] for evidence on limited access by the poor to the judicial system).

⁸ See Chant (2003b) for reasons for the increased poverty of FHHs. It is generally considered that worldwide there are 20-25% FHHs (Moghadam, 1997).

children (since her authority is reduced, less health care is given and more labour may be demanded of her) rather than the wider community (as children may protect an elderly widow from exploitation by the wider community, to preserve family prestige). Young widows, though living with in-laws for some time, eventually returned to her *maher* (Mother's home⁹) or village of one of her brothers, unable to bear the exploitation by the in-laws at the *sasar* any longer.

The situation is different for deserted women.¹⁰ Though the Indian Criminal Procedure code (125a-c) stipulates that a husband should pay for the maintenance of wife and children, it is in the context of lack of implementation of this legal provision¹¹, that states like Maharashtra have introduced IM for deserted women. Among these deserted women, the situation of women with and without children was very different, though remarriage was a rare option for both categories. The deserted women without children typically returned to their *maher*¹² and continued to live as a dependent there doing the household activities as well as working. Her labour provided additional income to the household, and if her *maher* was a joint family with her brother having young children, she might also contribute to childcare.

On the other hand, though a deserted woman with children mostly will return to her *maher*, this person is head of a separate family in an important sense. Where the woman's *maher* was financially well off, her parents would be able to give protection to their daughter by accepting her into their home. But this was not always the case, especially when the *maher* was poorer, because the deserted woman was often seen as an economic burden since caring for her own children was her primary duty and this prevented her from working and bringing additional income to the household. Even when she went out to work this would normally

⁹ In the Marathi language *maher* literally means 'mother's home'. Culturally, it is seen as a place where security is assured. Often, the term is also used in the sense of natal parents' village.

¹⁰ It is good to use the term desertion rather than 'separation' and 'divorce' in the rural Indian context, because the legal processes leading to divorce after separation often do not take place, and most often it is the husband who deserts the wife (Dasgupta, 1993).

¹¹ Any implementation deficit of this particular provision is due to the fact that women either have little access to the judicial system or hesitate to drag their ex-partner to court. During the fieldwork, it was reported that a woman who had dared to go to court for legal divorce was physically assaulted by her ex-partner for doing so. In the poor sections of society, women also know that their husbands have economic difficulties of their own, and cannot pay maintenance for the ex-wife as well.

¹² There are some voluntary agencies which provide residential and legal support to battered and separated women. However, these services are most often urban-biased.

bring just sufficient income for her and children.¹³ Further, social stigma associated with her situation lowered her status (and that of her family). Thus, upon return to their parents' village, many live as a separate household in close proximity. This sort of living in proximity provided some form of social support, as well as independence. Thus, help from friends and neighbours was not easily available to her on sympathetic grounds as it was the case with widows.

Of the 151 women interviewed, 110 were single women. 85 of them reported their husbands had died, while 17 had been deserted (8 of them were never married, mostly due to severe disability since birth). Table 8.2 provides the estimated age when these women first became single. As the table shows, from the age of 56, most of the cases are widows (42.7%). In another study, Chen (1998:43) reports 50 per cent of women above the age of 50 were widowed. However, this data from the vulnerable population shows that more than 70 per cent of the women in the age group 50+ are single. This widowed single life of women, coupled with their longer life expectancy, is one of the crucial problems in India's social protection (Mohanty, 2001; Datta, 2005).

In the sample, there were 25 single women who had children below the age of 15. In 20 cases their partner was dead and in the other five cases they had been deserted. Eleven of these single-mother families were living as a separate household. Of the remaining group of 14 single women, four continued to live with the in-laws, while the rest had returned to their *maher* or were living with their brother.

¹³ I came across a few women who lived on their own in their husband's village after the death/separation of their husbands without having a relative in the village. However, in all those instances they were above 40 and their children were above 15. It is very difficult to collect accurate empirical data on the residence of separated and widowed women, because, many of these women are in a situation of flux and undecided as to where they want ultimately to be. So, at the time of collecting data in a household, they claim they are there in the parental home only for few days (due to the stigma associated with admitting the fact that their husband had deserted them), and intend to go back. However, I observed many of the women who said this remained in their parental home even at the end of my eight-months fieldwork.

Table 8.2: Age of woman at the time of the death/separation of the partner (n=110)

Age at the time of partner's death/separation	Partner died	Partner separated	Total
21-25	4	4	8
26-30	4	5	9
31-35	7	1	8
36-40	8	1	9
41-45	12	2	14
46-50	4	1	5
51-55	7	2	9
56-60	15	1	16
61-65	11	0	11
66-70	16	0	16
71-75	2	0	2
76-80	3	0	3

Note: 41 women reported that their partners had died/left more than 20 years ago. Therefore, these women had been living without a partner at least 20 years. Also note this cannot be generalised to the whole population. The selective sampling to get eligible and potential beneficiaries had resulted in including most of the women who were single in the survey.

Whatever the reason for the loss of partner, it affected men and women very differently. I came across only two cases of early death among women (both delivery related cases) and in both cases these men had remarried. After the marriage, men live in their own home, and in most cases they were married soon after the death of the previous partner.

One of the specific social protection benefits to assist families in the case of death of the head of the household (below the age of 65) was NFBS (see detailed description of this scheme in chapter Four). We have seen that the take-up of this scheme was particularly low. This is a surprising fact, since a household would require a good sum of money at the time of death of its income earning member, particularly for hospital and funeral expenses in addition to the income loss. Fifty per cent of the households eligible for NFBS (n=26) reported that there was at least one loan to be repaid. This loan was the result of the death of the main earner in the household.

Besides the reasons of access, certain household dynamics also played a key role in this low take up. Most important of these dynamics was the difficulty of claiming a benefit (through the process of bargaining) until the grief of the death of a central member of household fades away. Since the benefit had to be claimed within one year of the person's

death, this could restrict the chances of the household entering into the bargaining. One assistant *tehsildar*, who was sensitive to this issue, reported: “On such occasions, the government should be proactive and provide the benefit to the household rather than expecting the household to make an application”. Since the benefit amount was potentially very high for this scheme,¹⁴ the brokers provided the information to households where a member of the household had died (In the survey all except one household eligible for NFBS had knowledge of the scheme, but only fifty per cent of the households had actually claimed the benefit (n=26)).

Generally everyone in the village saw NFBS as a benefit ‘in the name of the dead relative’. The moral pressure not to claim such a benefit is clear from the following incident. In one household while interviewing a widow, who had lost her husband when he was 62, it emerged that she had not applied for NFBS. Upon asking the reasons for this, she reported that she wanted to apply for it and made a few visits independently to the *tehsil*, but her sons had not given support in this process. The answer from her eldest son was: “we don’t want any money from government in the name of our father, who is already dead”. Here, while the elderly widow may have perceived some independent income as an important contribution to the household, the children were more concerned about how the neighbours perceived their actions. This pattern of male members not providing support for female members of the household in claiming benefits can be seen for other benefits too, reasons for which we will deal with later.

In another household, where the youngest son was living with his parents, upon the death of the elderly father, the eldest son had advised his youngest brother not to claim NFBS. How the money would be used, who would use such money, and among whom the money needs to be shared are important questions that a household has to address when debating an

¹⁴ In one case where the female was able to gain the benefit of Rs.10,000, the broker claimed Rs.2,000. Fifty per cent of the total benefit had to be given to the member of SSC though they had no formal role in the allocation of this central government scheme. This share was collected immediately after the cheque was cashed by the beneficiary/relative from the bank. Thus, though the official records and cheque transaction was shown as it went to the beneficiary, only a small amount actually reached the beneficiary household.

application. An important and contentious issue in the case of NFBS is between the younger son, who has the moral claim since he may have provided care for his parents, especially after the marriage of his elder brothers or sisters, and the eldest son, who has authority after the death of the father of the household. Difficulties in solving such complex questions may have delayed the process of claiming benefit. Of the three households that actually received NFBS, in two the male members used the money for business purposes (indicating they were comparatively well off households). These household dynamics indicate that the benefit is claimed especially when the dominant voice in the household favours such a move.

Of the 25 single mothers (with young children) in the sample, only five of them were receiving IM. Often, benefit was denied and it was pointed out there was a son who was older than 15 (and could provide for his mother), despite the fact that he had many younger siblings. Thus, the reasons for excluding claimants from benefit were emphasised rather than the reasons for eligibility. These women without any support from male members from the household and from the outside community found it difficult to enforce their welfare rights.

However, these young widows or deserted women had, over the years, often built up a relationship with other men in the village (most often not living together with them because of the stigma attached to remarriage and cohabitation) but through neighbourhood relations or relationships in the workplace. Building such a relationship not only provided emotional support, but also protection from other men, who might disturb their lives with sexual advances or encroachment on their private property such as land/house. With the help of such relationships, they were somehow able to gain benefits. Illustrative is the case of Gomathithai (a *Mali* lower caste woman) who was deserted when she was young. She started working for a *Marwari* (a comparatively well-off trading caste) elite person in her *Maher*, and everyone in the village knew she was close to the *Marwari* elite person. Since she was very old (aged about 80), with the help of the *Marwari* elite her house was sold and a room was offered (free of rent) to her near the *Marwari* house. Thus, she looks on record to be a homeless single elderly woman. But in reality, she receives food, housing and other informal support from a

rich house, and she also receives IM through the influence of the *Marwari* elite¹⁵. This is the sort of leakage that Buvinic and Gupta (1997) cautions in targeting merely FHHs.

In the context of the widespread exclusion of eligible households, the alternative options, the most important being the labour market, have to be examined.

After marriage, a woman's traditional sources of support take a different shape, when she moves to the husband's village. Women of the poorest households often join their in-laws in casual labour after a few weeks of marriage. They may then have to work alone if the in-laws are sick or in a lean agricultural season when work is scarce. Thus, seeking work and working in a new village is difficult. The woman's social identity is primarily associated with her relationship to her husband and the household into which she is married. Negligence by her husband or in-laws can make the work conditions more difficult. Ramani, who was 17 years old, was married to a man from a small village near to Bajgaon. However, she decided to come back to her *maher* (her father had died one year before her marriage) particularly because work opportunities were better in Bajgaon and she knew where the work would be available. When I asked her specifically the reason for leaving her husband's household, she said: "He is careless. Everyday he goes to watch films and to gamble. He does not take arrack or beat me up. But if no one goes to work, how will we eat? My mother-in-law asks me to go for work. But how do I know where the work is? I grew up here (Bajgaon) and I know where to get work, so I decided to come back to my own village". Though Ramani's story is an example of woman's agency to escape from poverty, it is also a case of an estranged relationship making her eligible for IM since she was pregnant at the time of the fieldwork. The reasons for negligence, as expressed by Ramani, are difficult to determine. Poverty and social exclusion, particularly in denying opportunities of work, could be one contributory factor.

In such a context of scarce work opportunities, single women often could not negotiate access to employment such as sugarcane cutting (as we saw in the case of exclusion

¹⁵ Gomathithai, of course, did not reveal these details. But more than one informant confirmed these details.

from EGS work in the previous chapter), as this required providing a credible pledge, which could be done if there was a male member (In the dataset there was only one single mother who used to work as sugar cane cutter, and she went with her 16 year old son). However, single women often contracted their labour to private landlords or businessmen (often elites) of the village in roles such as providing their labour for washing the clothes and utensils (monthly payment for this ranged between Rs.400-600). Though this provided a steady income, it prevented them from participating in the EGS which could bring a better income.

As we have seen in chapter six, information about the EGS was received informally through community informants (such as the *mukadam* or caste members), and these information sources were favourable to male members, rather than the single women, whose presence in public places was not encouraged. Thus, it was not surprising that only one single mother reported she had worked on the EGS, and she went with her 14 year old daughter.

The eldest child and female children were often forced to enter the labour market, independent of mother's income on such occasions. Often, this interruption of a child's education takes place before the death or separation of the husband. The child drops out of school when economic difficulties cast a shadow over the household such as at the time of a disease of a household member. There were six children (aged less than 15) in the dataset, who had dropped out of schooling because the main income earner in the household had either died or fallen sick¹⁶. Only four of them were living with elderly parents or in-laws. Thus, informal support from relatives was forthcoming only in few cases.

8.2.2 The elderly persons

Literature on ageing in India has mainly focussed on two fronts: 1) The changing values through education and use of new technology, and its effect on the reduction of the authority of the elderly persons (Caldwell, 1982). 2) Socio-economic changes through urbanisation and migration leading to reduction of the importance of family as unit of

¹⁶ Children dropping out of school to join in work with parents on the farm was a different case. Children work independently to earn an income of their own, often working in construction sites or shops.

production (Malhotra & Kabeer, 2002), and therefore reduction of importance to the elderly persons who are heads of these units. There is a dearth of research into the micro-level experience on the lives and desires of the elderly population in the households in the light of the wider changes in economy and society. This section will aim to shed light on these individual's experiences in the context of social protection.

8.2.2.1 Continuing agency¹⁷ of elderly people

It has rightly been pointed out that to consider old age as affecting everyone homogeneously is a regressive approach to social policy. Women survive longer and their mobility and ability to gain income and provide care are different from that of men. To consider the 'agency' aspect of the elderly age groups, it is important not to treat them as a homogeneous group (e.g. 60+), so that differences can be distinguished in the framework of functional ageing, rather than chronological ageing (Malhotra and Kabeer, 2002).¹⁸ This is because though ageing is accompanied by degenerative conditions, the perception and experience of ageing itself is determined by cultural, social and economic factors (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2000).

For example, it has been argued that people from lower economic strata with low-level intake of nutrition experience old age much earlier than the general population and often may not reach the age of 60 (Harriss-White, 2002). There is no widely accepted method to understand this diversity. In Europe, care agencies have developed instruments for assessing a person's capability to undertake 'activities of daily life' (ADL) in the context of assessing disability. This ADL index can be different for persons of similar disability or age (Mabbett, 2005). In the rural Indian context functional ageing can be understood in three stages: 1)

¹⁷ This expression is borrowed from Harriss-White (2005).

¹⁸ It is worth noting that the traditional classification of human life in India emphasised psycho-social ageing rather than chronological or functional ageing, i.e., a person was considered elderly when he had grandchildren. In the traditional Hindu culture, a man's life span was divided into four progressive stages: First, *brahmacarya* or celibate, leading the life of a student; second, *grihasta* or life of the householder, getting married, having children and leading a life of householder; third, *vanaprastha* or moving to the forest, when wrinkles appeared and hair turned grey, giving up the worldly pursuits to search for spiritual growth; fourth, *samnyasa* or ascetic, renouncing the world completely when he is spiritually ready. What is most pronounced in this description is the total absence of comment about the role of female. This is because the wife is expected to follow the man faithfully through each stage of life. (Mohanti, 2001).

withdrawal from income generating activities outside the home through labour or business (e.g. daily wage in some one else's farm), 2) withdrawal from external activities of the household economy (e.g. care for the livestock), and 3) confinement by oneself, needing help for daily routines.

Table 8.3 provides an overview of the differences in patterns of work (to earn income independently) and to move around, among the age group of 60+ in the survey. A cursory reading of the table reveals that 24 per cent of the population above the age of 60 still work and earn money. Often, the income the elderly person received was lower for the same amount of work than a younger person, and many of the types of employment the elderly persons were involved in were of a contract type, for example, picking cotton or weeding is work done by elderly women. The employer needs to pay only for the quantum of work done.

Table 8.3: Differences in mobility among elderly persons (60+)

		Going for paid work	Can move around independently, but can't work	Move around independently with the support of a stick	Need another person's support to move around	Total
60-64	Female	10	5	1	1	17
	Male	6	0	1	0	7
65-69	Female	7	18	1	0	27
	Male	4	12	6	0	22
70-74	Female	2	5	4	1	12
	Male	3	5	3	1	12
75-79	Female	1	10	5	0	16
	Male	0	1	2	0	3
80-84	Female	0	4	1	2	7
	Male	0	1	1	0	2
85-89	Female	1	6	5	2	14
	Male	0	2	0	0	2
Total		34	69	30	8	141

Source: Researcher's assessment recorded in survey forms using both household interview and observation.

Shilavathy, from the *Mahar* caste who was 87 and still attending the farm, worked three days per week and was always employed for weeding. (Though her two sons lived in the same village, they were often out of the village for sugarcane cutting, work involving seasonal migration. One son lived about one kilometre away, and visited her once in a week. Another son lived in close proximity, but hardly interacted with her at all.) She said that she enjoyed working as a contract worker because, “being on a daily wage you need to work fast along with the speed of other workers. I am very elderly. I need only very little money, to buy some vegetables, which I can earn by working three days. My sons provide me with some grain every year.” She was not receiving IM, particularly because her sons had not taken any interest in it.

Another striking example was Cheeru, a 76-year-elderly *chamar* caste woman, who was earning her own income. She had received a dwelling place with two rooms, built under the village government’s housing scheme. After her husband had died, her stepson tried to chase her out of the house to gain possession. When she protested against this, her stepson complained to the village elite and the *talatti* that Cheeru had a son of her own, who lived in Mumbai; thus she was not destitute and was illegally receiving the state’s old age pension. This eventually resulted in the removal of Cheeru’s non-contributory pension. This prompted Cheeru to seek means to earn her own income. She started to sit in the village market place to cobble shoes and reported to the researcher that she earned about Rs.60 on market day, which is sufficient for her to live, but wanted to “teach her stepson a lesson by not giving away the house”.

These case histories, on the one hand, show how the degenerative aspects of old age necessitate some kind of social protection since earning capacity is significantly reduced. On the other hand these stories also reveal how the intra-household dynamics prompt the elderly person to rely on informal labour markets for their survival.

Though heavy work such as the EGS was not suitable for elderly persons, during the visits to EGS worksites at least one elderly woman was noticed by the researcher. On each worksite their role was either to look after the children who had accompanied the parents to

the worksite or to take care of cooking or even bring drinking water. Legally, the EGS scheme had to allow for the elderly to be paid to carry out such activities. However, in the context of the informal implementation, these activities were left to workers, but the elderly relatives still carried out these activities. However, when the labour involved migration (such as sugarcane cutting), elderly people often did not go along. Rather, their role was to take care of the house and livestock.

The continuing agency of the elderly persons was demonstrated through their contribution to the care economy as well. An elderly person's contribution to the care economy is significant in terms of care for the livestock and care of grandchildren. Other activities whereby elderly persons contributed to the household's economy were collecting wood for fuel and drawing water (mostly by women). The care the elderly persons received was dependent on the ability of the elderly person to contribute to the care economy.

8.2.2.2 Care for the elderly within the household

In traditional societies, it is often assumed that old parents do not need to be involved in labour, since they receive respect and care as they live in three-generation joint families. This assumption is often not correct, and in the context of the younger generation migrating to cities, it is likely that older parents may be left alone as caretakers of the house in the village. These living arrangements by the elderly are an important indicator of informal support provided by the household (Martin, 1988; see also Bhat and Dhruvarajan, 2001).

Table 8.4 provides a breakdown of the number and type of persons with whom elderly persons live. There were 35 persons living alone among the 141 elderly persons surveyed from both villages. 31 of these were women (33% of women in the sample), and all four men living alone were associated with landlords, staying on the farm, and working as regular farm workers for him. There is evidence from various regions of India to show that more women live alone after the age of 60 compared with men (Panda, 1998: Orissa; Sivamurthy & Wadakannavar, 2001: Karnataka). Of these 35 persons who were living alone,

22 of them had at least one adult child (including eight of them having at least one son). Of these 22 households with at least one child, four of them had children living in close proximity and another six had at least one of their children living in the same village. This indicates that 12 single households were totally alone in the village despite having at least one child; whereas 13 of the households were totally alone because they had no children. This child care for the elderly persons is taken up later at the end of this section.

Table 8.4: Residential pattern of the persons of 60+ (n=141)

	Single elderly person		Couple elderly persons		Total
Living alone/themselves	35	61.4%	22	38.6%	57
Living with Children/close relative	66	78.6%	18	21.4%	84
	101	71.6%	40	28.4%	141

On various occasions, the researcher observed neighbours informally caring for an elderly person, who had no one else. This help was especially forthcoming when the elderly person was receiving state pension. An elderly lady from the *Mahar* caste had no children, and a neighbour (*Mahar* caste as well) used to take possession of the state pension and provide for the elderly woman. In such instances the bare minimum needs of the elderly person were met, as the state pension was a meagre benefit. The case of private vehicle owners (auto rickshaws) taking single elderly persons to hospital was dependent on whether the person was receiving the state pension. In the previous chapter we have seen how the credit availability for groceries was also dependent on the pension. Thus, the state pension, though small, made a significant impact on the lives of single elderly persons. This has been observed in other studies as well (Farrington *et al*, 2004; Harriss-White, 2004b).

For the elderly persons who were excluded from the pension, the alternatives were either to have an independent income from the informal labour market or to be dependent on their children. It is in this context that the issue of elderly persons without children becomes important. Childlessness was considered as one of the important causes of destitution by the

state, and elderly people without children often received a state pension. Of the 18 persons without a child, 14 of them were receiving IM. The chi-square statistic of association for the group of elderly persons without children compared to the group of the elderly persons with children (n=123) in receiving state pension was significant (Chi square = 10.95; df= 1; $p < 0.05$).

This was confirmed through ethnographic observation as well. Kisan and wife had no children and were in their late 40s. They were landless with a small *kutch*a house. Kisan, assuming the researcher to be some kind of government official, took me into his home and explained his situation and asked me to make a recommendation for state IM benefit on the grounds that he had no children. Further, observation in the offices, where claimants were filling their application forms, proved that many people, despite having children, claimed in their application form that they had no children, since it was a well-known that persons without children were preferred over those with children. This informal rule of preferring childless households for the state pension is due to the fact that younger members are able to engage in productive activities, and more productive members at home means a better financial position for the household. This indicates the connection between the labour market opportunities and IM in an important sense, an aspect which is dealt with in detail later in this section.

A further criterion for determining 'need' was the absence of a male child. Though the Indian Criminal Procedure Code (125d)¹⁹ holds both son and daughter as equally responsible for providing maintenance for their elderly parents, the prevailing social norm discharges daughters of this responsibility as "her labour and hence her income belong not to herself but to her husband" after marriage (Vera-Sanso, 2004: 79). In the sample survey there were 38 elderly persons (age=60+) with only female children, and 47.5% of them were receiving the state pension. There were 61 elderly persons with at least one male child and

¹⁹ In 1975 Supreme Court clarified the purpose of this clause as "to provide a summary remedy to save dependents from destitution and vagrancy, and thus to serve a social purpose" (see Bhatnagar, 2003).

32.7% of them were receiving the state pension. However, this difference between these groups was not statistically significant.

In the context of elderly parents without children the natural question that arises is ‘what does the state do for elderly parents who are neglected by their children?’. From a practice-based understanding of right and citizenship, this question is very relevant. Table 8.5 examines the extent of neglect and care by the children to their elderly parents. Interestingly 31.9 per cent of elderly persons, despite having children, do not even live in close proximity with them.²⁰ Among the rest of the elderly persons, it is the son who was found to be living with or in close proximity. (As we have seen earlier, often the daughters live in their husband’s village.)

This may lead us to a misleading conclusion: that sons are providing the care to the elderly parents. Research in Western countries has shown that care-giving is a defining task for women (Gilligan, 1982) and women not only provide more care, but also the person who receives care prefers a female carer (Qureshi & Walker, 1988). Daughters’ care for disabled parents has been reported as an evidence for this (Lewis & Meredith, 1988).²¹ Is the pattern of care by gender different in India? To understand this, we need to distinguish between caring *about* (the emotional aspect of caring) and caring *for* (the actual tasks of caring) (Finch, 1993). Once we have disaggregated the concept of care, we can see generally sons are involved only in caring about, and the daughter-in-law carries out the actual tasks such as giving a bath, feeding etc. Female mobility is highly restricted in rural India. A daughter-in-

²⁰ Close proximity here meant living in the same plot of land in two different dwellings, mostly cooking food separately. These single-member households, which lived in close proximity with their children’s household, often enjoyed some sort of social support from their children. A good amount of household chores (eg. bringing water) was done by the grandchildren. On the other hand, the household, which was living in the same village as the children, often many houses apart or in villages like Saralgaon in a different hamlet altogether, mostly carried out their own household chores. Unless it is a strained relationship, the son or daughter-in-law or grandchildren may pass by (and consult) the elderly parent everyday or at least once a week.

²¹ These differences, in receiving and giving care, have to be interpreted in the context of research on wider inequality, reporting the differences in food consumption (Sen, 1984; Glewwe, 1990), health care (Dasgupta, 1987) and leisure (Schultz, 1989) based on gender.

law typically required permission from her mother-in-law if she wanted to go back to her own village to care for her own mother.

Table 8.5: Residential pattern of the children of the elderly persons (n=123)

Source of immediate informal support	Gender of the child/ren the respondent has			Total
	Only female child/ren	Only male child/ren	male and female children	
Only male child/ren lives with	NA	15	29	44
Only female child/ren lives with	18	NA	8	26
Male and female children lives with	NA	NA	6	6
Only male child/ren lives in close proximity	NA	2	3	5
Only female child/ren lives in close proximity	0	NA	1	1
Male and female children lives in close proximity	NA	NA	2	2
Only male child/ren lives in same village	NA	1	8	9
Only female child/ren lives in same village	3	NA	2	5
Male and female children lives in same village	NA	NA	1	1
Only male child/ren lives in a different village/city	NA	5	0	5
Only female child/ren lives in a different village/city	17	NA	0	17
Male and female children lives in a different village/city	NA	NA	2	2
Total	38	23	62	123

Note: The event of more than one child per an old person and the children living in different locations has been taken into consideration. The child/ren living geographically closest to the parent is recorded in the table, and other children are ignored.

As Table 8.5 reveals, when there are children from both genders for a parent, the parental responsibility is undertaken by the male children (see 29 male children living with parents compared to 8 female children). When there were only female children for a parent, 18 of them (out of 38) had continued to live with parents to support them. Upon marriage the woman joins her husband's household and she is in a subordinate position to her mother-in-law. However, when the mother-in-law becomes old, the younger woman has a chance to decide things for herself. Often, this happens after the death of the father-in-law when the status of the mother-in-law is reduced. On such occasions, the elderly mother often enjoyed the company and care of her daughter rather than the daughter-in-law. Therefore, after the death of the husband, the elderly woman preferred moving to her daughter's house if there was an opportunity. (But often, the son would prevent such a move so as not to reveal to the local community the inability of his wife to take care of her mother-in-law).

Another important change that reduces the status of the elderly woman after the death of her husband is the transfer of land or house ownership to her sons. In poorer households, the land was often transferred immediately to the sons, because each time the land is transferred from one ownership to other, it involves paying fees. By avoiding transferring the land to the widow, there was some economic benefit to the household in general. But in households which were better off, this process of transferring land to the heirs was often delayed. At this stage, through widowhood, the elderly woman became the owner of the property. But, many family conflicts observed in such circumstances were due to male children exerting pressure to divide the property, and to transfer it from the mother's name to their names.²²

Obviously, the informal care enjoyed by the elderly woman as long as the property was in her name was better. But, in the case of most of the landless households, with the house as the only major asset, the property was transferred to their sons immediately after the

²² The oft-used phrase, which justifies such arguments, is 'get the legal complexity simplified by clearing the matter when the concerned persons are still alive'. The specific situation of the household may delay this process. The legal complexity of the land with other adjacent land, the necessity of the children to have the land in their names for purposes such as loans, resource of the children in a city etc were important considerations here.

death of their husbands. The case of Koovimma and Thoriyaa illustrate this well. Koovimma from the *koli Maratha* caste had no land, but had a house. She worked as a casual labourer. She had no children and her husband died 8 years ago. She was not physically able to move without someone else's help over the past two years. She sold off her house to another *Maratha* caste person from the village. He helped Koovimma to obtain a state pension.

Thoriyaa had two acres of land in her husband's name when he died. Her husband had gained a state pension with the help of a local elite for whom her husband had worked as a regular farm worker. On the record Thoriyaa was 'landless' since the land was in her husband's name. But, a few months after the death of her husband, her pension was stopped because Thoriyaa had become the owner of the land, as this information was passed to the local elite. She believed the pension had stopped as her husband no longer worked for the local elite as a regular farm worker. She had one daughter; and her daughter and husband kept telling her that they would take care of her if the land was transferred into their name.

When the residential pattern for women above the age of 60 whose husbands had died was calculated, it was found that 26% of the female children were living with their elderly mother (compared to 15% in the general population as in Table 8.5). This possibility of a shift in the residence was confirmed through ethnographic observation of household dynamics. But it was difficult to prove statistically. There were six households in the dataset in which the elderly parents lived with their adult daughter despite having an adult son.

8.2.3 Disability

The census and other national surveys often neglect the disabled population, and whenever they are enumerated only extreme cases of complete disability were counted, resulting in serious underestimation of their number (Erb and Harriss-White, 2004). In rural areas disabled females often remained unmarried, and spend their life with their parents, and later with their brothers or close relatives. Extreme exploitation, sometimes even with the consent of family members, was meted out to this group.

In the sample there were 15 women who were disabled (mental retardation [5], locomotor handicapped [5], visually impaired [3], deaf [2]). Eight of them had never married and lived with their mother or brother. Four of them (older women) reported their partners were dead, and three of them reported their partners had deserted them. Of the 15 disabled women, four of them were receiving IM benefits but only two of them were receiving IM on the grounds of disability. The other two were receiving old age pension, and their 'need' was aggravated by the fact of being disabled as well. On the other hand there were 16 men in the sample who were disabled, and of the five men receiving IM benefits, all of them were receiving benefits on the ground of disability.

During the fieldwork, the researcher came across a mother who used her mentally disabled daughter (about the age of 20) for prostitution; she moved around different villages, stopping in each village for 2-3 days. Similar incidents of older members encouraging younger members with prostitution have been reported among lower caste communities of Maharashtra by Kakade (1990). When the disabled person was not contributing to the care economy (e.g. tending the children) of the household, exploitation was one of the possible options for the poorest households. The researcher also came across contrasting experience: a mentally retarded woman from the *Maratha* caste, who was 58 year old, was staying in the household of her brother, and receiving informal care from her nieces. Her brother owned more than 20 acres of irrigated land, indicating a well-off financial position. She was receiving IM, though the rules of means-testing were against her case.²³ She also was receiving informal care from her niece. On the one hand her brother's economic position protected her from being exploited. On the other hand, as Erb and Harriss-White (2004) argue, it is the disability of the higher caste, which is recognised first. Further, the ability to spare time to make journeys to complete the complicated application processes, and to pay the

²³ It is important to note that there was disagreement between civil servants and politicians at the state level on whether means-testing should be a criterion while considering the applications of IM for disabled persons. While the politicians argued against, civil servants were for means-testing (based on an interview with a civil servant in the social assistance office on 23rd of February, 2004 Mantralaya, Mumbai).

necessary bribes to gain the certification to prove disability are reasons why disabled persons are often excluded from social protection benefits.²⁴

During fieldwork, the researcher came across a joint family that was facing turmoil over the rights of a disabled woman. Kausubai, from *Mahar* lower caste, (now aged 34) was affected by polio when she was child. Her brother, being a young political elite, gained a public telephone booth (reserved for the disabled) and ran a profitable business out of this. In addition, he gained monthly IM benefit for her, and he also took control of these. After marriage, despite her husband repeatedly asking the brother to give the telephone booth to her (in practice to her husband), it did not happen. Kausubai's husband revealed the deep feelings he nursed over this incident to the researcher: "she is disabled and no one would marry her. Being a distant relative, I generously married her. Her brother should have shown the courtesy to provide at least a decent living as gratitude for my generosity. But, how far can you fight with your own relative? Even if we are able to go to court and legally gain the telephone booth, he could stop the whole benefit because of his political clout" (see similar findings of elite persons intruding into family relations in rural areas of Bangladesh in Bird *et al*, 2004). These instances reveal that the agency of the person who gains the benefit has more control over the resource than the person legally entitled to.

Disabled persons, unlike elderly persons, were neither able to generate income through informal labour (except in the few cases where they resorted to begging) or by contributing to the care economy. Thus, the only possibility of generating income was by receiving a state pension. However, household dynamics worked against claiming this benefit when the disabled person was unwilling to share the benefit with the whole household. The case below provides evidence.

²⁴ As we have seen in chapter four, the comparatively lower number of people receiving disability benefit is mostly due to the difficulty of proving the extent of their disability. Generally, a person has to produce a certificate from a civil surgeon that s/he has 40% of disability in seeing, hearing, movement, mental ability or speech. In practice, this method of proving disability has implications of how access to a civil surgeon is structured and whether a household could bribe to gain these certifications. As a result, less poor households, those able to afford small bribes, those that had mobility (e.g. to take a day or few days off from casual labour) more easily gained the benefits than the very poor households. In the case of women who are disabled, their mobility is further constrained not only on gender grounds but also due to disability. This is further explained in Appendix 8.

Another case from fieldwork could demonstrate this point further. Gopika (*Maratha*, usually upper caste landlord; however, in this case her family had a small piece of barren land) was separated soon after her marriage and started to live with her sister Vasundhara, (whose husband had died). She had no children. Vasundhara has four children, all of whom were grown-up when the researcher interviewed the household. Their unmarried disabled brother (Gopalan aged about 40) also lived with them in the same household. Gopika undertook casual labour, with Vasundhara. Gopalan did not work since he could only move around with crutches. Vasundhara's son who was educated up to 12th standard had made an IM application for Gopika, though it was unsuccessful. When I inquired why he had not done the same for Gopalan, he quickly replied: "he will drink [alcohol] it away, so it is better not to have *pagar* (local term used for IM) for him." As we know from other cases, IM gained by females were usually shared among other members, and therefore other members took an interest in gaining benefit for female members. However, Gopalan reported to the researcher that since no one could make journeys for his application, he was not receiving IM. This clearly indicates when the income can be shared with the household, it is claimed; but otherwise it is discouraged. This leads us to the question of how the social protection benefit is used within the household.

8.3 The use of social protection benefit in the household

From the above discussion of household dynamics, it is evident that the possibility of gaining income in the name of a vulnerable member itself enhances the value of that person and the informal care that person is receiving. However, from the point of view of the effectiveness of state programmes, one important concern is how the cash, transferred to the household for social protection purposes, is used, and who in the household uses it. In examining this question the factor that is most useful is to consider who from the household had taken the pain to gain this benefit, and what sort of decision making patterns prevail within the household. The legal question of 'who has the entitlement' is a rather less significant one within the household.

Table 8.6 shows how the cash from IM was generally used. From the table it can be observed that the pattern of use of pension money is the same across all types of households. Mostly the money was spent to pay off debts and to buy groceries.

Table 8.6 Use of IM benefits in various types of households

	Single-member HH (n=21)	Two-member HH (n=20)	More than two members in HH (n=37)	Total
Sufficient to pay off credit/debt	13	13	21	47
Sufficient to spend for groceries	11	8	20	39
Sufficient to spend for Travel	3	1	4	8
Sufficient to spend for clothes	1	0	0	1
Sufficient to spend for medicine	3	4	2	9
There is something left for saving	1	0	0	1

Note: The N is larger than the persons currently receiving benefits, because information was collected from the persons who received benefit at least once, though their benefits may have been discontinued.

Source: Household Survey

As noted in chapter seven, the debts the poor elderly persons mention is the credit gained from shopkeepers. Similar notions of 'pension day markets' are found in South Africa as well (Lund, 2005).

A similar pattern was not observed in the use of cash gained from work in the EGS. Since IM was a regular payment, when the money was going to come was approximately anticipated by the household. Thus, how the money was going to be spent could also be planned. On the other hand, EGS was seasonal work and the economic priority that the household faced at that time was addressed. At the same time, it is interesting to compare the use of EGS money with the cash gained from sugarcane cutting. Though the government claimed the EGS to be an income enhancement programme, the cash gained was never invested for income enhancement purposes by the households. It was used for daily activities (such as needs of grocery, travel, clothes, medicine). On the other hand, the money from sugarcane cutting was used for a variety of purposes, such as marriage in the household (7

households), paying previous debt such as sickness (8 households) etc. Some households even reported they had bought land or livestock. This difference is particularly due to the fact that money from sugarcane cutting came as a lump sum, which the household could invest (households often approached the *mukadam* at the time of an ‘income shock’). On the other hand, EGS money came as small weekly payments, which was sufficient only to pay for the day-to-day household needs.

The other question of who from the household uses the money is more critical than how it is used. As we have seen above, EGS money is invariably taken into the possession of the male household member, in the context of informal implementation through the *mukadam*. In the poorer households, which were excluded from the EGS and forced to go for sugarcane cutting, the decision on seasonal migration was taken by male members. Often women resisted this. This difference in the income generation strategy within the household has to be seen in the context of the need for a lump sum of money by the male, and the strategy to involve female labour (and drastically affect the children’s education) in the process.

On the other hand, the stake in IM was created by the person who made the effort to gain it through the processes of making applications, and making contacts with the broker or elites. Table 8.7 shows the person who made the errands to make the application. Though in single-member households and two-member households the applications were mostly made by the claimant, in the multiple-generation households others (especially the son) were equally important.

Table 8.7 Who did the errands to make the application

	Single-member HH (n=32)	Two-member HH (n=25)	More than two members in HH (n=53)	Total
Self	23	14	23	60
Relative	2	2	3	7
Partner	3	5	7	15
Son	1	1	14	16
Someone outside the household	3	3	6	12

As we have seen in chapter six, the money was received from the postman by the individual claimant on most occasions. However, the money was handled differently in poorer households and well-off households. In the poorer households either the son or daughter-in-law took control of this money either to pay the credit/debt or grocery. In the better-off households this was not the case. In such households, the IM cash was considered as comparatively little money and it was left with the claimant to be used for their personal spending. This was particularly the case when the recipient was male.

Often, sons or partners would demand that the claimant pay the credits due to the shopkeeper as soon as the pension money arrived. One claimant showed me his passbook (an identity card with signatures from the recipient each time money was received) from which his daughter-in-law had torn out his photograph following a family fight. This could be because another person in the household made the effort to get the benefits (see Table 8.7). Sons or other significant persons in the household often threatened to stop the pension if their demands were not met (see the case of Cheeru above and her son trying to take over the house). But things were different in economically better-off households. One political elite whose father was receiving IM said: “he needs some money for his own expenses, so I got the benefit for him”. But, the same political elite said that he had not applied for IM for his mother since he ‘did not need the state’s money to take care of his mother’.

But, invariably, all recipients reported that the amount was very little and there was hardly anything left after paying credits to the shopkeeper and purchasing groceries for about a week. Some of them reported they received a little money when their sons or daughters visited them.

The key difference between sharing the EGS money among the members of the household and IM benefit being shared among the members was that different members of the household collectively worked on the EGS project, and everyone felt a legitimate right to share it. However, in the case of IM, even though someone from the household may have taken the initiative and done the errands, the legitimate right over the IM was with the

recipient, especially since the recipient's signature was necessary at the time of delivery of the benefit.

8. 4 Household dynamics around the state pension

Whether the person was receiving the state pension or not could change the household dynamics even in two-member households. The case of Dilooga illustrates this. Dilooga, who was from the *Mathang* lower caste, had no land and survived on casual labour in agriculture and sugarcane cutting; he was partially blind from childhood and he had completely lost his eyesight by the time he was 50. He began to receive a state pension when he was 55. He said he used to be cared for by his daughter-in-law, who lived near by, when he was getting a state pension. Following an election in the village, Dilooga's pension was stopped (he says the village leader complained at the *tehsil* office that he was dead, an allegation he could not prove otherwise. Dilooga showed me a letter from the *tehsil* office asking him to bring documentation showing 'he exists'!). Dilooga says he was 68 then, and was not cared for by anyone, though his wife who was 64 still lived in the same household. Dilooga was often found in the house of his sister who was a widow and received both the state pension and an NGO benefit. It was indeed painful when Dilooga asked the researcher to mediate with his wife to feed him and care for him.

His wife has a different version of the story. She says when Dilooga used to get the state pension, 'he would give the whole pension to his daughter-in-law and would not share anything with me. He thought he would get this pension always. Now, see what happened'. Dilooga's wife has not claimed a state pension, and says she is not going to claim it either. Their daughter was living in Bombay and Dilooga's wife takes care of her daughter's house for which her daughter gives her some money every month. She says she is happy with that money.

Further, in the households where both or one of a couple were receiving a state pension, the woman demanding the money from the male recipient was a common scene.

Women often complained that men spent money on *beedi* (a native cigarette) smoking, while they wanted to pay for the groceries.

It is also possible that in the same household there is more than one claimant. In the survey, the 214 interviewees came from 178 households. In 144 households there was only one eligible beneficiary or person receiving IM. In 32 households there were two eligible beneficiaries or persons receiving IM. In two households there were three such persons.

Of these 34 households in which more than one person was eligible and interviewed, in 17 households there was actually no one receiving benefits though more than one person from the household was eligible for benefit. On the other hand, in 10 other households all the persons who had applied for benefit were receiving benefits (except in one case all of these pairs were elderly couples receiving old age pension). There were seven households in which one person was receiving and other was not. In Bajgaon, one elderly woman who was aged 79 was receiving the pension, and her son was working as a regular farm worker in Sanjay Patilkar's farm. When a special inquiry came (see the case in section 7.5.3), Sanjay told him that the pensions of the elderly persons who had children were being stopped and that of his mother's pension should be stopped. He agreed to Sanjay's demand. But the regular farm worker, with Sanjay's consent, changed his own age from 52 to 66 and started receiving benefits for the OAP when his mother's pension was stopped. This incident shows how the pension is viewed more as an income for the household than for the particular person entitled to it.

In various houses where both elderly persons were not receiving benefits, it was an elderly male person who was blocking or not giving support to the elderly female person in submitting the application. The anxiety to obtain a regular income through the state pension was more evident among elderly women, who knew they would be alone without the partner (due to long life expectancy and the age gap of the couple). As we know from chapter six, the main reason for not submitting an application is the intuitive knowledge that the local elite would not give the benefit. The elderly male person knew the local politics in much more detail, and hesitated to bargain for benefits with the elites. On the other hand, the elderly

female person did not consider this bargaining as something against their self-esteem.²⁵ Thus, many elderly females could be seen commuting to the *tehsil* office (or to writers in the *tehsil* place) to apply and follow up their applications. However, in the context of their lack of contacts with village elites, their applications were often turned down.

8.5 Social inclusion for welfare rights and citizenship: A worm's eye view

What implications does this account of differential allocation have to the theory of citizenship? As mentioned in the second chapter, a practice-based citizenship (citizenship viewed as social construct rather than Marshallian citizenship where legal discourse dominates) theory has important lessons to be learned from a bottom-up analysis. Engaging in various processes to obtain welfare rights, and the experiences of interacting with bureaucrats, local elites and informal brokers as a job seeker or claimant of welfare benefits constructs this practice-based citizenship. This is far away from the legal promises. For an individual and household, their assessment of the worthiness of bonds and networks is evaluated in terms of the support given to them at times of threat, risk or vulnerability. The most immediate network of the household benefits from the citizenship rights of its members. For this purpose, the household is interested in engaging in a discourse of citizenship. An elderly person who was excluded from the IM benefit rehearsed the way he argued with the *tehsil* official to me as: "Either provide *pagar* (local term of IM) for me or provide employment for my son, but the official neither spoke nor offered".

Welfare rights are a necessary condition of full citizenship. But, we have seen, these rights are at serious risk when the poorest households are forced to migrate for their livelihood. In chapter seven we have seen that the labour of the poor households is contracted out to capitalist sugar factories. As a result, they were unable to avail themselves of the

²⁵ This issue can be viewed from the perspective of Bourdieu's framework of 'economy of honour', where a balancing act of honour and welfare is done in the pursuit of gaining pensions. I have developed this as a separate paper (Pellissery and Mathew, 2006). However, the space limit does not allow me to enter into that discussion here.

guarantee of employment promised by the state. Poor labour standards in hazardous situations is the only work opportunity for the poorest sections. This lack of enforceable rights in the *private* space (market) of work is one key reason to look for decent work opportunities. On the other hand, the government's guarantee is seen as available only as long as one person belongs to the faction of local elite. This political structuring of the enforceability of rights in the *public* space questions the use of 'citizenship' for dignified human existence.

Migration, forced or not, patterns the social membership in a village. The absence of householders from the village has implications for what rights they could gain. On the one hand, it is important for the householders to find alternative means of livelihood when there are no works in the villages. But, seeking such alternative sources is detrimental to their welfare rights. From an elite's perspective, the political support or vote from the migrated individual or household is absent. This creates a difficult scenario for the households engaged in seasonal migration to bargain for their citizenship rights. Thus, some essential livelihood strategies themselves are against citizenship rights.

We also have seen that politically opposing the local elite can result in unsuccessful claims for IM benefits. Thus, citizenship rights are often associated with the personal power of local leaders. To gain some welfare benefits, these marginal citizens may have to forego much more important rights such as freedom to work for a different employer (other than elite) or to express protest against encroachment on private property etc. As a result, the language of citizenship itself cannot be used by poor people if benefits from the state have to be gained.

In practice, the inclusion and exclusion of households from welfare rights reinforces and produces a hierarchy of citizenship. Thus, without engaging in or using a discourse of citizenship, a relationship with the state welfare provisions generates a hierarchy of less valued and more valued members within the community. This in turns sets informal institutional pathways of claiming citizenship rights.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored the impact of being included or excluded from social protection on individuals. We have noticed that while women are more vulnerable, necessitating more access to social protection, the sphere of elites, brokers and bureaucrats dominated by males tend to deny this access. The position of women in the intra-household bargain is also weak, and their need for social protection is recognised only after that of male within the household. Decisions within the household are male-oriented and often the male agency is able to exploit the female labour through the structure of the state institutions and provisions. However, the cases that compare the situation of women in lower and higher castes show that high caste women are often better placed.

The state's limitations in regulating the private spheres of the legally bound marital relationship creates informal rules for establishing the deservingness for social protection in the case of desertion of women, children's abdication of their responsibility to care for the elderly parents and widowhood.

The practices of differential allocation of social protection on the one hand require people to adopt informal means to gain access to social protection. On the other hand, differential allocation forces the vulnerable households to adopt extreme strategies for their livelihood. These livelihood strategies themselves partially alienate the individuals from social membership and citizenship, creating a vicious circle of exclusion.

Chapter 9

Summary and Conclusions

“Practice has a logic which is not that of logician” (Bourdieu, 1990: 86)

It was evening in Bajgaon. I was about to wind up the day’s visit to the village, almost worn out by the heat of the summer of 2004. Suddenly I heard the noise of quarrel from a nearby house, and as I glanced in that direction, a villager (a neighbour of the quarrelling household) reflexively said: ‘they have some guests’. This answer intrigued me much more than the quarrel itself. Though I later learned the ‘guest’ was the father-in-law of Sahoy (the eldest son of the household), it took a few days, with the help of key informants and interviews with household members to reconstruct the episodes that had led to the quarrel I had witnessed.

Sahoy, a 21-year-old *Mahang* (lower caste) boy, was practically the head of the household, as his father had been debilitated with a heart disease (and bed ridden) for the past two years. His household comprised his parents, a younger brother and two younger sisters. They had no land, and their primary livelihood was casual agricultural labour and the making of brooms. Since the onset of Sahoy’s father’s disease, there has been great economic difficulty in the household. Besides the loss of income from the labour of the head of the household, hospital expenses were an additional burden. Neighbours said that one of the aims of Sahoy’s marriage (one year previously) was to gain a dowry to meet the financial difficulties that the household was facing. The particular episode that had led to his father-in-law coming over to pick a quarrel also stemmed from this economic difficulty. For the hospital expenses of Sahoy’s father, money (Rs.15,000) had been loaned from by a *mukadam* (also a relative) of sugar cane cutting. Sahoy’s wife delivered a baby in October 2003 and three of the household members (Sahoy, his wife plus new born baby and Sahoy’s mother) went to the sugar cane cutting fields (in November 2003) to offset the loan they had taken. Sahoy admitted it was the first time they had gone sugarcane cutting, but they would have to go next year as well, since they were able to offset only Rs.9000 through their labour. The

father-in-law had come to seek an explanation from Sahoy for taking his daughter to the sugar cane fields (without proper post-natal care), despite marrying her with a good dowry. The quarrel took place in March, 2004 when the family had returned after five months of migratory work. When I asked Sahoy whether he had considered taking EGS work, he was furious and replied:

“Right now, one scheme is going on in the village. Nobody from the village is working on that though it is government work. [The work was not EGS, but work carried out by the public works department]. The engineer has brought in outsiders. I am tired of the sugarcane cutting work. But, when I went and explained the situation and asked for a job, the engineer laughed at me saying: ‘You may want job, but does it matter? I am doing my work here. If you want work, ask your villagers’. There is not even one good politician in this village to find out why outsiders are working in our village when poor households go to bed hungry here.”

Sahoy’s case is typical of a poor household in Marathwada area struggling to cope with in ‘income shock’. The variety of means that the household adopts (such as marriage for dowry, pledging labour in advance etc) in this vulnerable situation, and the exclusion of the household from public resources to meet these challenges, calls for economic, political and social analysis. His household requires both *protective* and *promotive* social protection, if it is to cope successfully. The decisions within the household to adopt protective or promotive strategies may be influenced by what is accessible, rather than what is best in the situation. The quality of these decisions may have a long-term effect on the welfare of the household (Dercon, 2002). Despite various programmes in place, when access is sought, the typical response by the State is, as the engineer responded to Sahoy: ‘does your eligibility matter for entitlement?’. This thesis has shown that social identity and the relationship of the claimant to the local elite act as the key determinants of gaining access to public resources. The practices of decision-making at the local level are influenced by the power structure, rather than meeting the policy logic meant to reduce power disparities by providing economic independence at times of vulnerability. Even the household as a unit is not immune from this bargaining. For the vulnerable members like Sahoy’s wife, exploitation of her labour may be

sought by her own husband. The only voice in her favour could be that of her father, whose influence over another household could only be through moral rather than legal claims.

In this final chapter I return to the three research questions raised in the first chapter, and summarise the main findings. Section 9.1.1 discusses the first research question on exclusion from and inclusion in social protection programmes. Section 9.1.2 discusses the relevance for the power and legitimacy of local elites and bureaucrats of differential allocation in welfare benefits. The third section deals with the third research question of how differential allocation has an impact on households. Then, the policy lessons for better implementation of social protection programmes are discussed in Section 9.2.

Apart from these important conclusions, the research also contributes to Indian social science and policy studies in significant ways. The first important progress that this research is making is a process evaluation which has been neglected much in the Indian policy research. A detailed process evaluation in this study has shown that by looking beyond the outcomes measures to evaluate programmes, various mechanisms that create outcome could be examined. Second contribution is the application of social network analysis to the wider poverty reduction research. Through this method how gate keepers control the access to public provisions have been evidenced. Though poverty research in India has widely recognised the importance of local elites, their interrelations have not been documented. This research fills this gap by showing the function of factional politics in development administration. A third advancement of knowledge that this research is making is to contribute towards the discourse on the interaction of local state and private sectors. How the corruption practices of the private sector influences the local state and its provisioning capacity of public welfare is argued in this dissertation.

9.1.1 Exclusion and inclusion for social protection

The state's IM programmes target individuals, who have few other avenues (private funds or networks) to cope with vulnerable situations. However, proving to a bureaucrat the

eligibility for such support by a poor household, almost never takes place without the intervention of a member of the local elite. This brings the local power structure into the picture when the allocation of state resources takes place. The local elites who often dominate the agrarian labour markets and require helpers for household duties, often preferred those claimants who had a relationship with them through these private arenas. This resulted in a large number of ineligible claimants being included. This was comparatively easy to achieve since the 'deservingness' of the claimants was cited as the reason by the local elites when bargaining with the bureaucrats. These claimants were 'engineered for a fit' (Houtzager, 2003) to meet the policy criteria through forged documents to suit the political reasoning of the elite. There are a large number of patrons seeking rent, benefits from petty corruption and patronage from poor people. Therefore, the allocation of public resources is also the subject of competition among the local elites. Claimants belonging to the opposite faction or challenging the power of the elites were excluded from welfare benefits. Such exclusion of apparently eligible claimants was roughly 60%.

In the case of the EGS, the work was available if a village politician was able to gain a project for the village at the end of the process of bargaining at district level. Often this was a matter of political affiliation with the ruling party MLA or that of the district EGS committee. At the work site, informal implementation through labour market managers (*mukadams*) allowed caste and other social identities to take precedence for the inclusion of workers. The inclusion of migrant workers benefited the *mukadam* by providing cheap labour, rather than ensuring welfare rights for these groups. Since the programme is self-selected, the type of work available also facilitated exclusion and inclusion on the basis of social identity. Some social groups, which had greater expertise in digging and shifting earth, easily 'self-selected' in a collusive arrangement with the *mukadam*. While other social groups, especially the Muslims having no exposure to the sort of work offered, were disadvantaged by the very nature of the programme. Large scale exclusion of the poorest households was due to other economic forces, such as the sugar industry, which could absorb cheap unskilled labour by providing lump sum wages in advance. EGS wages reached the household with bureaucratic

delay. The poorest households preferred the advance money that came with conditions of working in hazardous situations in sugar cane fields. Thus, the capitalist economic forces were able to attract the labour from vulnerable households, and deprived them of EGS programmes.

9.1.2 Power and re-distribution

Policy on the documents clearly defines the role of bureaucracy and politicians. The bureaucracy determines eligibility (by checking whether EGS projects meet the criteria, and individual claimants for IM meet the targeting criteria), and politicians determine the entitlement through final decision-making. But the practice of the policy is different because what policy makers assume is a balance in the relationship between bureaucracy and politicians. This study and various other studies on public administration in India (see sections 2.3 and 7.2) have shown how politicians are able to dominate these bureaucratic decisions. Therefore, the underlying social and economic power structures are able to reproduce themselves through the informal implementation process of social protection programmes.

The dominance of local elites in these welfare programmes happens in three ways: i) local people express their needs through politicians; ii) the administration looks to incorporate politicians' ideas for the legitimacy of the state; iii) local politicians are 'prime-movers', and therefore, take the initiative for local development. This creates a 'lock-in' situation as long as the elites are satisfied with the policy, leaving little room for policy change. 'Everyday forms of protest' by the discontented claimants (section 7.3.3) immobilises the potential force for changing the policy. Attempts to improve access by non-state agencies such as NGOs have comparatively little significance, since these attempts do not challenge the power structure itself. On the other hand, local elites through their informal networks are able to weaken the hierarchy of administration itself.

9.1.3 Household strategies and social protection by the state

Informal implementation reinforces the gender bias in the allocation process, creating a tremendous impact on the intra-household allocation of resources at a time of vulnerability. The review of situations of vulnerability (section 8.2) has shown that vulnerability itself is a social construct, and needs are an individual's judgement within the power dynamics of the household. Large numbers of elderly females were living alone, and their social support was minimal. In old age, a male person often had the social support his wife. The life of an elderly woman after the death of her husband, and resource transfer to sons, is difficult, especially due to the attitudes towards widowhood. The life of these elderly single widows, coupled with their longer life-expectancy is one of the key concerns. For the single member elderly households the non-state actors of shopkeepers and neighbours provided credit, influenced by whether these single elderly persons were receiving the state pension.

Care within the household is often demanded from female members, but they could hardly provide care when they require it themselves. This aspect of more female contribution in the care economy was evident in the way pension was used in the household. The females were generally ready to spend the pension money for general household purposes, rather than personal consumption. This was particularly because a male member of the household was key to negotiate with a local elite for the welfare benefit. Thus, the care economy within the household is perpetuated in the pattern of the allocation of public resources.

9.2 Policy suggestions for implementation

I will restrict the policy suggestions to the implementation part of the social protection programme. There could be a number of issues which are more important, such as the financing of the programme or restructuring the programme priorities. This study has not addressed such issues. Whatever way the programme is restructured or financed, implementation issues cannot be ignored. The most important aspect for both programmes to be effective is that the state needs to consider the context within which they operate. But the

wider context of the state and power structure is not considered in the programme design. For example, though the Indian state is widely known as a corrupt rent-seeking state, such discourse is hardly on the agenda when welfare policies are formulated. In the case of the IM programme that was studied in this dissertation, when the village council (in fact the elites) was sought information for the purpose of effective targeting of IM programmes, it was obvious that the existing unequal agrarian relations would affect the programme's effectiveness. However, incorporating an understanding of the local power structure into policy design can be a daunting task. The policy challenge here is how the existing interaction pattern among the actors could be altered to bring the desired outcome the state claims that it wants.

9.2.1 Income enhancement programmes

The EGS has existed for three decades. The popularity of the programme stems from the political backing it has received and the ability of the programme to satisfy the needs of everyone, namely the rural poor, urban residents, landlords, politicians and bureaucrats (Echeverri-Gent, 1988). Its long history had allowed space for various actors to find loopholes to weaken the programme, but at the same time to keep the programme going. There has hardly been any attempt by the state to restructure the programme to make it more relevant for the target groups, and to attract labourers. Rather, labour shortage in the programme has been celebrated by the state, as lack of demand by labour. But, at the same time, a lack of sustainable resources of livelihood is evident from the increasing number of participants in sugar cane cutting through seasonal migration. The following suggestions for implementation could be useful not only for restructuring the EGS, but also for the National Employment Guarantee Scheme that was started in 2006.

1. Decision making over EGS projects is highly biased towards the political parties in power in a particular district. This has two effects. First, good promotive projects that could create assets may be neglected (See chapter six where we have seen good quality projects are rejected). Second, the projects selected, on the basis of patronage, could be of low quality

(e.g. a road that may be washed away by the next rains). In a democracy, development projects are most likely to be chosen because of their politicisation (Bardhan, 1984). A policy mechanism to ensure the utility of these projects other than their political usefulness is necessary. As Schaffer (1984) suggested, the key concern should be to make the responsible persons accountable. In the case of the EGS, the bureaucrat has to be made responsible to ensure asset quality. In a similar way the politicians (particularly the EGS committee) should be held responsible if some villages are excluded from the EGS. Though a legal guarantee is available for labourers, this is not exercised, as a result of the social structure. But, exclusion of the villages from the EGS can be understood even without the exercise of an individual legal guarantee.

2. The state is both the implementing and monitoring agency. This, in effect, can turn the scheme into a tool for legitimizing the state, rather than for the employment of labourers. In practice, a single engineer is officially expected to manage a number of projects, and for practical purposes he relies on local elites for implementation, creating informal ownership of the projects by these elites. On the other hand, if the state takes responsibility for monitoring alone, it could be more efficient.

3. Wages constitute over 60% of the EGS allocation. If this cash could reach labourers directly through bank accounts, directly deposited by the state (like IM), a larger percentage of money allocated for EGS would reach the correct person, without passing through many hands. It would also reduce the delay in payments.

4. Seasonal migration is an important livelihood strategy for poor people. This strategy has not been taken into consideration in the EGS. If the guarantee of a job is to be meaningful, serious thought has to be given to how the poorest sections of the claimants can be incorporated. Simple solutions such as self-selection or means-testing may not be universally successful. In the Indian rural context, tied-labour and informal contracts are important issues in an informal economy that cannot be abolished through legal provision. On the one hand when reliable livelihood strategies are provided by the state, people would not have any

incentives to migrate. On the other hand, labour groups could demand local labour is employed on the scheme (as in the state of Kerala), which could also ensure wage increases.

5. Public works programmes need to enhance the skills and values of people. Otherwise, they tend to be instruments for bringing legitimacy to the state by understating a 'welfare' role rather than actually contributing to citizen empowerment. Some examples of NGOs providing literacy for workers by teaching measurement, money counting etc are good examples. They give some bargaining power to people.

9.2.2 Income maintenance programmes

Sufficient attention has not been paid to the administration of IM programmes. This is partly because the benefit amount is very small, and some studies (Farrington et al, 2003) report that 'rent-seeking' is less likely to occur. This study has shown how the intermediary class (educated middle class young people, landlords etc) is keen on 'patronage', and will not allow access to any welfare benefits without social, economic and political payoff. Further, this study has shown how small welfare benefits have a huge impact on individual welfare, since shopkeepers and other neighbourhood actors provide credits and help depending on the state pension. Therefore, important administrative restructuring is required, for ensuring these rights to vulnerable people.

1. Community targeting is excessively emphasised, and takes place at two levels; first by asking the village council to approve the list of eligible beneficiaries, and second by the decision making process of the SSC. This discretion available to the local elites creates an unpredictable situation for claimants. A more transparent system would be one where the eligibility criteria are explained (through booklets showing pictures, so that illiterate persons can understand) in such a manner that the applicant could judge whether he/she qualifies for the benefits. Thus, by making a close link between eligibility and entitlement, the stigma attached to means-testing can be avoided to a great extent. The SSC should be the body to act on the appeals, and thereby to bring accountability for bureaucratic behaviour. This can

ensure a system where if an ineligible case is included the bureaucrat can be held responsible, and if an eligible claimant is excluded the politician can be held responsible.

2. A more serious issue at the implementation stage is how the documentation to prove eligibility is produced. The affidavits signed to prove age, income and disability create avenues for petty corruption. Thus, the poorest persons are excluded and opportunities for 'brokerage' are high. There is no easy solution to this except to improve the documentation procedures. A poor documentation system affects the poorest households' citizenship rights the most.

3. Representative bureaucracy is often considered as a sufficient condition for better access. It may be a necessary condition for increasing the sensitivity of bureaucrats to client groups. How this representative bureaucracy is capable of interacting with client groups, and their representatives (politicians), is a crucial aspect at the stage of implementation. Post-structural power discourse has been too critical of the idea of 'professionalism of bureaucratic behaviour', and has tended to view all professionalism as taking place within the power discourse. If bureaucracy is to gain legitimacy, professionalism is an essential requirement, as impartial behaviour is one of the characteristics that sets a bureaucracy apart from the politician's behaviour.

4. The impartiality of the bureaucracy could be ensured by introducing 'single window' services. Here bureaucrats do not need to interact with the claimants directly, and the application could be treated on its merits. Simultaneously, citizen advice services by the state (like the institutions of SETU which the Government has started on an experimental basis) are important ways of helping people to complete application forms. This policy suggestion to formalise procedures may be critiqued by post-structuralists, who believe 'informal' procedures to be more efficient. However, these critics do not answer the important question of 'efficiency for whom'.

5. Learning about the delivery problems through the postal system, the government of Maharashtra has started to send monthly IM through banks. This is an important and welcome change. But, any delivery mechanism is in danger of being corrupted, and constant review by

asking the opinion of client groups is necessary. This feedback by claimants is almost never sought in the case of the welfare services. When feedback is taken into account, it contributes not only to improvement of the programmes, but also helps to inculcate a sense of 'rights' among local people.

9.3 Conclusion

It is interesting to observe how the state of Maharashtra, which has an internationally highly regarded 'promotive' social protection programme (EGS), also has a poorly administered 'protective' programme. The EGS started in 1972, and the IM programme was started in 1980. The political backing and popularity that EGS received was never achieved by the IM programme. This is surprising as both programmes were implemented through the same part of the administration (*tehsil*). On the one hand, this shows how programmes are designed and implemented without a coherent policy framework. On the other hand, the success of the EGS as often portrayed by development researchers could be attributed to the positivist research practice of calculating success against the measures and goals that are set by the policy itself. The 'legal guarantee' is considered to be the parameter against which outcome measures are compared. It is the actual *practices* of the policy processes that goes unnoticed resulting in a policy deficit or success, which this study has attempted to unravel. Often evaluation of state programmes is carried out without looking at the functionally equivalent non-state programmes (e.g. informal opportunities). This study has shown that when state programmes are studied along side non-state programmes, a view of the state programmes as 'social constructs' of the wider power structures in the society can be observed.

**Part II:
References and
Appendices**

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Appendix 1 Profile of the key informants

The key informants were carefully chosen at various stages of the study. The main criterion for selection was their knowledgeability about the community and their interest to share the information frankly with the researcher. This selection was through a snowball process, and was primarily based on the initial interaction with the elites and young persons in the community. Care was taken to select the key informants from the following three categories:

- 1) Village officials including village council president, NGO worker, Anganwadi (women and child health care centre) teachers, health workers, Mahila Mandal (women's organisations) president, school teachers, village level worker (*Gram sevak*), and *talatti*.
- 2) Informed persons who by their profession interacted with a large number of people from the village and possessed both information and understanding about community affairs. This group included the shopkeepers, landlords who employ large number of workers, students who attend colleges, doctors in the village, postman, and retired teachers from the village.
- 3) Beneficiaries from different SP programmes from the village.

The panel of key-informants in Saralgaon was of 19 members, and in Bajgaon there were 29 members

The socio-economic background of key informants was only of secondary importance. The ability of the respondents to provide useful information to the research was the criterion to select them. However, it is useful to understand that the informants came from all castes, class, professions and walks of life, to realise that the identification of elites was done by giving a fair chance for everyone. Table A1 shows the age structure of the respondents.

Table A1 Age of the key informants

	Saralgaon (n=19)	Bajgaon (n=29)
Mean	39.1	42.1
Max	66	68
Minimum	19	21
S.D	14.5	15.8

A major deficiency was that females were not sufficiently represented among key informants. There were only four females from Saralgaon and five females from Bajgaon among the key informants. The main reason for this is that the 'identification of elites' was conducted as the first part of the fieldwork. Rapport with the community was being established and it was a time when our credibility was being tested by the community. At the

start, approaching females (both of us were male) to obtain information would not be appreciated by the community for cultural reasons. Therefore, the respondents from females constituted mostly those females who were officials in the community such as managers of child care centres or old women who were beneficiaries of IM. However, I am confident this has not resulted in a failure to identify female elites. The females who listed the names of elites, did not wish to name other females as elites. The females who received nominations as elites were nominated by males.

Table A2 indicates there were respondents from all professions. However, there were more people from farm wage workers because it was the largest working class category in the village. However, these respondents were not selected by a systematic stratified sampling process. The purpose was to gain information from the person who was able to provide useful information.

Table A2 Main job of the key informants

	Saralgaon (n=19)	Bajgaon (n=29)
Farm wage labourer	6	8
Office/salaried class	4	8
Own farm	2	2
Shop keeper	2	4
Skilled Labour	3	3
Student	2	4

Table A3 and table A4 respectively provide information on the religion and caste of the respondents. As above, I tried to select informants representatively from the communities.

Table A3 Religion of respondents

	Saralgaon (n=19)	Bajgaon (n=29)
Hindu	17	24
Muslim	2	5

Table A4 Caste of the respondents

	Saralgaon (n=19)	Bajgaon (n=29)
Open (Higher castes)	5	10
OBC (Other backward Classes)	5	5
SC (Scheduled Caste)	6	12
ST (Scheduled Tribe)	3	2

The difference in total number of key informants is due to differences in the total population in the two communities. These numbers are sufficient to conduct the 'reputation technique' to identify elites (Powers, 2004).

Appendix 2

A note on reputation technique for identifying elites

This note aims to clarify the origins of the reputation technique and its application in Indian and international contexts. Later, I will explain how the reputation technique generated the names of various village notables, and how the ‘elites’ were decided, using a score analysis.

Origin and application

‘Reputation technique’ is a name-generating survey to identify who the respondent thinks has influence in the community. The technique has its origin in Floyd Hunter’s (1953) data collection method in the research on the leadership in Atlanta, Georgia. He asked a panel of community informants to name the most influential person from the point view of the ability to lead others (see also Knoke, 1990). This method underwent further revisions (Lasswell, 1963; Dahl, 1961; and Polsby, 1963), and there are many other methods of identifying elites, none of them is as comprehensive as the reputation method. Other methods of identifying elites are ‘positional identification’, ‘issue participation’ and ‘the ecological approach’. The last two methods are not effective and are not much used in empirical research, though they are useful for analytical purposes. A number of studies (Broomfield, 1968; Sirsikar, 1970; Carter, 1974; Rosenthal, 1977; Narain *et al*, 1976) have used the positional approach for identification, assuming that mere holding of a position makes the elite powerful. The positional approach does not consider sources of power other than the overt position. As Dahl (1965:52) writes, ‘the positional approach reveals only the king and not the kingmaker’. This was very relevant in the context of Bajgaon and Saralgaon where village councils and other official positions were filled by lower castes because of government regulation, and these officials had to act as pawns in the hands of the elites whom I identified in the study. Further, the reputation technique is able to reveal the networking mechanisms within the power relations of the community (Singh, 1988). The technique has been used successfully both in India (Lal, 1974; Singh, 1988; Mitra, 1992) and other countries in the study of elites (Hunter, 1953, Dahl, 1961, Polsby, 1976; see Singh, 1988 for a detailed list of studies in various other countries).

Application of reputation technique in this study

During this study the reputation technique question was asked of the key informants listed in Appendix 1. The question was slightly modified to suit the aim of this research. The question was elaborated in the following way: ‘Who do you think in your village is capable of

deciding things in matters of the community concern, and whom do you approach for help'¹. This was particularly because while a person could be an elite, he/she may not be approachable and helpful and less relevant for social protection. Earlier studies on community power asking only the first part of the question (who is capable to decide on matters of community concern) were later criticized because the persons who are capable may not take an interest or participate on the issues of community concern. Therefore, the modification that was made in this research was important to include the perspective of 'issue participation' of reputation technique.

While, the respondents were nominating the names of the elites, we asked why a person was an elite, or why they thought him to be so. We did this only when new names came up. This was to learn about the community and elites in particular on the one hand, and on the other hand check whether the nomination was for personal reasons. Once, the list was produced and the respondent stated he can think no more 'elites', we asked him/her to rank the persons in the list from the most powerful person to the least powerful person. We marked them with a different coloured pen like first rank, second rank third rank and so on. Normally these sessions lasted 30 minutes-40 minutes.

One major problem we came across during this interview was due to the personal characters of each respondent. Some were very frank and talkative. They came up with a large number of nominations such as 25 persons. Some others were shy and hesitant to take give other names. They would stop after giving three names and say 'the village is good; everyone helps each other'. In the first case we had to check them, asking why she/he was suggesting a person's name. The second group of persons we had to encourage by helping him/her to think more clearly as explained above.

But many of the respondents (especially those who were educated and took a critical view of what happened in their community) were reluctant to nominate many of the community members as elites. In Bajgaon the nominations ranged between two to twenty two names, the mode being eight nominations (mean 9.9; SD: 5.3). In total 286 nominations were

¹We had to ask the question in different ways to elicit answers, without giving directions. Often respondents suggested answers like 'village council president', 'govt officials' and then they stopped. On further perusal and repetition of the question respondents came up with the names of the important people. Therefore, asking the question in different ways was important to keep the respondents thinking. Especially the clause of whom they approached for help was difficult. People approach different people for different needs such as economic, social support, recommendation for jobs or writing application etc. Different names came out each time the initial question was reiterated. We also elicited an interest in the discussion from the respondent with different suggestions. For example we would ask him/her to suggest elites particularly among social groups such as within caste or particularly for females or for religious groups. But we made sure we made these suggestions to all the key informants. This was particularly useful for two reasons: on the one hand it kept discussion going, on the other hand the respondent was able to think about the possibility of nominating an elite in a wide variety of options. In particular we tried to avoid the local term '*prathishtith*' (prestigious) while asking to identify the elites (unlike Singh, 1988). Often, high castes are associated with the term '*prathishtith*'. As a matter of fact, I identified a number of lower caste persons.

received, and a total of 47 names came up. In Saralgaon the nominations ranged between four to fourteen, the mode being eleven nominations (mean 11; SD: 2.68). A total of 171 nominations were received, and a total of 30 names came up.

Many of the nominations were the names of the elites who were personally important to the respondent or to a very small part of the community. Such persons did not receive more than one nomination. There were also some self nominations.² Therefore, it was necessary to operate a cut off for nominations to accept a person as elite of the community. I put it at five, but there is no consensus among the users of reputation technique on this score. The key criterion is to exclude those nominations that may be biased by the key informant's personal tastes.³ Therefore, any name which came up more than five times was considered to be an elite. Thus, it is interesting to note that though there were three female names (in Bajgaon) and one (in Saralgaon) in the list of nominees, in the final list of elites they did not appear as they did not receive five nominations. Only those persons who have received more than five nominations are referred as elites in this study, and the other important persons are referred as 'notables'. The number of nominations is used along with other properties to decide who is powerful in the community in Chapter Five.

² However, except in two cases they were not nominated by other members of the community. So, self nominations are not included in the final score analysis to determine who are elites.

³ The research also had planned to consider the ranking received as an measure to decide who are elites. However, ranking could not be used. Because a good number of respondents said that 'it is impossible to rank the elites since their power and important lies on different occasions on different matters'. However more than half of the respondents were able to make some ranking. They were ready to rank up to seven elites. Then respondents definitely did not want to rank further. This also shows how community power is diffused among various elites, and why networking among elites may be essential to gain power. This lack of clear cut hierarchical structure of power is an important stepping stone for further investigations.

Appendix 3

Interview schedule (original in Marathi)

(These elite interviews, wherever possible, are to be recorded electronically. About two sittings of one hour each is expected with each elite to complete the schedule; all questions are not relevant to all the elites. While some questions have to be deeply investigated with market elite, other questions may have to be deeply investigated with official elites, who may be administering a programme. The objective of the question is written in the column on the right side. That is helpful to probe the question more meaningfully in line with the research questions.)

Introduction

“I am a university student, and I am studying the social security arrangements used by the people in the village. Therefore, I am collecting information from the beneficiaries as well as social security providers. When I talked to various people in the village, taluka, and district, I was told that you are an elite in this locality and you help people in need. In fact, people have suggested a list of people, which I will shortly show you, who are helpful in the locality. I am meeting all the people and going to ask similar questions to them as well. The purpose of seeking a list was not to identify the individuals, rather, it was to identify the process of help they receive. In this interview as well, my interest is not to know whom you helped (which individual you helped and why), rather, my interest is to know the process of help people receive and to know the social security arrangements available to them. Besides, the information provided here will be used only for research purpose. Your name will never be written anywhere and nobody will be able to identify that you told me these facts. Do you have any questions at this stage?”

1.1 Self-perception

1.1) At the outset let me ask why did the people consider you as an important person with regard to social security arrangements in the village?	<i>Introductory question and understanding self-perception of elite.</i>
1.2) How long have you been helping people in this way?	<i>Understanding self-perception of elite.</i>
1.3) How did you begin this? What is your motivation to continue this?	<i>For money lenders, NGO leaders to know their overt intentions. Probe covert intentions at later questions</i>

1.4) How do other people generally think about you? What is the benefit for you of helping people?	<i>Leading question to next section</i>
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2. Perception about other agencies implementing social security

2.1) You would be knowing that people approach other institutions and persons for their social security needs. Are you aware of any of them in the village/taluka/district? If so, which are they?	<i>The idea is to explore which institutions the elite considers (and to compare with the people's perception) as social security provision. Some of the sources may be termed as exploitative or not helping people in need.</i>
2.2) Which agency (or who) in your opinion should execute (planning, selection of beneficiaries and implementation) of income enhancement activities (providing employment for the poor people) in your community? (prompt: village panchayath, taluka panchayath samiti, zilla parishad, state government, central government, voluntary organisations, market) Is there any disadvantage or benefit of this agency running this programme? If so, what is that?	<i>These two questions aim to explore to which agency the elite is more close to, and which agency allows more... ..flexibility to the elite for his mode of provisioning.</i>
2.3) Which agency (or who) in your opinion should execute (planning, selection of beneficiaries and implementation) of income maintenance activities (old age pension, maternity benefit and benefit after the death of primary breadwinner) in your community? And why is the benefit or disadvantage of this agency running this programme? (prompt: village panchayath, taluka panchayath samiti, zilla parishad, state government, central government, voluntary organisations, market)	

<p>2.4) Social security programmes are being provided in other village and talukas. But it is general experience that some villages do better than others and they reach the really needy people. Comparing your village with others would you say that it has done much better than others, somewhat better than others or worse than others?</p> <p>a) If says 'much better', ask what it is due to?</p> <p>b) If says 'worse' than others, ask why has it performed so badly?</p>	<p><i>This allows exploring of the reasons for differential allocation in the particular locality and particular local situation as perceived by the elite.</i></p>
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3. Type of help given

<p>3.1) Generally for what type of need do people approach you? (probe the frequency and type of people).</p> <p>3.1.1) Do they people usually seek cash or kind?</p> <p>3.1.2) What kind of people do you give loans to? (probe class and caste) Who approaches you from the household (prompt: head of HH, female or male, the needy person or relative, your relationship to this person)</p> <p>3.1.3) Do people come repeatedly? If so, in which season and for what purpose do people come chronically?</p> <p>3.1.4) If people come to you to get job, what kind of job do they expect you to provide? (agricultural job, job in town or your shop, or household work, or any other)</p> <p>3.1.5) If people seek help to get job, why do they come to you? (Because they have no appropriate skills to obtain jobs for themselves; they have no other relations to get jobs, their skills are not suitable for jobs, or other reasons)</p>	<p><i>Probe whether social security needs for income enhancement (e.g. bribe to get a job or to buy) or income maintenance (e.g. to buy medicine for old person or for hospital charges during delivery) is often aimed by people.</i></p> <p><i>3.1.3 is aimed at understanding the need intensity as perceived by the elite.</i></p>
<p>3.2) Why do they come to you?</p> <p>Because they want help from you? Or they know you will give them a recommendation to get help from another person or institution?</p>	<p><i>Is the elite seen as a link or as the provider?</i></p> <p><i>This also leads to next set of questions.</i></p>

Specific questions

There are four types of important elites, identified when preparing this schedule (money lenders including shop keepers, landlords, state officials and NGO officials. Political elite may be doing one of the above roles, if not restrict to the above set of questions). The specific questions asked to each type of elite differ substantively from one another.

4. Specific to moneylenders

<p>4.1) What are the occasions when people approach you for help? (prompt: for investment such as farming, education or a job, or when they have emergency needs such as hospital treatment or purchase of medicines they need money. Usually does people approach you for loan or grant?</p>	<p><i>Types of needs Nature of loan and interest</i></p>
<p>4.2) If grant, How often do you give grants? What amount and to whom?</p>	
<p>4.3) Are the people to whom you give charity/grant related to you? What work do they do for you? How long has this existed? How exactly does it operate and what is the deal between you both? Is it a household serving you or just one individual from the household? If a household how many in the household? 4.4) Who approached you in this relationship? The client or someone who recommended the client to you or you went out of your way and offered your help?</p>	<p><i>Probe to understand any exploitative relations existing such as 'bonded labour'.</i></p>
<p>4.5) If a loan, What is the criterion for giving loans? (Probe to find out the eligibility of the needy person such as understanding the need or ability to repay the loan.)</p>	<p><i>Informal eligibility criteria, and differential social worth of individuals.</i></p>
<p>4.6) Usually when you refuse to give loans what do you say? 4.7) What is the refusal rate? (probe which class or caste or group of people are often refused and the reasons) (Probe as to how things are said such as "no money to loan now" or does he get angry with the clients. This can be verified by talking to beneficiaries.)</p>	<p><i>Communication patterns.</i></p>

4.8) If you refuse, do they come back with the recommendation of anyone else to press their case for a loan? With whom (if any body) do they come to press their case? Do you give loans when they come again? (because of the guarantee of the recommender?)	<i>Links of the elites with elite persons of the community.</i>
4.9) When you refuse, do you ask them to approach/apply to income maintenance programme of the government or some schemes of help by NGOs? Are you aware of any of these schemes?	<i>Link of money lender to govt and non-govt bodies to enhance their powerbase.</i>
4.10) If you recommend them for those schemes, who are the contact persons in those bodies (village council and NGO)?	
4.11) If you ask them to mortgage things what do people usually mortgage? (prompt: valuables like gold, silver, ration card, land/house ownership papers)	<i>Probe what he does with mortgaged goods. It is a very sensitive issue since the safety of goods and illegalities may be involved.</i>
4.12) If a person comes in dire circumstances do you charge him less interest? How much less? What is the normal interest for general purposes? What according to you is dire circumstances? And what is the interest charged in those circumstances?	<i>The differential interest rates are related not only to the need but also to the kind of people and relationships. That has to be probed here.</i>
4.13) Generally how long do people take to repay loans? Usually if people fail to repay in time what do you do? (prompt: send reminder (how), press through guarantor or other influential person, ask them to do some job for you (if so, what job)?	
4.14) Have you come across any problems with officials or people in the village (prompt: village government, police, voluntary organisations) since you give loans? What kind of problems and how did you handle them?	<i>This will be useful to understand how links are used by the elite.</i>

5. Specific to landlords

<p>5.1) What are the agricultural products you have on your land?</p> <p>5.2) How much land does he own? Where (in the same village or different villages?) In his own name or in someone else's name. Is it land on which family has right?</p> <p>5.3) In what season do you produce what and how many crops per year?</p>	<p><i>Opening question in a non-threatening manner. But the aim is to find out the economic power of the person.</i></p>
<p>5.4) Who generally works on the land? Relatives or paid employees?</p> <p>5.5) Generally, how many paid employee are needed to work?</p> <p>5.6) What is the pay (cash or kind)? How much is the pay per day? Is it paid daily, weekly or monthly? How, where and to whom is it paid?</p>	<p><i>Probe specially if there are any employees who are permanently placed on the land with payment or kind (such as a thatched house) as care takers.</i></p>
<p>5.7) Do you have the same employees every year? How many employees 'stick with' you or come each year?</p>	<p><i>Regular farm workers</i></p>
<p>5.8) Do you have to go and ask people to work on your land or do they come in search of a job on your land? Who approaches you for a job? (the one who needs a job or his/her relative or someone else – what is your relation to this person).</p>	<p><i>Prestige as an employer, possibility of reduced payment for work.</i></p>
<p>5.9) When some one approaches you for work, what is your criterion for selection? (prompt: he should be from same village, he should be of the same class or caste or socially acceptable, your work should get done, expertise of the person, relationship to be maintained with the person recommending employee, to help the person since you know that person is in dire circumstances)</p>	<p><i>Use of munim (managers) in recruiting daily wagers and RFWs.</i></p>
<p>5.10) Do you refuse to give work to people? What reason do you give for refusing? What is the refusal rate?</p>	
<p>5.11) If you refuse to give a job in your land, do you ask them to apply for EGS or to approach or NGO?</p>	<p><i>Link of landlord with government and non-government schemes to supplement his power base.</i></p>
<p>5.12) Do you recommend him/her to EGS or NGO through the village council? Who is the link person on the village council or NGO?</p>	

5.10) Normally, do people who work on your land request credit for their needs or for the education of their children? If you give credit to them what is the interest charge? Does that money have to be paid back in cash or do you deduct it from 'salary'?	
5.11) Does the old people who worked on your land or your parents' land still approach you for help in terms of money or other help? What kind of needs do they approach you for (a job, money etc) and what do you do?	<i>'Informal pension system'</i>

6. Specific to government officials

6.1) Place from where the official come? Is he local? Whether he/she knows local language/dialect?	<i>An opening question. But important since it will help to identify his characteristics</i>
6.2) His position and jobs: How did he/she get the job? How much salary does he/she have? How much did it cost to get the job?	
6.3) What are your specific duties with regard to social security (and other programmes) under your control?	
6.4) Who normally approaches you for benefit? (probe as to whether the beneficiaries approach directly, or through middle men; if middlemen the relationship between middlemen and the official, middlemen and the beneficiary).	
6.5) Are you in a position to refuse ineligible people? If so, how do you manage to do this? What reasons do you give? What is the refusal rate?	<i>The screening process</i>
6.6) Are you in a position to encourage eligible people? If so, how?	
6.7) On what grounds do you refuse eligible people?	
6.8) How many cases do you deal with per month? What proportion of applications are incomplete when they arrive at your office?	<i>Bureaucrats' work pressure and how they handle it.</i>
6.9) Do you have to ration people's access to the scheme? Give details of how you ration? (prompt, 'first come first served', 'most needy', 'to those quarters from where more pressure comes')	<i>How informal eligibility rules are created.</i>

6.10) When you are not able to provide benefit, do you explain to them other means of social security? What are they?	<i>Probe whether those alternative mechanisms include market and NGO</i>
6.11) Do you personally recommend them to get any of those benefits? Who is your link for those sources	
6.12) How often are you inspected? By whom?	<i>Supervision of street-level bureaucrats</i>
6.11) What do the inspectors do on their inspection?	
6.13) Are you given positive incentives to reach the really needy people through the scheme? How? Any negative incentives if you provide benefit to ineligible people? How?	
6.14) What kind of problems are there with salary? (prompt: delay etc) Do you have to pay commissions out of your salary? Who gets those commissions? How does the system of paying commission operate?	<i>Aims to identify the possibilities and rationalization for bribe</i>
6.15) What are the problems you face with the planning, and implementation of the scheme in the villages?	<i>A closing open ended question</i>

7. Specific question to NGO officials

7.1) On the origin of the NGO; whether it has a local basis, types of programmes it runs, its funding sources, its image.	<i>An opening question. But important since it will help to identify his characteristics</i>
7.2) Place from where the NGO person comes? Is he/she local? Whether he/she knows local language/dialect?	
7.3) His position and jobs: How did he/she get the job? How much salary does he/she have? How much did it cost to get the job?	
7.4) What are your specific duties with regard to social security (and other programmes) under your purview?	
7.5) Normally who approaches you for benefit? (probe as to whether beneficiaries approach directly, or through middle men; if middlemen the relationship between middlemen and the official, middlemen and the beneficiary).	
7.6) Are you in a position to refuse ineligible people? If so, how do you manage to do this? What reason do you give? What is the refusal rate?	<i>The screening process</i>

7.7) Are you in a position to encourage eligible people? If so, how?	
7.8) On what grounds do you refuse eligible people?	
7.9) How many people approach you per month for benefits? How many cases do you deal per month? What proportion of application are incomplete when they arrive at your office?	
7.10) Do you have to ration people's access to the scheme? Give details of how you ration? (prompt, first come first served, most needy, to those quarters from where more pressure comes)	
7.11) When you are not able to provide benefit, do you explain other means of social security? What are they?	<i>Probe whether those alternative mechanisms include market and state</i>
7.12) Do you personally recommend them to get any of those benefits? Who is your link for those sources	
7.13) Who are your colleagues? How do you get along with them? How far do you and your colleagues share the NGO's ideology? How often are you inspected? By whom?	<i>Sharing ideology of NGO by official</i>
7.14) What do the inspectors do on their inspection?	<i>Supervision of street-level bureaucrats</i>
7.15) Are you given positive incentives to reach the really needy people through the scheme? How? Negative incentives if you provide benefits to ineligible? How?	
7.16) What kind of problems are there with salary? (prompt: delay etc) Do you have to pay commissions out of your salary? Who gets those commissions? How does the system of paying commission operate?	<i>Aims to identify the possibilities and rationalization for bribe</i>
7.17) What kind of difficulties are faced by you from the community? What kind of co-operation is availed from community?	
7.18) What are the problems you face with the planning, implementation of the scheme in the villages?	<i>A closing open ended question</i>

8. Elite-elite linkage

8.1) If you are not able to provide help (job or cash) do you recommend them to get help from other sources? If yes, you do recommend them for help from other source, which is the usually recommended source? (Ask for instances or examples to identify the pattern of recommendation).	<i>The aim is to identify to which agency (state, market or NGO) he recommends and where his links lie. Obviously, the</i>
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<p>8.1.1) What is your relationship to that source to make such recommendation?</p> <p>8.1.2) Do people know your relationship to that source?</p> <p>8.1.3) Has there been instances when you have recommended to that source previously and help has been declined? Yes/No</p> <p>8.1.4) If yes, what have you done in such circumstances? (personally went and persuaded; there has been conflict with that source, - if conflict, nature of conflict)</p>	<p><i>elite will recommend some people to some sources, and some other people to some other source. This should be probed to identify which class, which caste people are recommended to which source and if he has no links with such sources, what he does.</i></p>
<p>8.2) Identify from this list whom you often relate to and for what reason.</p>	<p><i>This helps to map the links among elites</i></p>
<p>8.3) What do other leaders expect in return (or demand in return) for their help?</p>	<p><i>This is to understand whether power is exercised in a mutual way.</i></p>
<p>8.4) Generally speaking which of the leaders have been consistently helpful? (prompt: village leaders, taluka leaders, district leaders, NGO leaders, business people)</p>	<p><i>The aim is to understand the sector-wise linkage. Check reliability of the answer to 8.2</i></p>
<p>8.5) How often do you relate to state officials like the village level worker or departmental officials?</p> <p>8.5.1) At what level are these officials (village, taluka or district)?</p> <p>8.5.2) Do you relate with them in personal and social occasions? Do they come your home for personal or social purposes?</p> <p>8.5.3) Do you relate to them directly to deal with applications for Income maintenance and income generation? Or do you approach them through some other source?</p> <p>8.5.4) Do you think state officials are biased towards some particular group in the village (religious, class or caste) when making provisions of social security?</p> <p>8.5.5) If yes, is this due to political influence from this particular group? Who is the leader of such a group?</p>	<p><i>This is aimed to understand how the state officials (who are not in the list of elites) are approached and influenced to make social security provisions in favour of the elites' suggestions).</i></p> <p><i>Probe also, as necessary, to identify the means used to influence the state officials (eg. money, threat or other illegal or immoral</i></p>

8.5.6) Has there been any conflict with state officials when they have denied or went against the demands of a local group or its leaders? What has been the nature of this conflict? Any cases that have been filed? If yes, where, when and who?	<i>means)</i>
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9.0 Promoting civil society or market or state linkages

9.1) Have you encouraged or established any self-help groups or NGOs in the village? If so, what are their activities and how many people in the group? When was it began and who is the formal leader of it, and what kind of people (caste, class) constitute it?
9.2) If you have not established anything, have you tried or wanted to do so, but did not succeed? What were the reasons for failure?
9.3) Have you encouraged or established Life Insurance Corporation group insurance schemes in the village? If so, how many people benefit from the group? When was it began and who is the formal leader and what kind of people (caste, class) constitute it?
9.4) If you have not established any such group, are you aware of the group insurance scheme? Or have you tried or wanted to establish one, but did not succeed? What were the reasons for failure?
9.5) Do you have personal insurance or any other pension? From where do you get it? Have you encouraged anyone in the village to take out personal insurance? Who and why? How are you related to that person?

10. Voting preferences

10.1) Elections are coming next year. Will you vote in the election? Yes/No	<i>Political involvement</i>
10.2) Do you generally vote at village elections/panchayat samiti elections/assembly elections/general elections?	<i>Power source, and party affiliation and its borders</i>
10.3) Which party will you vote for? Why?	<i>Affiliation and shifting</i>
10.4) How long have you supported this party? If you have changed why?	<i>affiliation will explain the</i>
10.5) How do you participate in campaigning during the election? (This information can be used on scale to rate the involvement with party based political process and linkages (probe whether the following methods are used: give a vehicle, give money, I myself go to persuade people to vote for candidate...other)	<i>nature of power source, conflicts and identification with groups</i>

Appendix 4

Respondents of in depth interview

I Elite Interviews:

20 elites from Bajgaon

16 elites from Saralgaon

II Stakeholder interviewees:

2 Junior Engineers (JE)

1 Senior Engineer

2 State level officials doing various activities related to income maintenance programme

1 District collector

2 Deputy district collectors

1 EGS collector

1 Sub divisional Magistrate

2 *Tehsildars* at *tehsil* level

1 Tehsildar in charge of income maintenance programme at district level

7 Officials below the rank of tehsildar (doing various activities related to income maintenance programme) at tehsil level

3 Officials below the rank of tehsildar (doing various activities related to EGS programme) at tehsil level

2 Naib tehsildar (in charge of social security programmes)

2 President of social security committee at tehsil level

5 members of social security committee at tehsil level

2 Village level workers

2 Talattis

2 Village council secretaries/accountants

1 Circle officer (above the rank of *talatti* in charge of group of a villages)

6 Anganwadi teachers

2 Mahilamandal (Women's organisations) leaders

2 School teachers

2 Journalists

2 EGS committee members at state level appointed from civil society

- 2 EGS committee members at tehsil level
- 5 Income maintenance committee at tehsil level
- 2 Life Insurance of India Corporation's agents
- 6 Writers of application forms
- 8 Photocopying shopkeepers specialising in social security form sale
- 1 President of Labourer's trade union
- 8 Mukadams
- 3 NGO heads/officials operating in the locality
- 1 Ex-member of Legislative assembly
- 4 Village council presidents (surpanch)
- 3 Village council members

Appendix 5

Survey instruments:

(Household Information, Income Maintenance Survey, EGS survey; Maternity Benefit Survey and National Family Benefit Scheme Survey)

Household information

1. Background information

1.1 Religion:

1.2 Caste:

1.3. Are you living as a joint family? Yes/No

1.4 If yes, how many families? (Calculate grandparents as one family; calculate unmarried (after 25 – average age of marriage in the village) or divorced/separate persons as one family):

1.5. Is the family listed in the BPL list: Yes/No

2. People of your home (a family within the joint family) –tick the respondent

S. No.	Relation-status (eg. mother, son, self)	Sex	Age	Disability*	Main activity#

* Blind = 1, deaf/dumb = 2, mentally challenged = 3, Hand related = 4, leg related = 5,

Others = specify. (If disability is part of ageing process mark: A)

Student = 1, Daily wage in farm = 2, Daily wage in non-farm= 3, Business = 4 specify,

Annual or monthly wage in farm = 5, Annual or monthly wage in non-farm = 6, Unable

to work = 7, Own farm =8, Sugarcane cutting =9

3.1 How long have you live in this village:

3. 2 Your schooling

a) Has not gone to school

b) Less than 4th std

c) 5th - 7th std.

d) 8th above to \ 10th grade failed

e) 10th grade passed but less than 12th grade

f) 12th grade passed

g) Above 12th grade

h) Special training (specify).....

3.3 Your education

- a) Illiterate
- b) Can read
- c) Can read and write

3.4 Are you/any one from home/from joint family (tick the appropriate) involved in any organisation (prompt: social club, political party, temple board, self-help group, multi-purpose society)

3.5 Are you/any one from home/from joint family (tick appropriate) involved with any of the govt programmes/institutions (to understand the channels of informal influence) (prompt: Primary Health Centre, village panchayat, revenue office, bank)

4. Assets and sources of income

4.1 Do you own a house: Yes/No

4.2 If yes, any other persons paying rent and living in your house? Yes/No

4.3 If yes, how much rent per month:

4.4 If no, the present place where I live is :

- a) It is a free space given by a relative
- b) It is a free space given by an ex-employer
- c) It is a free space given by the present employer
- d) It is a free space given by someone else
- e) I pay rent of Rs. per month.
- f) Other: specify:

4.5 Nature of house:

- a) Pucca b) Semi-Pucca c) Kutcha

4.6 Note on the nature of dwelling place.....

4.7 Note on the clothing (tidy, shabby, seems to be spare clothing or not).....

4.8 Who brings water.....

4.9 Who cooks.....

4.10 Do you own land/farm: Yes/No

4.11 If yes, how many acres:

4.12 Is the land irrigated? Yes/No

4.13 If yes, how many acres of land are irrigated:

4.14 During the last year what were your cultivations and how much:

Jowar:

Wheat

Bajri

Sugarcane

Cotton:

.....

.....:

4.15. If no land,

a) I never had land/did not receive land as inheritance

b) I recently sold off the land

c) I do sharecropping on other land

If b), the purpose of selling off the land:

If c), what is your profit per year from share cropping:

4.16 Do you have any animal husbandary? Yes/No

4.17 If yes, how many and what kind? (e.g. Goats –5)

1.

2.

3.

4.

4.18 Are you involved in traditional craft/job for income/earning? Yes/No

4.19 If yes, reasons to quit:

Borrowing pattern

5.1 Are you a member of a co-operative society? Yes/No

5.2 If yes, have you received any loans? Yes/No

5.3 Have you received any loan from a bank? Yes/No

5.4 If yes, in which year and for what purpose?.....

5.5 Were you able to return the loan from the bank? Yes/No

5.6 Do you have to borrow money from anywhere on a regular basis? Yes/No/Yes, but no one gives a loan.

5.7 If yes, from whom (relationship to that person; identify whether it is a professional moneylender).....

5.8 Do you have to get credit from grocery shops regularly? Yes/No

5.9 If yes, upto how much credit does he/she give you?

5.10 Give the name of type of shops from whom you often take credit (e.g. grocery)

1.

2.

3.

5.11 Are you/have you been working for an employer regularly? Yes/No

5.12 If yes, who is the employer?.....

5.13 Do you get advances/credit from an employer at time of need? No/Yes

5.14 Do you have debts from private sources? Yes/No

5.15 If yes, how much?

5.16 What was the purpose of borrowing?

5.17 And how long has been this debt?

5.18 Who helps you generally at a time of difficulties?

5.19 Who lives in your immediate neighbourhood? (caste, religion, economic class)

.....

5.20 Do you approach any of them when you need any kind of help? Yes/No

5.21 If no, why?.....

6. Has any of the following benefits been received or receiving (currently):

	Year or period received	Comments (eg. Stopped since when)
Housing scheme		
Pension from govt		
Ration of food from govt		
Bank loan (IRDP)		
National Family benefit		
Maternity benefit		
Concession ticket for bus		
NGO benefit		
Private Insurance		

7. Perception about differential allocation and response (open ended)

7.10 There may not be enough money to meet everyone’s need at the village panchayat (government). In that case, the village panchayat may ration its resources. Whom do you think get the panchayat’s preference in those situations?

(Prompt if no answer is coming: Leaders, Relatives of leaders, Friends of leaders, Friends of Govt officials, High caste (other castes), Those who are needy, Those who pay bribes)

.....

7.11 Has anyone tried to change this situation in the village? Yes/No

7.12 If yes, what did they do?

7.13 If no, will this situation be changed? Yes/No

7.14 If yes, what kind of action is required for change?

7.15 If no, why would it not change?

7.16 Often NGOs or self-help groups run with small funds and all the needs of all their members are not met. In that case, NGO may ration its resources. Whom do you think get NGO’s preference in those situations?

(same sub-questions as above 7.11 to 7.15 to lead the discussions)

7.17 Often, lending by the bank or by the village money lenders is given only to a few. In such situations, who get the preference of these private agencies?

(same sub-questions as above 7.11 to 7.15 to lead the discussions)

7.18 To whom do moneylenders prefer to provide credit?

(same sub-questions as above 7.11 to 7.15 to lead the discussions)

Who provided this information?

Who else was present?

Income maintenance survey

1.1 Details of children

Children (male/female)	Do they live (lives with/in same village/different village/ city)	Type of employment

1.2 Have you ever applied for *pagar* (local term of pension) ? Yes/No

If yes, continue (section B)

If no, go to section D

Section B

2. Making the application

2.1 How did you come to know about the scheme?

- a) Someone told me
- b) Everyone in the village knows about it and I applied for benefit
- c) Other (specify).....

2.2 If a), who (relationship to that person or status of the person in the community) told you about this scheme?:.....

2.3 Who (relational data as above) helped you to complete modalities (such as completing application form)?.....

2.4 How much was your total expenses in making an application?.....(bribes to be paid to various officials for making affidavits or to influential persons in the community, brokers and travelling charges for them; collect break-downs wherever possible)

2.5 Who in the household made the claim and ran the errands to obtain the benefit?.....

2.6 What was the main reason to claim benefit?

- a) Others in the village benefit from the scheme
- b) Husband/main earner in the household died
- c) Illness/disability
- d) Too old to work

- e) Separation/divorce/end of a relationship with husband
- f) Children left home after marriage
- g) Income from other sources was insufficient to meet needs
- h) Other (specify).....

2.6 How did you come to know about the result of your application?

- a) I kept asking the broker
- b) I kept asking the village official
- c) The broker came and informed me
- d) Village official told me without asking
- e) Someone from the village told me
- f) I came to know when the money came
- g) There was written communication
- h) Other

2.7 Was your application successful? Yes/No

If yes, go to section 3

If no, please continue

2.8 How many times was your application turned down?.....

2.9 If no, what do you think is the main reason that your application was turned down?.....

2.10.1) Did you ask why your application was rejected? Yes/No

2.10.2) If no, why did you not ask:

2.10.3) If yes, whom did you ask?

2.10.4) Do you know any other person or authority to whom you could have appealed?

Yes/No

2.10.5) If yes, why did you decide not to ask there?

2.10.6) *What was the response from the person to whom you asked:*

Section C

3. On delivery mechanisms

3.1 What kind of *pagar* are you receiving now? (e.g. Sanjay Gandhi etc)

.....

3.2 How long did it take to get benefit?.....

3.3 When did your *pagar* begin ----- (month) -----(year)

3.4 How much did you receive from the post office/bank on the most recent occasion?

3.5 Has it ever happened that some one else has taken away your benefit/stolen it without your permission? Yes/No

3.6 If yes, who?.....

3.7 Who can claim/receive the benefit? (the beneficiary him/herself or a proxy is acceptable?)

3.8 Has it ever happened that you were given a lower amount than the benefit you are entitled to? Yes/No

3.9 If yes, what have you done to obtain the full amount?

3.10 Were you successful in obtaining full or increased amount after your argument/complaint?

- a) Not successful
- b) I received a small increased amount
- c) I received the full amount

4. Use of the benefit

4.1 Often (thinking of the past few occasions when you received benefit) how is the amount spent?

Prompt: (paying off credit at grocery shop, paying other debts, paying for medicines, buying new clothes or paying credit for that, keep as savings and use it for shopping, as an honorarium for the carer)

4.2 What needs of the claimant can this benefit meet?

	Sufficient		Insufficient	
1.		1.		
2.		2.		
3.		3.		

4.3 Who decides (relationship of the decision maker to the claimant) how the money should be used/who keeps the money once the money is obtained from the bank?

4.4 Do you generally get help from your extended family or relatives?

4.5 Has there been any change in this help since you started receiving benefit?

4.6 Do the shop keepers give you credit normally?

4.7 Has there been any change in this help from shopkeepers since you started receiving benefit?

Go to section E

Section D

Perception and Opinion on the Scheme

5.1 Why did you not apply?

(prompt: lack of information, too costly to obtain (specify or tell the story), no need, feel shame, benefit is captured or goes to others, benefit is too far away, procedure is too complicated, officials will not give benefit, benefit is inadequate, benefit is not available on time, benefit is not available in the form I can obtain it)

5.2 Do you know the **eligibility criterion** for beneficiaries of *pagar*? Yes/No

5.3 If yes, please describe them: (check whatever is mentioned)

a) poor, b) landless, c) no job, d) other.....e) age above.....

5.4 Do you think these criterion are fair to meet the needs of people? Yes/No

5.5 If yes/no, why?

5.6 Do you know the **selection process** of beneficiaries for income support? Yes/No

5.7 If yes, please describe them:

5.8 Do you think such a selection process is fair? Yes/No

5.9 If yes/ no, why?

Section E

6. Does the claimant require a care taker regularly? Yes/No

6.1 If yes, who takes up this responsibility generally (relationship to that person).

6.2 Is the caretaker's work/income lost? Yes/No

6.3 If yes, how much?.....

6.4 What incentive is there for the caretaker to care?.....

Sickness in the past month

7.1 How many days have you been unwell last month?

7.2 Type of disease:

7.3 Type of treatment: private doctor in the village, private doctor out of village, private doctor (inpatient), govt doctor (out patient), govt hospital (in patient), other

7.4 Who took the decision to treat the patient?(relationship to the person)

7.5 How much expense (medicine and other wear and tear) were incurred during the illness period:.....

7.6 Who took care of the patient during these days? (relationship to the person).....

7.7 Any work or income lost to caretaker in that period?.....

7.8 Was money borrowed during past month for any of the sickness? Yes/No

7.9 If yes, how much?

7.10 How did you repay it?

Who gave the information?

Who was present during the interview?

EGS Survey

Section A

1. Generally what are the paid jobs that you do in a year

	Type of work	Season
1		
2		
3		

1.1 How long (in months) was your prime-income earning activity this year?

1.2 This week what kind of paid work has been done by all the workers in your family?

Sex of the person	No of days	Rate	Age of worker

Section B

2 On EGS Work and registration

2.1 Have you ever done an EGS work? Yes/No

2.2 If yes, where and when? (best estimate of location and year)

	Year	Location
1)		
2)		
3)		

2.3 Can you do the EGS work? Yes/No

2.4 If yes to 2.3, are you disposed to do EGS work this year? Yes/No

2.4 If no to 2.4, why?.....

2.6 Have you registered yourself with EGS (show the model registration card –: Yes/No

2.7 Registration date: (obtain registration card and get the date. If they don't have the card, ask them to make a good estimate)

2.8 If you registered earlier than this (if the current one was a renewal), when was the first registration?

2.9 Are you aware of the need to register for EGS? Yes/No

- 2.10 If registered, who (relational data) helped you to register?
- 2.11 What offers were made to you as a benefit for registering?
- 2.12 What actual benefits did you receive by registering?
- 2.13 How much expense has been incurred in registering yourself for EGS?

Are you working/have you worked on an EGS scheme this year? Yes/ No

If the respondent is working in EGS this year, please continue (section C)

If the respondent is not working in EGS this year, but working as a sugarcane cutter continue to section C but appropriately filling, accordingly for sugarcane cutting.

If not working in EGS or sugarcane cutting, then go to section D

Section C

3. Information about the work

- 3.1 How long have you been doing EGS/Sugar cane-cutting employment (tick appropriate) ?
.....
- 3.2 How many people from the household are working in this?.....
- 3.3 Who took the decision to do this work?.....
- 3.4 How did you come to know about this work?
- 3.5 How long have you known this informant?
- 3.6 How far is this work from your residence?
- 3.7 How much does it cost you to travel to the work-place (by what means)?
- 3.8 Who pays for your travel?
- 3.9 If you are staying at the work place, who has given you shed/temporary house?
- 3.10 If you made the shed, how much did it cost you?
- 3.11 How many children of school-age are at the work place (either working or not working)?
- 3.12 What do children do there?.....
- 3.13 Who provides the tools for the work: 1) self 2) rented 3) from friends 4) govt provides 5) govt pays rent for them.
- 3.14 What do you do for drinking water or resting in between the work?
- 3.15 How many hours do you work on an average a day?.....
- 3.16 What is the rate of pay for the work?

Measurement and payment

- 4.1 Who does the measurement of the work?
- 4.2 Has it ever happened that there are problems with the way measurement was done?.....Yes/No
- 4.3 If yes, what did you do?.....

- 4.4 Over how many days does the measurement take place?
- 4.5 After how many days does the payment for work come?.....
- 4.6 How much did you earn this year from the work?.....
- 4.7 How many days did you do this work for this income?
- 4.8 Who pays you the money?.....
- 4.9 Did you have any difficulty regarding payment? Yes/No
- 4.10 If yes, what sort of difficulty?
- 4.11 What did you do to resolve the problem?
- 4.12 Do you receive grains as part of the payment now? Yes/No
- 4.13 Do you like to receive part of the payment as grains? Yes/ No?
- 4.14 If no, why?

Section D

- 5.1 Have you ever tried to start a business or to gain a job? Yes/No
- 5.2 If yes, what and how? Why did not succeed?

- 5.3 Have you attempted to gain a job? Yes/No
- 5.4 If yes, what? If no, why did not succeed?

- 5.5 Reasons for liking/disliking work

	Reasons for liking	Reasons for disliking
EGS		
Daily wage farm work		
Dailywage non-farm work		
Sugarcane cutting		

5.6 What did you do with the money earned from EGS/sugarcane cutting this year? (prompt: To pay the debts you have incurred; To begin an independent business or programme for stable earning; To purchase a farm; To build or buy a house; To marry off the children; To save in some ways such as postal/insurance/self-help group)

Please continue Section E

- 6.1 Who do you think should get EGS work?.....
- 6.2 Do you think such people are getting benefits? Yes/No

6.3 If no, what are the reasons?

6.4 Has it ever happened that you went to get EGS work, but you were denied the opportunity to work? Yes/No

6.5 What reason was given to you for not giving you the work?

6.6 What do you think the real reasons are?

To sugarcane cutters only

7.1 Has it ever happened that you went to get an advance from a mukadam and you were denied the advance? Yes/No

7.2 What reason was given to you for not giving an advance?

7.3 What do you think the real reasons are?

7.4 Do you have any suggestions for better implementation of EGS?

The maternity benefit beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries

(The first section (1-2.8) should be done along with household information to be sensitive to the nature of these questions on the one hand and to understand the sequence of children in the household information)

1. Age at the time of marriage:
2. No of times you have been pregnant: (including abortion, miscarriages)
 - 2.1 No of abortions:
 - 2.2 Reason for abortion:
 - 2.3 Who took decision about abortion:
 - 2.4 No of miscarriages:
 - 2.5 No of still births:
 - 2.6 Any children died after they were born:
 - 2.7 Age at the time of the child's death:
 - 2.8 Reasons for death:

(Following questions are related to the most recent pregnancy/delivery)

3. Where (social place) did the most recent delivery take place? (At wife's home/ At husband's home)
 - 3.1 If the delivery took place at the wife's house in which month did you leave for delivery from your husband's house:
 - 3.2 If the delivery was in your husband's place did any one from your home came to help you out? Yes/No
 - 3.3 If yes, who came?.....

4.1 Kinds of work was done when you were pregnant: (tick if worked)

On own farm												
On daily wage in other farm												
Other daily wage other than farm												
Household work												
Cutting sugarcane												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 th month			

4.2 Kinds of work done after your pregnancy: (tick if worked)

On own farm												
On daily wage in other farm												
Other daily wage other than farm												
Household work												
Cutting sugarcane												
	1 st month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			

4.3 Was there changes in the work pattern during pregnancy or immediately after that from your usual work pattern? Yes/No

4.4 If yes, what were the significant changes:.....

.....

4.5 If yes, who compensated those works?.....

4.6 If you worked after delivery, who took care of children?.....

4.7 Was there any special care when you were pregnant

4.7.1 In Food: Yes/ No

4.7.2 In health matters: Yes/No

5.1 Have you had any check ups with health professionals after you became pregnant?

Yes/No

5.2 If yes, how many times?

- a) Every month
- b) More than five times
- c) More than twice
- d) Only once

5.3 Where did you go for the check up?

- a) At Women-child health care centre in the village
- b) Govt hospital
- c) Private hospital
- d) At village traditional doctor
- e) Other.....

5.4 Who took the decision to have the check-up?.....

5.5 Who accompanied you for the check-up?.....

5.6 Expenses for check up?

Travel	Doctor's fee	Medicine	other

6.1 Where was the delivery?

- a) At home with the assistance of a relative
- b) At home with the assistance of a traditional nurse
- c) At home with the assistance of neighbours
- d) At home with the assistance of govt/private nurse
- e) At home with the assistance of doctor
- f) At govt hospital
- g) At private hospital

6.2 Who took the decision as to where the delivery should take place?

6.3 Expenses for delivery

Travel	Doctor's fee	Medicine	other

7.1 Have you given vaccination/innoculations for your child? Yes/No

7.2 If yes, which:

- a) B.C.G.
- b) Tripple
- c) Polio
- d) Govar

7.3 Where was the dose given:

- a) At Women-child health care centre in the village
- b) In govt hospital
- c) In private hospital
- d) At village traditional doctor
- e) Other.....

7.4 Who took the decision to give those dose?.....

7.5 Expenses for giving dose:

Travel	Doctor's fee	Medicine	other

8.1 Did the baby ever fall sick after birth? Yes/No

8.2 What kind of sickness?.....

8.3 If yes, did you have to get treatment for him/her? Yes/No

8.4 Where was the treatment given:

- a) At Women-child health care centre in the village
- b) In govt hospital
- c) In private hospital
- d) At village traditional doctor
- e) Other.....

8.5 Who took the decision to treat the child?.....

8.6 Expenses for treatment:

Travel	Doctor's fee	Medicine	other

9.1 Any kind of sickness for the mother after delivery? Yes/no

9.2 If yes, what kind of disease?.....

9.3 Did you get take treatment for the sickness? Yes/No

9.4 If yes, who took the decision to get treatment?

9.5 Where was the treatment given?

- a) At Women-child health care centre in the village
- f) In govt hospital
- g) In private hospital
- h) At village traditional doctor
- i) Other.....

9.6 Expenses for treatment:

Travel	Doctor's fee	Medicine	other

10.1 Social expenditure:

	How many people came	For food	For travel	For gifts	Other
At the time of going to Maher					
At the time of delivery					
Naming of the baby					
At the time of coming back to husband's house					

11.1 During the whole process of pregnancy and delivery have you had to take out any loan? Yes/No

11.2 If yes:

Source	How much	Interest	Obligations to pay back

12.1 Are you aware of any govt schemes for the benefit of pregnant woman? Yes/No

12.2 If yes, which scheme are you aware of:..... (go to Question no. 12 if the scheme is known to her)

12.3 If you know about the scheme who told you about the scheme?.....

12.4 Who from the household decided to make the application?.....

12.5 Did anyone assist you to fill up the application form? Yes/No

12.6 If yes, who assisted you?.....

12.7 How much was the total expenses in making an application?.....

12.8 How many times did you have to meet the broker to submit the application:.....

12.9 Did you get the benefit? Yes/No

12.10 If yes, how many months after making application, did you get the benefit?

.....

12.11 At what stage of pregnancy or delivery did the benefit come through?.....

12.10 Who kept this money?.....

12.11 Brief account as to how the amount was used:.....

.....

12.12 If you did not get benefit, did you ask any one why your application was rejected?

Yes/No

12.13 If yes, whom did you ask?.....

12.14 If not, why not?.....

National Family Benefit Scheme Survey

This survey has to be very sensitive since the questions are regarding a person who has died recently. Do not press for information. Try to cover the questions in a narrative manner and obtain information.

- 1) Has anyone from the household died recently.....
- 2) What used to be the normal work of this person.....
- 3) Reasons for death.....
- 4.1) Was the person hospitalised? Yes/No
- 4.2) If hospitalised for how long?.....
- 4.3) Type of hospital.....
- 5) How much expenses was incurred for treatment? (start the question expressing a sympathy that... 'I know it would have cost a lot for treatment.....how did you meet the expenses?)
- 6) How was the treatment financed?.....
- 7) Any loan to be returned, from the financing of treatment or funeral expenses?.....

- 8) Effect on children due the death of the person (record only if the children are of schooling age)

Relationship (daughter/son)	Age (now)	Gender	Before illness/death of person	After illness/death of person

- 9) Do you know about NFBS?
 - 9.1) How did you get the information/Who told you about it?.....
- 10) Did you apply for this benefit? Yes/No
 - 10.1) If no, why?
 - 10.2) If yes, record the story of how the application was made.
 - 10.3) How much expense was needed to apply?.....
- 11) Did you get the benefit? Yes/No
 - 11.1) If yes, date of getting benefit?
 - 11.2) How much money did you get?.....
 - 11.3) Why was less than the expected amount given?.....

Appendix 6
Bureaucratic, political and judicial structures in India at various levels

Elected political representatives	Government	Bureaucracy	Judiciary	Comments
Union level				28 states 7 Union Territories
542 directly elected members in lower house of parliament & 250 indirectly elected members in upper house of parliament	President Union Cabinet headed by prime minister Minister responsible for each ministry/department	Ministry/departments headed by civil servants from IAS cadre Central Planning Commission	Supreme court	48 members of lower house and 19 members of upper house of parliament are from Maharashtra
State level				Maharashtra has 35 districts
288 directly elected members of lower house and 78 members of upper house are indirectly elected	Governor State Cabinet headed by chief minister Minister responsible for each ministry/department	Chief secretary of state Ministry/departments headed by civil servants from IAS cadre State Planning Commission	High court State police Commissioner drawn from Indian Police service (co-ordinating with home ministry of state)	Groups of districts are organised into divisions and Maharashtra has five divisions.
District level				
Directly elected Zilla parishad council	--	District collector (IAS) (primarily responsible for revenue, law and order, and social security programmes) Chief Executive Officer (IAS) (responsible for development programmes)	District (civil cases) and session (criminal cases) courts. District Police Commissioner drawn from Indian Police Service	Five to eight <i>tehsils</i> together constitute a district. Some tehsils may be grouped as a unit under a sub-divisional magistrate

Tehsil/block level				
Directly elected panchayat samiti members	--	Tehsildar (drawn from state level civil servants) Block Development Officer (drawn from state level civil servants)	Sub-district courts	60-100 villages are grouped together as a tehsil/block.
Village level				Population of 500 to 12000
Directly elected village council	--	Talatti (for revenue) Gram sevak (for development)	Lok adalat (people's court)/panchayat /police patil	Small villages are grouped together under one village council.
Ward level				20-50 households
Directly elected ward members represented in village council	--	--	--	Often this is one hamlet or groups of houses in one geographic location.

Appendix 7

Profile of the elite members

This appendix provides a brief introduction to each of the elite members of the local community described in the study. When understanding the nature of an elite, it is not sufficient simply to understand their socio-economic position. It is also important to look at the sources of power, history of their emergence and other unique characteristics that make him/her an important link in the network or a potential player. Each person's age, religion, caste and education is given in parentheses.

Elites of Bajgaon

Sanjay Patikar (41; Hindu-Maratha; graduate) is the most influential leader in the village. His uncle used to be a member of the legislative assembly for some year and he continues the political legacy of his family. In fact his two other brothers (Prakash Patilkar and Baba Patilkar) also are in the list of elites. Sanjay was educated in Aurangabad and returned to the village 15 years ago; since then he has been active in the politics. He officially belongs to the National Congress Party, but has very strong links with the Congress. He is a village council member as well as vice president of the Social Security Committee (SSC) at *tehsil* level. Raju Shinde, who appeared in the list of elites, acts as a broker for Sanjay on social protection applications. Sanjay acts as 'kingmaker' for various other positions, and it is his close friend from a nearby village who is the president of the SSC at *tehsil* level. During a minor communal incident in the village, during a political election four years ago, Sanjay was stabbed and since then his power has been unchallenged. He, with his brothers owns about 250 acres of land, and there are at least 15 *ghadis* and one *munim* appointed to look after this land. Sanjay often travels on his motor cycle, he also owns a jeep and an ambassador car. He mostly dresses in trousers and shirt mostly. However, occasionally he can be found in the white *khadi* dress of politicians.

Bauu Oswal (57; Hindu-Marwari; graduate) is known as healer in the village and has a religious background. He also possesses about 400 acres of land, which is looked after by a

munim. There are people visiting him from nearby villages to receive healing. However, he is not a traditional healer. He was admitted to hospital for allopathic treatment for his slipped disc. However, on the advice of a stranger (a Muslim woman) he decided to take treatment from an ayurvedic doctor and he was completely cured. This made him start his own treatment practice. He is a generous person and helps villagers at the time of marriage and in case of adversities (he claims that during the drought of the early 1970s, people from the village used to line up in front of his house for food). However, this help is not equally available to the poorest people, because his contact and healing is linked with religious practices such as reading the Gita and cultivating good habits such as quitting smoking and abstaining from alcohol. Often, the poorest people will not give up these habits. He claims equidistance from all the politicians in the village. His chief mode of travel is by jeep.

My observation is that his inclusion in the list of elites is due to respondents confusing 'social status' with 'influence'. In fact, he is not strictly an elite, if involvement in decision-making is the key criteria, because he is not consulted on issues in the village, since he does not express any interest in political/development issues in the village. He owns a jeep and he is dressed in spotless white traditional *kurta* and *dhoti*.

Madhu Patil¹ (49; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) is vice president of the village council, shopkeeper of the main PDS shop and landlord of about 150 acres of land. His emergence as an elite is not clear. It looks as if his possession of land and shops helped him to emerge. A mysterious story about his well is famous in the village. People believe that due to some power of the goddess, some sort of transformation of the water in his well takes place in every year on a particular day of festival. He is close associate of Sanjay Patilkar and belongs to the NCP. His brother is the president of the BJP in the village, and therefore acts as a communication point with the opposition party. He is often dressed in trousers and shirt, occasionally in Maharashtrian pants and jubba. He moves around on his motor cycle.

¹ All the elites with the surname Patil and Patilkar belongs to the same family caste. To indicate the closeness of being siblings I have called three elites 'Patilkar'.

Kamlakar Shinde (38; Mahar/neo-buddhist (SC); graduate) studied in a different city until 1993 and then returned to village. In the first year upon his return he organised the birthday celebrations of Dr. Ambedkar (which was very elaborately celebrated in cities, especially where he studied). Since then he was considered to be the leader of scheduled caste population in the village. Since he was an educated person he started helping people to fill in application forms for social security, housing and other benefits. Since there are special provisions for scheduled castes, on which the village council has to take decisions, often it is Kamlakar who decides on these allocation. This increased his reputation. In the next village election Sanjay Patilkar offered him the post of village council member, which is reserved for scheduled castes. Now, he has entrusted Raju Shinde (who is another elite), his own stepbrother, to look after social security applications. He concentrates on housing scheme and bank loans. Shinde family's legacy and relationship with Patilkar has some history. Kamlakar's father used to be a very well known contractor in the *tehsil* and uncle of Sanjay (ex-MLA) who used to be a close associate of the Shinde family. However, compared with the Patilkars, the family of Shinde is poor (with some land for the joint family), and they rely on public transport. Kamlakar is dressed in trousers and shirt and uses public transports.

Rau Patil (58; Hindu-Maratha; 10th std) used to be the right hand supporter of Sanjay's uncle (ex-MLA), and was made village council president in 1990. Eventually Rau carved out his own support base. As a result during the next election in the village (1995) Kisan Patil was installed by the ex-MLA as the village council president. Thus, Rau Patil and Patilkars parted company in 1997. At about this time, Rau moved towards the BJP, which was taking root in the region. He was able to get elected as the *panchayat samiti* president (at *tehsil* level) on the BJP ticket in a post reserved for women, by making his wife stand for the post. One of his sons is a village council member and another who is a graduate, assists him in the post of president of the *panchayat samiti*. He owns over 125 acres of land and has a few *ghadis*. His son has a motor cycle and they move around together. Rau Patil is always found in traditional Maharashtrian *kurta* and *dhoti*, and the cap of a politician.

Mohammed Kareem (48; Muslim-Pathan; 12th std) is a landlord with 200 acres of land and is a well-known contractor for government jobs. He is the richest Muslim in the village. But he does not identify himself as Muslim, and is always in the company of Patilkar, who in turn helps him to obtain government contracts. There are stories in the village about Mohammed's emergence. Villagers say Mohammed was an ordinary person like others in the village. But suddenly became rich, a matter about which villagers wonder. Some of them seriously believe a gold object was identified in Mohammed's house and because of that he became rich. He claimed property rights over the village mosque as his forefathers had protected the mosque (currently the case is in court) and Muneer Ali (another elite) challenged it. He is a job provider not only on his land, but also on the road contracts he obtains. He has a motorcycle as well as a jeep to travel around. He is found in traditional Maharashtrian pants and *jubba*, with *petta* (head band) on occasions. Headband he wears is often of saffron colour and helps him to identify with majority Hindus and tehsil officials.

Muneer Ali (50; Muslim-Pathan; 10th std) became the leader of ordinary Muslims in the village after he challenged Mohammed Kareem over the mosque issue. He is closely associated with Sanjay Patilkar as well, and used to be the vice-president of village council until three years ago, when he protested against the move to accept money for a new shopping complex to be built in the village (he was proposing an auction which would have brought money for the village council). He has a small piece of land and relies on public transport. He wears traditional dress of Maharashtrian Muslims.

Gyanesh Oswal (31; Hindu-Marwari; graduate) owns a medical store in the village central location. It is in his shop that Sanjay Patilkar and friends can always be found. Gyanesh decided to marry a Maratha girl (outside the village) and that resulted in his Marwari family expelling him. This resulted his seeking refuge with Sanjay Patilkar for his survival and support in the village. Being a successful businessman, there are good resource exchanges between these two. He has a motorcycle. He is dressed in trousers and shirt.

Kisan Patil (61; Hindu-Maratha; 7th std) was the village council president for fifteen villages and is known as '*maji surpanch*' (ex-president). He was put forward as village

council president by the ex-MLA to stand against Rau Patil. Though Kisan's daughter in law is a village council member (Kisan virtually doing all the activities on her behalf), the relationship between Sanjay Patilkar has not been cordial recently. Since he has served for long time in the capacity of president of the village council, he knows the procedures to gain government benefits and he keeps good relationships with the government officials at the village level and sometimes at *tehsil* level. He moves about on his bicycle and public transport. He always dresses in *kurta* and *dhoti*, with the cap of a politician.

Kumar Pandith (56; Hindu-Brahmin; graduate) is known as *malak* (owner) of the village because, traditionally his forefathers used to keep the village records (after independence this right was given to government officials). He has over 100 acres of land and every year he appoints 10 *ghadis*. Though he does not nurse political ambitions, he is consulted on major issues in the village, and is a close associate of Bauu Oswal. His son has a motorcycle. He always dresses in Maharashtraian *kurta* and *dhoti*, and is found observing Brahminic rituals.

Pramod Oswal (50; Hindu-Marwari; graduate) is, arguably, the richest man in the village with four different businesses (fertilizer shop, public phone, cloth shop and grocery) and over 100 acres of land. Most of these businesses are inherited. He has his own motorcycle and jeep. He often supports financially the religious festivals in the village. His attire is trousers and shirt and at times traditional Maharashtraian *kurta*.

Raju Shinde (33; Hindu-Mahar/neo-Buddhist (SC); 12th std) is stepbrother of Kamlakar, and acts as a broker for Sanjay Patilkar on social security applications. He was educated in a nearby city and returned to the village 10 years ago. He was asked by his stepbrother and Sanjay Patilkar to help people with social security applications. He relies on public transport. He dresses in trousers and shirt.

Ishwar Rai (32; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) is Rau Patil's the right hand man. He was picked by Rau Patil to work for the BJP in the village. He stood in the village elections and was defeated in 2002. He brings EGS projects to the village and for this purpose he keeps close contact with the local MLA. He relies on public transport. His dress code is trousers and shirt.

Naresh Kathat (52; Hindu-Sonar; graduate) is known as *savkar* (professional moneylender) in the village, and owns over 150 acres of land. Besides these inherited roles, his official business is that of goldsmith, and he owns a shop selling gold ornaments in the nearby city. He moves around on his motorcycle. His dress code is traditional *kurta* and *dhoti*.

Suresh Kathat (49; Hindu-Sonar; 12th std) is also known as *savkar* in the village and owns over 300 acres of land, which the people say he has forcibly taken from people to whom he provided credit. His official business is that of goldsmith. He moves around on his motorcycle. His dress code is traditional *kurta* and *dhoti*. Suresh has a poor reputation in the village and people consider that he does not have a licence for money lending. Naresh however is considered to be a good person with a licence for money lending.

Jaiswal Lal (43; Hindu-Khosti (OBC); 12th std) is not originally from the village. But he is settled in the village for past 10 years running the biggest alcohol (arrack) shop. He also provides credit on interest to people. He has a motorcycle. His dress code is pant and shirt.

Baba Patilkar (48; Hindu-Maratha; graduate) is the eldest of Patilkar brothers and is settled in the *tehsil* town with a fort-like house. He is still the president of the village agricultural co-operative society. He runs a number of educational institutes in the *tehsil* and is able to incorporate educated young men from the village into these institutions. He has a jeep. He is always dressed in the politician's attire of khadi pant and *jubba*.

Ramvilas Oswal (61; Hindu-Marwari; 12th std) was headmaster of the village school for a long time and is now retired. He is known for giving credit to the people on interest, though he is not called a money lender since, he has the reputation of being a school master. He has a motorcycle and is found in traditional Maharashtraian *khadi* pants and *jubba*.

Javed Nasir (36; Muslim-Tamboli(OBC); graduate) owns a shop on the fringes of village. However, people, especially the poorest people, rated him as an elite, since he generously provides credit from his shop. His business was started by his father, but prospered with Javed's involvement. He dresses himself as a traditional Muslim and regularly takes part in religious activities.

Prakash Patilkar (45; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) lives in Aurangabad and owns a business firm crushing stone in the vicinity of village, where a number of people are employed. Also provides credit for the people. He comes to the village every day via-train and from railway station by his Ambassador car. He moves around on his motorcycle once he is in the village. His attire is trousers and shirt.

Elites in Saralgaon

Mohan Chandkar (52; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) inherited the positions of the president of village agricultural co-operative society from his father, and later became village council president. He is a supporter of the NCP. His brother is a government official with a senior position in Mumbai. However, presently Mohan does not hold any specific position in the village and concentrates on farming his 80 acres of land. He has a motorcycle to move around. He dresses himself in traditional Maharashtrian pants and jubba.

Hanifa Khan (54; Muslim-Pathan; 12th std) is known as *maji-surpanch* (ex-president) of the village council. His forefathers used to keep the village records. His son runs a milk co-operative in the village. He own over 100 acres of land. His affiliation to any political party is not clear. During the most recent village election he was king-maker for the village council president (Prahlad's son was made village council president, who gives support to Shiv Sena). He dresses in traditional Maharashtrian pants and jubba. His son has a motorcycle. But Hanifa relies on public transport.

Sopan Sonatta (57; Hindu-Marwari; graduate) is a cloth shopkeeper and moneylender, but does not live in the village. He lives in the market village near to Saralgaon. However, most of the elites from Saralgaon are associated with him and depend on him to obtain credit. He dresses in *dhoti* and *kurta*.

Prahlad Mandin (50; Hindu-Mali (OBC); 12th std) has over 50 acres of land. His son is the village council president. His power is limited, as leader of the Mali community, geographically located in one part of the village. He dresses in *dhoti* and *kurta*.

Ismail Khan (46; Muslim-Pathan; 12th std), though brother of Hanifa Khan, is strong supporter of the NCP and owns over 60 acres of land. He has a motorcycle to move around. He dresses in traditional Maharashtrian pants and jubba.

Sunder Chandkar (68; Hindu-Maratha; no formal education) used to be head of the village co-operative society for a long time. He now runs his own milk co-operative. He is supporter of the NCP and claims a relationship with the local MLA. His sons are in government jobs in the district centre. He owns over 100 acres of land, but relies on public transport for travel. He dresses in dhoti and *kurta*.

Milind Sukhdi (35; Hindu-Chamar (SC); 10th std) was educated in a nearby city and came back to the village 17 years ago. He has started two businesses in the main market village. He has also started a registered money co-operative society. He is also in the process of registering a non-governmental organisation. His chief political support is from the local MLA, who happens to belong to his own caste. His attire is trousers and shirt. He relies on public transport.

Iqbal Ahmed (53; Muslim-Sheikh; 7th std) is the most famous *mukadam* for sugarcane cutting. He recruits workers for three sugarcane factories and every year about 80 people from the village to take up sugarcane cutting through him. He dresses in traditional Maharashtrian pants and jubba.

Abdul Kasam (45; Muslim-Pathan; 12th std) is the main grocery shopkeeper in the village. He is also president of the farmers' commune, an activity initiated by the NGO in the village for co-operative farming. He dresses in traditional Maharashtrian pants and jubba, and sometimes in trousers and shirt

NGO: This is the only player without a personal identity in the elite list. However, the officials who interact with the village are often people with whom the other elites from the community negotiate. For the past two years Sushil Shinde (38; SC; masters education) is the main person who came to the village at least once a week. There is a female worker (25; Maratha; 12th std). However, she is new to the village and has limited activities.

Varun Kale (61; Hindu-Maratha; graduate) is not a resident of Saralgaon. However, his agricultural land, which measures more than 200 acres, is in Saralgaon. He is a political elite, being the village council president of the market village of Saralgaon. A good number of people work on Varun's farms.

Sandeep Rawat (51; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) is *munim* to Varun Kale who is another elite. Other than this, Sandeep's name is included in the list of elites because he provides credit for people, with funds he gains from Varun Kale. He dresses in traditional Maharashtrian pant and jubba

Ganesh Chandkar (41; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) is a landlord and used to be president of the village agricultural co-operative for a short period. He is a supporter of Shiv Sena. He wears trousers and shirt.

Sopu Bhudkar (48; Hindu-Maratha; 12th std) is a known credit provider with about 25 acres of land. He is the leader of a small group of houses located in one corner of villages. He dresses in traditional Maharashtrian pants and jubba

Kopri Kolkar (48; Tribal; 12th std) is employed as a government official, and is the leader of the tribal community in one village. Geographic segregation of the community requires Kopri to act as the spokesperson for the community to establish links with rest of the village. As Kopri is the only well educated person from this community, this role is unchallenged. The tribal community members rely on him to be the middleman to gain credit from moneylenders or the *mukadam*. He owns the only tractor in the village and often hires it out. He wears trousers and shirt.

Raman Kirti (50; Tribal; no formal education) is professional moneylender and runs a business of processing milk. Most of the people in the village sell their milk to him since he pays a higher amount than the co-operatives in the village. He makes various milk products such as ghee and sells this in city. He also gives credit for various purposes (especially to buy cows, whose owners have to sell milk for a stipulated time at lower rates). He has come with conflict with most of the other elites since he has very harsh methods of recovering credits. He dresses in *dhoti* and *kurta*. His son has a motorcycle.

Appendix 8

Certificates required to claim IM

This appendix sets out various certifications required to be submitted along with the IM application to prove eligibility. The difficulties encountered by the claimants to obtain each of them are also narrated. Particularly, how the inclusion of the ineligible cases and exclusion of the eligible cases takes place through these certifications are examined.

1) Age certificate: The applicant need to submit either a school leaving certificate or an attested extract of a birth register from the *Gram Panchayath*. Often, these two either do not exist or are very difficult to obtain¹. Therefore, a third option is ‘proof of age’: an age certificate from a Government Medical Officer. Usually, it is this third option that is used by applicants and brokers to provide proof of age. A medical officer is expected to examine the person’s appearance and determine his/her age. In practice, the Medical officer will certify a ‘suitable’ age if he is given a small amount of money (about Rs.20). The broker in the village already knows the medical officer and the medical officer also knows the broker, and the broker’s relationship with the main village elite. Therefore, the medical officer may give these certifications without even seeing the applicant and without taking any money². This is typical of the government officials’ desire to please the political elites given the nature of the need to appease politicians to obtain promotions (Wade, 1985; Das, 2001) and to carry out their duties without being challenged legally by the politicians with false accusations.

Interestingly, it is the eligibility criteria of age, which is most often found to be violated. Of the 26 ineligible beneficiaries in the sample survey, 21 had obviously manipulated their age. I came across a person who boasted proudly that though he was less than 50 year old he was able to get a benefit for which he should be 65. Lack of records provided enough room for the claimant and elite to argue for self-reported age³. This results in people receiving benefits when they are capable of working, implying that a person working for the local elite is likely to benefit.

¹ Even if the documents exist in the village office, they are not easily available. When a poor person approaches the village office for any of these certifications, the village officers take the occasion to make the person pay any outstanding taxes, such as land tax, house tax etc. It is the responsibility of the village government to collect these taxes. Usually these taxes are not paid regularly and there may be huge arrears (about Rs.500 or more), which are due from poor households. The village officer may make payment of arrears a pre-condition to provide any certifications. However, the village officer skips this pre-condition if a small bribe (Rs.20 or so) is paid. This results in accumulating the arrears on individual basis and resource loss to the village government.

² While interviewing the medical officer, it was interesting to hear his complaint that the broker would pressurise him to certify an untrue age for applicants.

³ During the study I found it difficult to believe the self-reported age of many persons. Thus, I often demanded a record such as election identity card. Many respondents revealed their real age when the purpose of the research was reiterated and I could check their claim in the informal discussion by asking them to recall historical incidents in the village. Though a crude method, it provided a mechanism to check serious overstating of age.

2) Income/property certificate: For the central government schemes it was necessary for the applicants to have their name in the BPL list to be eligible for benefit. But the eligibility criterion for state government schemes was stated to be a low income (less than an annual income of Rs.12000). Since the old age pension was paid from a combination of state and central government funds, with only 30% from the central government, the rules of the state government prevailed informally at the local level. So, an income assessment was necessary for every application.

The *talatti* (village revenue officer) was considered to be the competent authority to give this income certificate. Often the *talatti* examines the land records⁴ and states whether a person owns land and what his income from the land may be. The *talatti* would provide the certification for a fee of about Rs.20. However, it is not easy for an applicant himself to find the *talatti* and to obtain the certificate, since a *talatti* usually has the responsibility for 5-6 villages. Here, the broker's proximity to the *talatti* becomes helpful, and he can get the certification without any expenses.

The purpose of giving power to a local official such as the *talatti* seems to be an important option to incorporate local knowledge into the income assessment. As Scott (1998) argues land value cannot be measured from size alone, it is like "telling a scholar that he has brought six kilograms of books" (p. 26), but a number of local factors (eg. water availability, quality of soil, distance from living place) have to be considered. However, the practices of local officials did not result in better assessment by devolving power to them. Rather, the devolved power was used to apply the rules differentially. For example, an elite person would argue with the *talatti* that since the land was in the name of the husband, the wife/child has to be interpreted as eligible for benefit since she was 'landless'. On the other hand, where there was no elite to argue for a poor household, the *talatti* considered all the members of the household to be persons possessing land. The informal rule that *talattis* maintained was that a person with two acres of land was able to make an income of Rs.12,000 per year⁵. This rule was adopted because there are a good number of landless households.

In the survey, eight persons were found to have obtained benefits despite having more than two acres of land. However, while counting them as 'ineligible' I considered the nature of their house as well, because two acres of land does not necessarily bring an annual income of Rs.12,000. There were only three persons who had *pucca* houses and more than three acres of land who received the benefit. In all the cases, they were rich Marathas getting benefits due

⁴ Land records are huge log-books and it is tedious to examine them (However, Maharashtra is computerising all the Land records currently). Usually talathis appoint an assistant to do the routine jobs, paying a meagre salary. The assistant has to collect bribes from the people make a decent salary for himself.

⁵ My interaction with farmers shows that poor farmers depending on rain-fed agriculture were able to make a profit of about Rs.1000 per acre (they may get this amount if they give the land for share cropping in one season).

to disability. So, we could conclude that non-poor directly benefiting from the scheme was very minimal on this criterion.

3) Certificate of disability: There was no clear guideline on the degree of disability, which could be taken as an eligibility criterion. However, the informal rule was that 40% disability was essential to be eligible. However, obtaining a certificate from a medical doctor was not often enough. A certificate had to be obtained from a specialist civil surgeon. This meant the disabled person, often with an assistant, travelling to the district centre (in the case of villages I studied, this meant a travel costing Rs.100 per person) since specialist doctors are normally found only in a district centre. So, brokers often charge a much higher fee to gain a disability benefit. One of the respondent claimed she was asked for Rs.3000.00 to obtain a benefit for her mentally disabled daughter. As a result, only 13 persons in the survey out of the 36 disabled persons received benefits. Of these 13 persons, nine of them had land over two acres. This suggests that only a person who could afford to obtain the certifications received this benefit. Two of the persons who were receiving benefits were not disabled. They were able to get fake certificates from doctors by paying a bribe.

4) Certificate of residency: A person has to prove that he has been living in the state of Maharashtra for the past 15 years. The *talatti* or *surpanch* are competent persons to certify this. The difficulty here is the same as getting an income certificate that is to find the *talatti* or *surpanch*; a broker can get the things done quickly without paying any 'kickbacks'.

But, the benefit of Rs.250 was not a strong incentive to avoid migration to cities⁶. Informants reported a number of families (not less than seven together in both villages) who were settled in cities and receiving benefits in the village. A relative, who was still living in village, often received the benefit on their behalf.

The reason for people not living in the village receiving benefits lies in the way village elections are conducted. When village elections are conducted, political factions calculate the relative strength by looking at the list of households and guessing who may vote for whom. Each faction has to make sure the persons likely to vote for them are present in the village on the day of voting. The elites send out their messengers to the nearest cities with the news of the election and often some travelling allowance is offered to people who live in cities to enable them to come and vote in the village. This keeps the bond between elite and migrants, and some persons living outside village are able to turn these bonds into their 'welfare rights' to social protection.

⁶ GoI specified a requirement of Rs.328 per capital per month for meeting a minimum calorie requirement in rural India. This is much lower than international a dollar a day criterion.

5) Certificate of pregnancy: To obtain the NMBS's benefit a woman has to produce a certificate that she is pregnant. A doctor of primary health centre is the authorised person to certify this after two months of pregnancy. However, there were not many women who were aware of this scheme and thus, I did not encounter a single woman who had approached a doctor for this certification.

6) Certificate of death: Though villages are expected to register the birth, marriage and death of each of its citizens, very often poor people do not do this. This is particularly because when the poor people approach village officials for registration, they may be asked to pay previous arrears or pending tax. Certificates are sought when a requirement arises such as admitting a child to school (birth certificate needed to prove age) or land transaction (death certificate). To claim NFBS a death certificate was necessary. This had to be provided by the village administration (when hospital admission was involved, a doctor's certificate was required). Often, the date of death could be altered with months or to even years with small bribe. Such practices could be defended on account of recall problem of exact dates. This altering of date was often done to make one person eligible for time-limited application (NFBS application has to be submitted within one year of the death of the head of the household). Often the names of dependents were recorded on the death certificate, and this was important for land transaction. Sometimes, when a young man died his parents might not record the name of the young man's wife in collusive relationship with village officials. This could stop the property being transferred to their daughter-in-law as the marriage registration may not have been done.

Appendix 9

Two cases of application tracing

Taramati, aged 33, applied for IM after her husband died in an accident, since she had young children. Her first application was not successful. She started working on a farm of an elite on a regular basis and the elite told her to gain the IM benefit. She told the elite that she had applied some six years ago and she had not heard from the officials. The elite asked her to follow up the matter, and he would ask the officials to grant her application. She repeatedly went to the officials and they would direct her from one official to the other. After four journeys to the *tehsil* office, the officials told her that her application could not be found at the office. She was asked to make a new application if she wanted income maintenance. She collected the certifications needed again and submitted it a second time. She explained: “I would not move from the office even after I had submitted the application. I kept looking at the application, and the place where the official had kept it. The official was casual with my application. I had made the application with much difficulty. He put my application amid a heap of files. What certainty is there that he would find my application on the right time, when some decision had to be made on the application?”.

I observed a very different case when I was interviewing the IM official. It was the lunch break and one person in politician’s attire entered the office (later I confirmed from a different source that he was the secretary of the employee’s union of a factory in the *tehsil* centre), and I could smell that he had consumed arrack, and was intoxicated. He demanded to know the result of application of NFBS he had submitted for his relative. The official said that the application could not be passed since it did not meet the criteria. The politician demanded to know where the fault was. The official went on to explain that NFBS benefit was for the families whose main income-earner had died pre-maturely. In the case of elite’s application, the dead person was the mother (aged 65) of two children who were adults. Three months before the death of the mother, their father had died and he was given NFBS benefit. (The

official, later, said to me that the real reason for not favouring the application was that since there were many applicants, one family can be given the benefit only once). These explanations of the rules by the official made the politician furious. And he insisted that he should get the application immediately and he wanted to discuss it with the *tehsildar*. All the attempts by the official to pacify the politician, and requests to come another day when he was not intoxicated fell on deaf ears. This resulted in the official along with the assistant looking frantically for the application form, which was submitted some months ago. After half an hour's search of the heaps of files (they may have opened and tied up at least 15 heaps) they were able to trace the application. Then the politician smilingly commented in local language: "*mehnath karen murghi, anda kaye fakir*" (the chicken takes the effort and one who roams without purpose eats the egg). The thrust of the remark was: as a politician, who deals with the issues of the people, I have the right to decide who should get the benefit.

Appendix 10

Probabilistic model using logistic regression

This appendix explains how the statistical tool of logistic regression was applied to create a probabilistic model to explain the outcome of Continued Income Maintenance Benefit (CIMB) applications.

The binary dependent variable of receiving CIMB (1; n= 85) or not (0; n=76) was the key aspect to be explained. As explained in the Chapter Four (and Six), the persons who had not applied for benefit (n=53) were excluded from the analysis. As independent variable, the variables of assets, social status, education and mode of applying are considered. The highest level of each measurement was considered as the base for the dummy variables. For example in the case of caste, high caste was considered as the base category. The distribution of these independent variables and their parameter coding is explained below.

Here, though the unit of analysis is individual, various demographic data (age and gender) could not be used as independent variables since CIMB are meant for various age and gender groups. For example, in practical sense, only women are the claimants for the CIMB meant for single parents with dependent children. In another instance, some CIMB are meant for the elderly population, while other CIMB benefits (e.g. disability) could be claimed irrespective of age differences. Thus, in general, age and gender are built into the system through categorical targeting and including them into the model does not affect the probability of the outcome application.

Asset had two measures: Land possession and the type of house. These are important measures to understand the economic condition of the households in rural areas than the self-reported income, which is often unreliable, and difficult to measure. In the case of this survey, largest number of people were from landless category (n=146). 10 households possessed 1-3 acres of land, three households possessed 3-8 acres of land, and two households possessed more than eight acres of land. The last category was considered as base category for the purpose of logistic regression.

Another important measure to assess the economic condition is the type of house. There were 26 people living in pucca (using cement and brick) houses. This was considered as the base category. There were 15 people who were living in pucca houses built under government's housing scheme. These houses had only two rooms.

Largest number of persons (n=93) lived in a mixture of pucca and kutcha (thatched) houses. 27 persons reported they lived in kutcha houses.

Measuring the social status was done using the variable of caste. 46 persons in the survey were from high caste. This was considered as the base category. People belonging to other backward castes (OBC) were considered as middle castes (n=31). People from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe were considered as the dummy category for low caste (n=84).

The variable of education was skewed highly towards those who were illiterate (n=114). 32 persons reported they had some schooling, and 15 persons reported they had gained education above 10th standard. The highest level of education (those above 10th standard) was considered as the base category.

The final variable of mode of applying was operationalised as chiefly happening through four categories. In section 6.2.1.2 we have seen six categories of people and how some are connected among themselves. There we have seen broker and leader are closely associated. Therefore, this category is considered as a single category and 51 persons had applied through this mode. This is taken as the base category. In the similar way relative and self are considered as one category (n=20). Many people also had applied through government officials (n=37) and 'writers' (n=53).

These explanatory variables were entered into the analysis step wise as dummy variables. By including each variable step wise, the impact of each additional variable on the model could be calculated.

Therefore, log of the probability of the success of the application was calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Log } P/(1-P) = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 \dots \beta_n X_n$$

Anti-log or exponent derived from using this equation is reported in Table 7.14. The odd ratio values for each dummy variable allow us to compare it with its base category, and to determine the likelihood of gaining IM if a claimant was in that particular dummy category.

Appendix 11
Caste wise description of who gains benefits for whom

Table A11.1 Connection of the elites and beneficiaries: caste wise in Bajgaon

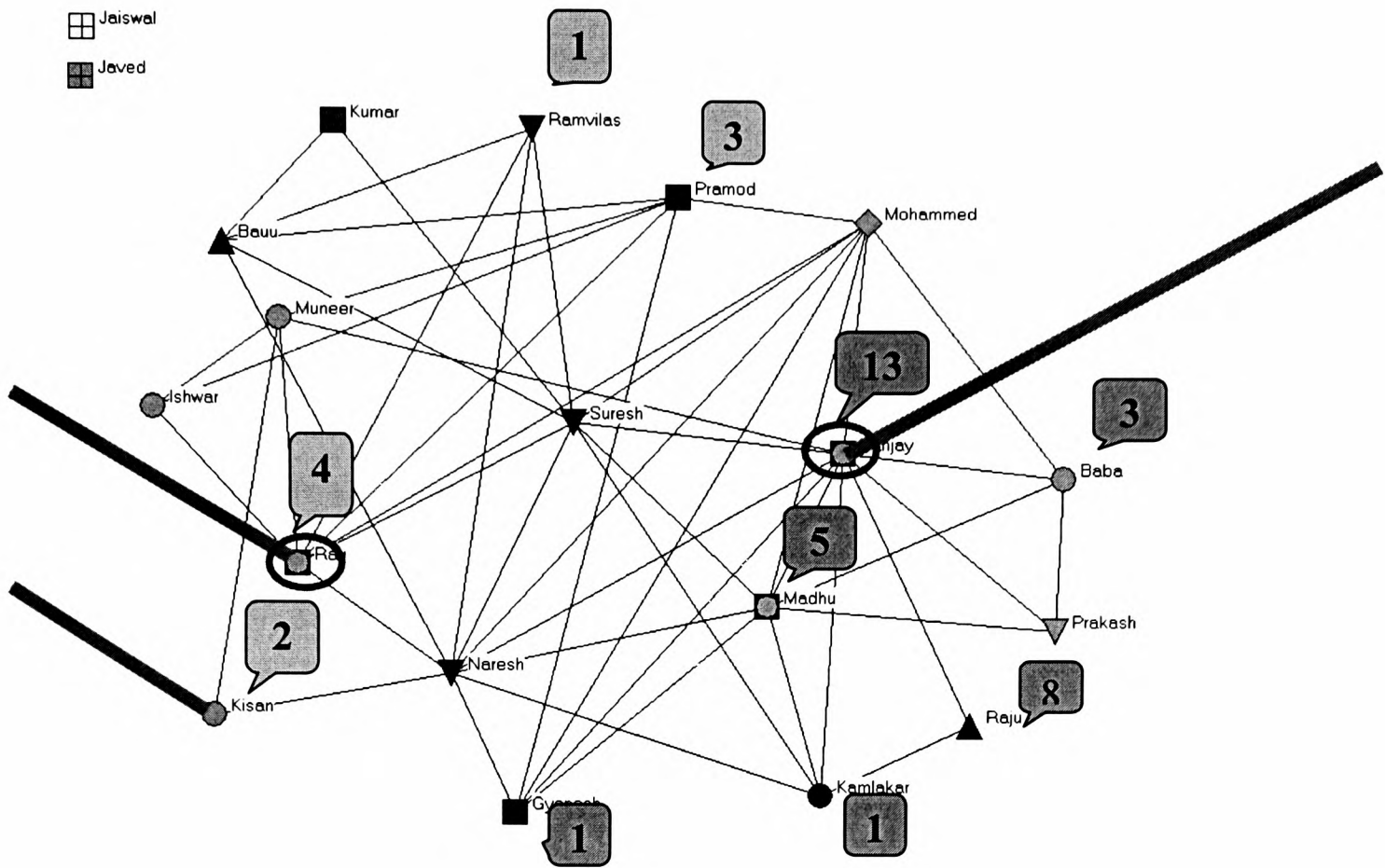
Beneficiary castes	Elite castes who have been acknowledged as responsible for getting access to IM benefits		
	Maratha	Mahar (SC)	Marwari
Mahar (SC)	2	3	3
Mathang (SC)	4		
Varik (OBC)		1	
Mali (OBC)			1
Dhangar (OBC)	5	2	1
Maratha	13		
Sheikh (OBC-Muslim)	1		
Khatic (SC-Muslim)	1		
Kumbar (OBC)	1		
Gosai (OBC)		1	
Pardi (ST)		1	
Sutar (OBC)		1	
Total	27	9	5

Note: Raju who is broker for IM benefits is Mahar. That is the reason why Mahar elites are appearing to be shown as responsible to gain benefits for large number of persons especially for the members of other castes. In Saralgaon such an effect is not seen.

Table A11.2 Connection of the elites and beneficiaries: caste wise in Saralgaon

Beneficiary castes	Elite castes who have been acknowledged as responsible for getting access to IM benefits			
	Mali	Maratha	Muslim	Chamar (SC)
Mahar (SC)	1	5	6	
Mathang (SC)		1	1	1
Mali (OBC)		1		
Maratha		3	1	
Sheikh (OBC Muslim)			2	
Pathan (Muslim)			1	
Chamar (SC)				1
Total	1	10	11	2

Appendix 12: Network of elites among themselves and with bureaucrats



The colour of the nodes indicates their social identify (caste) and the shape of the nodes indicate their professions.



Faction leader



No. of social security benefits gained by the elite as reported by claimants



Tie with a bureaucrat



Tie with another elite

Appendix 13

A Typology of Targeting

“Targeting is a means towards the end of poverty reduction” (Coady et al., 2004: 2). The chief principle guiding targeting is how could scarce resources be allocated to the most needy households (Besley and Kanbur, 1993; Sen, 1995). Devereux (1999) and Coady et al., (2004) have identified three types of targeting methods: 1) individual/household assessment, 2) categorical assessment, and 3) self-selection. In the first method of the means-tested targeting, the administration selects the beneficiaries from the number of applicants.¹ Here allocation can be in three ways: 1) all the person below particular tested criteria (e.g. income) are selected to be beneficiaries; 2) using first come first served principle, all the applicants who meet the criteria are given benefits till the resources are exhausted; 3) a time period may be maintained in which applications are scrutinised to provide benefit to the most needy without keeping a cut off criterion.

In the second method, demographic (e.g. only children) or geographic (e.g. hilly areas) considerations guide the principle of targeting. Both these methods involve laborious administrative functions, and some people who may demand for the benefits will have to be excluded.

In addition to both these methods a community based targeting could be added to above methods (Conning and Kevane, 2001) primarily to deal with information asymmetry, and when neediest from the large number of eligible claimants may have to be chosen.

On the other hand, self-targeting is close to universal eligibility since whoever chooses to apply, are selected. But, the programme is designed in such a way that only the most needy will self-select. For example, in the EGS programme, which has been studied in this dissertation, when the wage rate is kept at little lower than existing wage rate in private labour market, only those will choose to participate who are unable to gain minimum wage participating in labour markets. Therefore, if the self-selection took place without any hindrance, only the poorest households will choose to work in EGS. It is due to this simplicity, lack of administrative burden, attraction of ‘universal eligibility’ to the planner, and above all belief that individual will act rationally to maximise benefits in the labour market that has accorded superiority to self-selection among targeting methods. However, self-selection has its own costs. Information distortion, incentive distortion, stigma and inability to claim (e.g. long queuing or producing documentation) are some of them (Sen, 1995; Coady et al., 2004).

Though economically robust and simple is the principle of targeting, politics involved in the process of allocation of resources through the identification of ‘which are needy households’, often makes it complex (Gelbach and Pritchett, 1997; Pritchett, 2005; see

Hirway [2003] on practical application in Indian context). Thus, there can be two types of targeting errors: Failure to reach the eligible/needful and excessive coverage to include the non-poor in the programme (Cornia and Stewart, 1995). In the first type of error, programme is ineffective since welfare loss to the eligible individuals occur, while in the second type of error, public resource is wasted since the ineligible persons receive benefits, which are not meant for them. The study of the politics of social protection need to examine the causes of these two types of targeting errors.

¹ Coady et al., (2004) further identifies three methods of assessment such as direct income assessment, assessment using proxy methods (e.g. type of house) or community based (parents and teachers association selects eligible children).