Demanding Rights
Creating Opportunities

Oxfam India Strategy 2010 - 2015

Contents

Executive Summary

Oxfam India is a newly created Indian non-governmental organization integrating the 60-year-old India operations of 6 separate International Oxfam affiliates working in the country. It came into being on September 1, 2008 with an Indian staff and an Indian board.

It is a member of Oxfam International, which is a global confederation of 14 Oxfams (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Quebec, Spain, and the US). Two new Oxfams are currently forming including India and Japan.

The Oxfams are rights-based organizations that fight poverty and injustice by linking grassroots programming (through partner NGOs) to local, national and global advocacy and policy-making. All of Oxfam's work is framed by our commitment to five broad rights-based aims: the right to a sustainable livelihood, the right to basic social services, the right to life and security, the right to be heard and the right to equality: gender and diversity.

Oxfam India's vision is to create a more equal, just, and sustainable world. The overarching vision of Oxfam India is "Right to Life with Dignity for All". Oxfam India will fulfill its vision by empowering the poor and marginalized to demand their rights, engaging the non poor to become active and supportive citizens, advocating for an effective and accountable state and making markets work for poor and marginalized people.

While India has already become the third largest economy[1] (in terms of purchasing power parity) after USA and China as per the World Bank and has seen consistent growth rates between 6%-9% for the last five years, second only to China, even today, according to World Bank parameters of

1.25 $ a day, 456 million people or approximately 42% of the people in India are poor. It is also worth noting that every third poor in the world is an Indian; every third illiterate in the world is an Indian too and approximately half of its children are malnourished. India also ranks deplorably high in maternal deaths (in many states higher than sub-Saharan Africa).

At the heart of Oxfam India's new strategy is the shared concern regarding the gap between the two Indias - the developed and the underdeveloped - and the lack of an inclusive development path that India is currently on.

Based on our analysis, there are particularly large gaps in the economic and social indicators between four groups of people that we will focus on closing.

**Women and Men;
Dalits and non Dalits;
Tribals and non-Tribals; and
Muslims and non-Muslims.**

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[1]World Development Report, World Bank 2009

Among all the poverty indicators, it is the Dalits, Tribals and Muslims who are found to be worse off than the others. While there has been a growing assertion among the Dalits led by its middle class intellectuals and politicians, a similar pattern is yet to emerge among the Tribals and the Muslims. And despite positive changes in the policy environment and progressive legislation, Indian women continue to face discrimination on all fronts, including inside and outside their homes.

Oxfam India aims to be a role model in linking up four critical themes and areas of work – Economic Justice, Essential Services, Gender Justice, and Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction – into a comprehensive programme framework pursuing dignity of life as the overarching goal.

Economic Justice

More women and men will realize their right to secure and sustainable livelihoods.

Essential Services

People living in poverty, especially women and girls will realize their rights to accessible and affordable health, education and social protection.

Gender Justice

Women from all communities will gain power over their lives and live free from violence.

Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction

All women and men in humanitarian crises will be assured both the protection and the assistance they require, regardless of who or where they are or how they are affected, in a manner consistent with their human rights.

Oxfam India is now seeking to focus its programs in a few key thematic and geographic areas so as to maximize impact. It will focus its work in seven states that have above average poverty rates and have lagged in the post-liberalization period and would require strategic intervention: Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Since roughly two-thirds of poverty is concentrated in these states, Oxfam

India will focus two-thirds of its resources here and use one-third of its resources to respond to specific issues in the rest of India. In view of the increasing number of urban pockets of acute poverty, it will include an urban component in its programs and address urban-specific issues.

Oxfam India has also recognised certain cross-cutting perspectives to its work. Given India's young population, we will try to engage with young people to develop active citizens amongst them. Oxfam India will also be focusing its efforts on building the capacity of its staff, partners and communities to understand as well as address discrimination by making people aware of their own perceptions, prejudices and facilitating an understanding of others. It would work towards building partner's capacity to address communal conflict and foster peace. Oxfam India will seek to build up a program of support to tackle the special issues of peace building in Jammu and Kashmir and the North-East of India.

The other key areas of work for the future would be to influence the role of private sector in poverty reduction and also explore key aspects of India's growing role at the South Asia regional as well as international level from the perspective of influencing policies and programs for a poverty free region and world. It will also seek to build an active and international platform of civil society groups across northern and southern countries.

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New Outlook

Oxfam India is seeking to gradually transform itself from essentially being a grant administering and monitoring agency to an active member of Indian civil society and a rights based advocacy organization. Its advocacy will be based on the grassroots work that it supports. To understand better what is working well and what is not, it is committed to set some of the key processes in place, and work towards setting up community based monitoring systems to track and use the outcomes to enhance programme quality and ensure rights based approach in programmatic interventions.

New Relationships

The new Oxfam India partnership policy envisages both funding and non-funding partnerships with a wide range of development actors-grassroots NGOs, academic institutions, research think tanks, national and global advocacy NGOs, etc. The proposed patterns of funding relationship include maintaining the diversity of partner size (micro, small, medium and large) but establishing limits for each category; establishing longer term relationships with partners and to fund each partner for a maximum 10-12 year cycle (through two strategy periods); and wherever feasible, provide core funding rather than project-by-project funding to partners.

New Initiatives

At the moment, Oxfam India is upscaling its fund-raising operations across various cities, to expand its supporter base and to build active citizenship by engaging the rich and middle class in India in addressing the many development challenges facing our country. Our experiments with running in-house fund-raising operations in Bangalore and New Delhi have paid off and we would be opening six new fund-raising offices, on similar models in the next six months. These offices would be located at Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh and NOIDA besides multiple

operations in the existing cities. In the next five years, we are also going to test various new techniques of fund-raising, like Internet and web, direct mailing, trail walker, special events, tele-facing and direct response television, which were not used by us till now.

Brand awareness and communicating with donors are provenly crucial for connecting with large numbers of people. We would be dedicately working on these aspects in the years to come to make Oxfam India a household name.

New Road Maps

This strategy is meant to provide an overall vision of what Oxfam India wants to do in the coming years to be relevant and meaningful to the emerging Indian context and to make a difference. In each of the program areas that we will work in, we are now developing a detailed strategy that will lay out the context, the opportunities for work, and the outcomes that we will seek to achieve. Once the programs are defined, partners who can work together with Oxfam India to deliver those program goals will be identified and supported. We realize, however, that the roll-out of the strategy (aligning our programs to it) should be carried out in a phased manner. It is likely to take 2-3 years so that it is not too disruptive for our partners and programs.

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Introduction

What is Oxfam India

Oxfam India is a newly created Indian non-governmental organization integrating the 60-year-old India operations of 6 separate International Oxfam affiliates working in the country. It came into being on September 1, 2008 with an Indian staff and an Indian board and is a member of Oxfam International, which is a global confederation of 14 Oxfams (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Quebec, Spain and the US). Two new Oxfams are currently forming viz. India and Japan.

The Oxfams are rights-based organizations that fight poverty and injustice by linking grassroots programming (through partner NGOs) to local, national and global advocacy and policy-making. Oxfam India works in the area of removing poverty and aims to be a role model in linking up four critical themes and areas of work – Essential Services, Gender Justice, Economic Justice and Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction – into a comprehensive programme framework pursuing dignity of life as the overarching goal.

The new organisation is a national entity with presence in six cities, with a staff of around 120 in place. It is bringing together new and existing programs under implementation through more than 250 partners and allies, and is building a strong national and international advocacy capacity.

The Oxfams are rights-based organizations that fight poverty and injustice by linking grassroots programming to local, national and global advocacy and policy-making.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Oxfam India's vision is to create a more equal, just, and sustainable world.
The overarching vision of Oxfam India is "Right to Life with Dignity for All".

Mission

Oxfam India will fulfill its vision by empowering the poor and marginalized to demand their rights, engaging the non poor to become active and supportive citizens, advocating for an effective and accountable state and making markets work for poor and marginalized people.

Values

Organizational values and competencies define acceptable standards which govern the behavior of individuals within the organization. They set common norms of dealing with each other while working to achieve the organizational goals and objectives.

Oxfam India believes that the values cited below are core to its vision and would seek to promote them through its work.

I. **Commitment**

a. To social justice and poverty
b. Demonstrate passion
c. Walking that extra mile
d. Flexible and adaptable
e. Demonstrate openness to learning, innovation, change and growth

II. Honesty and integrity

a. Consistency and predictability
b. Adhering to organizational values
c. Being fair, objective and impartial in decision making
d. Self awareness

III. Inclusiveness, secularism, pluralism

a. Respect difference and welcome alternative viewpoints
b. Value team work
c. Creating a diverse workforce and creating an environment to retain that workforce.
d. Treat people equitably
e. Gender diversity - religious, ethnicity, caste

IV. Value and respect people's rights

a. Active listening
b. Engaging with and respecting different points of view
c. Respecting differences
d. Giving critical/constructive feedback – in a sensitive way
e. Giving support in setting priorities
f. Enabling space for being heard

V. Delivering high quality results in a manner accountable to stakeholders

a. Clarity on roles and responsibilities and objectives to achieve – monitoring, evaluating, learning (responsibility of both sides)
b. Perseverance
c. Aligning team objectives with organizational mission
d. Use time and resources efficiently
e. Use other's skills
f. Taking risks, being realistic with opportunities (links to innovation, creativity etc.)
g. Delegation

What We Do

Oxfam India works to address root causes of absolute poverty and inequality. We see poverty as a problem of power, rather powerlessness, in which people are deprived of opportunities,

choices, resources, essential services, knowledge and protection. In this sense, poverty is something more than mere lack of income, health and education. It is also people's frustration about any control in deciding the destiny of their lives, their exclusion from decision-making. While the Universal Declaration of Human rights is the guiding framework under which Oxfam India functions, it also derives its mandate from the constitutional rights promised to every citizen of the country.

Persistent poverty and inequality is not just a violation of basic human rights of the people but it also undermines economic growth of a nation by wasting talents and human resources. It leads to a skewed society where power and decision-making remains in the hands of the few leading to greater conflicts and undermining social cohesion in the end.

Oxfam India seeks to address this through a Rights- Based Approach where people are seen as the bearers of civil, political and social and economic rights.[2] At the same time, institutions - both state and non-state - are seen as duty bearers to guarantee and provide those rights to the people. It is also important to underline that without augmenting people's ability to exercise them, the rights would be meaningless.

Hence we work to bring change in people's lives by aiming for wider structural changes that include:

• greater state and institutional accountability;

• effective participation of people and civil society organizations in decisions affecting their lives through articulation of their demands and rights and getting public and private institutions to meet their responsibilities;

• increased power and influence of poor and marginalized people over distribution and use of public resources and assets;

• increased social inclusion of the poor and most marginalized;

• changes in ideas and beliefs to inform equitable development strategies.

All of Oxfam's work is framed by our commitment to five broad rights-based aims: the right to a sustainable livelihood, the right to basic social services, the right to life and security, the right to be heard and the right to equality: gender and diversity.

Oxfam India focuses on four change goals:

Oxfam India focuses on four change goals in these areas:
Economic Justice, Gender Justice Essential Services and Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Economic Justice

More women and men will realize their right to secure sustainable livelihoods.

Essential Services

People living in poverty, especially women and girls will realize their rights to accessible and affordable health, education and social protection.

Gender Justice

Women from all communities will gain power over their lives and live free from violence through changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs about gender relations, and through increased levels of women's active engagement and critical leadership in institutions, decision making and change processes.

Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

All women and men in humanitarian crises will be assured both the protection and the assistance they require, regardless of who or where they are or how they are affected, in a manner consistent with their human rights. Fewer people will suffer deprivation as a result of conflict, calamity and climate change. And to reduce risks and building community resilience to disasters, one of the critical areas of specialization and pillars of Oxfam India's humanitarian work is disaster risk reduction programming.

[2] "Right are long-term guarantees, a set of structural claims or entitlements that enable people, particularly the most vulnerable and excluded, to make demands on those in power who are known in the jargon as duty bearers." Duncan Green, From Poverty to Power. How Active Citizens and Effective States can Change the World, Oxfam International, 2008

Strategy Formulation Process

Oxfam India has followed a very participatory process for developing its strategy. It started this process when it was formed in September 2008, and has involved all the key stakeholders including Oxfam India staff, its Board, the other Oxfam affiliates and its partners in a series of extensive discussions and consultations to formulate a strategy that will give the right focus to our programs so that we can maximize our impact.

How We Work

Oxfam India works primarily through grassroots organizations to bring about sustainable changes in people's lives through long-term development programming linked to positive policy changes at various levels (figure 1). We also work through the lens of social exclusion and facilitate the right of the most marginalized to be heard and also mobilize them to campaign for greater economic and social reforms.

Oxfam India seeks to:

Build Capacity of the Poor People at the Grass Roots Level - facilitating relationships, networks, resources and capabilities to boost voice and opportunities of poor people and bridging the social gap;

Promote Multi-stakeholder Dialogue - creating a joint platform to facilitate a constructive conversation among the poor, civil society organizations, governments and private bodies including media;

Monitor, Research, Analyze - delivery of public expenditure/private provision/government policy and using findings to promote informed opinion, debate;

Shifting Attitudes and Beliefs - through popular campaigning, alliances and mass mobilization; and

Mainstream - gender, caste and ethnicity (social inclusion) into all Oxfam India's work.

Oxfam India believes that working with the poor is more crucial while working for the poor and its role is merely that of a facilitator to bring voices of the people to the fore, where they can articulate their aspirations, be in a position to visualize their own future and work towards realizing the same. Only that can bring sustainable long-term changes in their lives as well as in the life of a nation.

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Figure 1: How Oxfam India works
Multi-stakeholder partnerships is key to Oxfam India's way of working

Research Institutes
Universities
INGOs
National NGOs
Oxfam India
People's Movements
Active Citizens
State
Media
Private Sector
Regional and Global Policy Making

Where We Work

Oxfam India presently works in the following states in India –

- Delhi
- Uttar Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Gujarat
- Maharashtra
- Assam
- West Bengal
- Bihar
- Jharkhand
- Madhya Pradesh
- Chattisgarh
- Uttarakhand
- Andhra Pradesh
- Kerala
- Karnataka
- Tamil Nadu
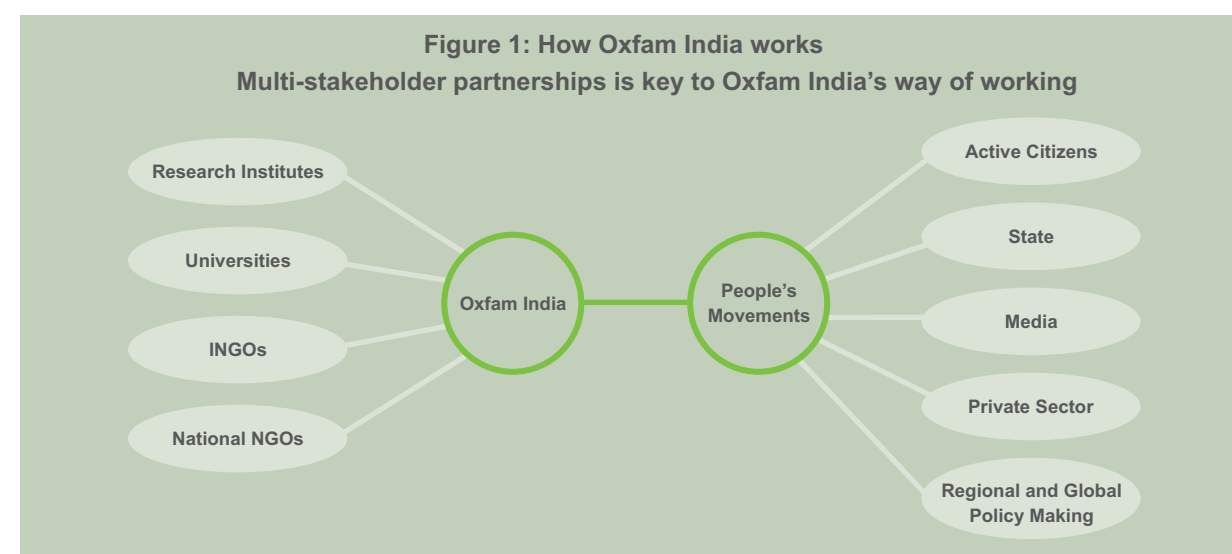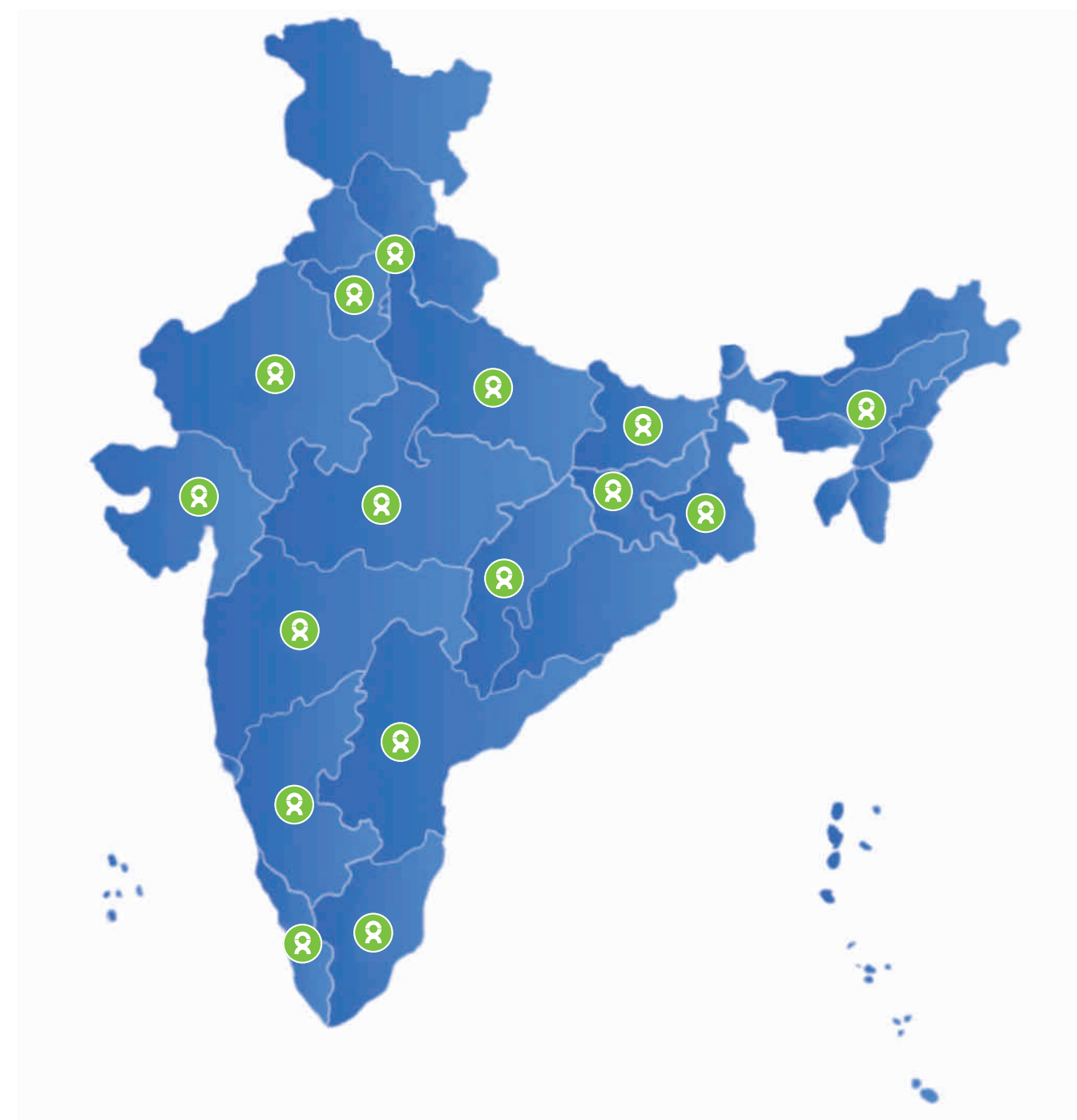
External Context Analysis:
A Tale of Two Indias

Poverty and Inequality in India

Poverty and Prosperity: A picture of sharp inequalities

The world has been hailing the twenty-first century for quite sometime now, as the century of Asian dominance, particularly one dominated by China and India. A relatively lesser impact of the recent economic slowdown has further reinforced such views.

The coining of the term BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) to represent the new power bloc has boosted this image further.

India has already become the third largest economy (in terms of purchasing power parity) after USA and China as per the World Bank. It has seen consistent growth rates between 6%-9% for the last five years, second only to China, leading to significant reduction in poverty levels (from 46% poor in 1986 to 28% in 2008 officially). It now boasts of three Indians making it to the list of ten richest individuals in the world at any given time. It also boasts of a strong middle class (ranging between 200-300 million according to various estimates), good enough to sustain its economic drive. Globally, it is also seen as the savior of the world due to its reputation as the 'global pharmacy of the third world' through its large scale production of affordable generic drugs.

And yet, the other side of the picture will tell us of an alternate and equally (if not more) powerful story of an India steeped in acute poverty and inequality, which has sharpened during these very glittering years of growth. Even today, according to World Bank parameters of 1.25 $ a day, 456 million people or approximately 42% of the people in India are poor.

According to a recent report submitted by NC Saxena Committee set up by the government of India, the official Below Poverty Line (BPL) should be revised from the current 28% to cover 52% of the population which is in acute need of food security. As per recent estimates, the average Indian family today is absorbing 115 kg less per year of food grains than in 1991[3] . Hence India's drive for a super power status is pulled back by its huge underbelly. It is also worth noting that every third poor in the world is an Indian; every third illiterate in the world is an Indian too and approximately half of its children are malnourished. India also has a deplorably high number of maternal deaths (in many states higher than sub-Saharan Africa).[4] Globally, we know that if India does not meet Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (which it is now certain to fail on many counts)[5], the world at large will fail too.

Even the relative insulation from the recent economic recession has led to revised lower figures of growth projections which will severely impact poverty challenges. The growing presence of a large mass of illiterate, unskilled population will directly impact this projection further.

India has already become the third largest economy (in terms of purchasing power parity) after USA and China as per the World Bank.

[3] Utsa Patnaik, Neoliberalism and Rural Poverty in India, Economic and Political Weekly, July 28, 2007, pp. 3132-3150.
[4] Look at the annexure I and II for more disaggregated details.
[5] For example, it has already failed the target of meeting 2005 target of gender parity inside the classrooms.

According to 2001 Census, 34% of its population is in the age group of 15 to 35 years and by 2020 the average age of an Indian would be 29 years, making India one of the youngest nations but also vulnerable to the growing pressure from this very population for better economic and social opportunities.

Large scale internal migrations from the rural to urban areas have been a key feature in India for a long time precisely because of the developmental model showcasing 'islands of prosperity' amidst a sea of poverty. This has not only increased manifold during the recent years of economic growth, but has also led to a large scale impoverishment of the urban population itself. This is largely a result of crumbling infrastructure, inability to meet the employment demands from the migrating population and a growing casualisation of labour without any kind of social and economic security.

Increasing Inequality

It is also worth repeating that poverty and inequality have many faces in India and different indicators would tell us about different pockets of concentration of poverty. Hence, inequality has to be defined in terms of regional disparities, economic, caste and social status, ethnicity and religion, gender among others. And it has to be argued that while the absolute poverty might be on a descent (itself a debatable point), inequality has

increased sharply in the last few decades or so.

Pockets of Inequality

Northern and Eastern states versus the rest: poor regional integration

There is now general consensus that there has been a great imbalance between different regions and states in terms of economic prosperity in India. These disparities between regions within a country are mainly between the lagging east and northern parts of the country vis-à-vis the relatively prosperous southern and western parts. These states are almost uniformly lagging on the three basic indicators of economic poverty, basic amenities and social indicators. The ratio of per capita incomes within India, looking at the richest and poorest states, was 4.5 to 1 in the late 1990s and this gap is still rapidly increasing. Per capita GDP in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (which represent 25% of the Indian population) is less than half the national average and only a third of that in the seven richest states.

Even in the relatively prosperous regions, there are areas recording high levels of malnutrition, anaemia and hunger, as for instance in the remote Tribal belts of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Table 1: State-wise Rural Poverty Incidence across Socio Religious Categories in 2004-05

	All	Hindus				Muslims	Other Minorities
		All	SCs/STs	OBCs	Gen		
Total	22.7	22.6	34.8	19.5	9	26.9	14.3
Kerala	9	9	19	7	4	11	4
Uttar Pradesh	28	28	39	26	10	33	40
Bihar	35	34	56	29	13	38	33
Assam	18	12	14	16	7	27	20
Jharkhand	38	38	49	32	17	36	46
Andhra Pradesh	8	8	16	6	2	7	4
Gujarat	14	15	24	14	3	7	6
Orissa	41	40	60	30	16	22	70
Chhattisgarh	33	33	40	27	26	40	11

Source: Social, Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Community of India (Justice Rajinder Sachchar Committee Report), GoI

There has been a historical trajectory of under development in these regions. These states are beset not by income poverty alone but also trail on the scale of illiteracy, poor health indicators, lack of access to markets, gender disparities and social conflicts. Much of the Maoist insurgency in India is concentrated in these states besides much of religion and caste based conflict. This further exacerbates the cycle of inequality and absolute misery. Even in the relatively prosperous regions, there are areas recording high levels of malnutrition, anaemia and hunger, as for instance in the remote Tribal belts of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The other key facet of poverty and inequality in India is among the socially discriminated groups along the lines of caste, ethnicity, religion and gender. For example, while Muslim children under five suffering from malnutrition are comparable (Table 1) to national average (41.8% against the national 42.5%), Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children fare much worse with 47.9% and 54.5% respectively. While the relative status of these groups is quite adverse across states, it is also important to note that these groups comparatively fare better in the better-off states.

The vast rural hinterlands

The largest concentration of poverty is still to be found in the rural areas simply because seven out of ten Indians live in these parts. Despite somewhat rapid decrease in official figures of poverty in rural areas (from 56.4% in 1973-74 to 28.3% in 2004-05 as per the 11th Plan document), it is here that the absolute numbers of rural poor have not decreased (officially 22 crore rural poor are BPL). This is also because the number of the unemployed in rural India have grown at almost double the rate of employment.

Growing urban face of poverty

The large-scale migration to urban centres coupled with the dynamic growth in these centres has led to a scenario where out of about 285 million people living in urban India today, nearly a quarter are below poverty line. They suffer from insecure

housing tenure, lack of access to basic services, ill health, poor livelihood opportunities (most of them casual workforce without any security to minimum regular wages). Worse, because of very little or no access to official identification process, they have no or very little social security cover leading to a scenario where urban inequality has grown more sharply than the rural in the past few years.

One of the key trends in this respect has been that of steady informalisation of labour as a result of both the decline of agriculture and the organized public sector as a whole. The total share of the informal labour sector consisted of more than 85% in 1999-2000 itself.[6] 11th Five Year Plan document underlines the declining trend in wages especially with respect to the agricultural sector while also underlining the overall decline in wages of women in the overall informal sector. This has rendered this population increasingly vulnerable to the vagaries of the market.

Drivers of Poverty and Inequality in India

While the growth rate of the Indian economy has improved significantly, several key factors have contributed together to make inequality sharper in the current scenario. This can be attributed to socio-economic factors propelled through the interplay between the market and the government, a lack of governance accountability on essential services, and due to social, caste, class and religion based discrimination and conflicts, and also increasing natural disasters now further worsened by climate change.

One of the key trends in this respect has been that of steady informalisation of labour as a result of both the decline of agriculture and the organized public sector as a whole.

Unequal Development Trajectories and Poor Governance

In the course of the economy undergoing liberalisation, the state's role has been getting redefined. While earlier, the government was supposed to deliver all the goods to a 'passive recipient' people, the latter phase has been a reversal where poor people have been left entirely to fend for themselves. But it has also led to a parallel rise of the social movements mobilizing people to demand their rights leading to governments increasingly recognizing the threats of sharp inequalities.

The situation is aggravated due to the unequal relationships between the hub and the spokes within a federal structure. A mere 5% of the total outlays go to the local governance bodies. Through a long prevailing demand, local decentralization of governance has taken place in the form of 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments giving some power to the local Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies. This would necessitate support to the local bodies for revenue generation as well as equitable provision of the revenue by the state and central governments for the local bodies. There have been further reforms with quotas for women in these bodies (ranging from 33% - 50%)[7]. The process is still far from complete as the power is yet to be fully devolved to the grass roots while in many instances there is intent to bypass even what is prescribed. For example, while the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) says that at least 50% of the work will be undertaken through the PRIs it has not been implemented in most of the states. Also very often, the elected representatives act as mere stamps for those entrenched in the system.

One of the useful comparators in this respect would be to compare the lagging states with the relatively better ones. It makes a sharp contrast - the better performing states also have better governance structures and service delivery capacity. A state like Tamilnadu is found to be performing much better compared to the poorer states even in the implementation of schemes like National Rural Health Mission, Public Distribution System, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan etc.

One of the major factors in this respect has also been the lack of political will among the political class as well as bureaucracy in terms of both pushing for pro-poor policy reforms as well as implementing the existing government schemes. Hence there is a huge gap in terms of intent and the actual translation of that intent. While this has a lot to do with the corruption institutionalised in the polity at all levels, it is also due to the lack of capacity (especially at the lower levels) to even implement the schemes effectively, one of the reasons why states return major portions of money unutilized every year.

Out of a total of 180 countries, India ranked 85th on the Corruption Perception Index, surveyed by Transparency International in 2008. Police and Judiciary are rated as the two most corrupt institutions in the country in the same report. It is not merely due to accidental gaps but due to the very legacy of patronage and power entrenched in the governance system. Needless to add, it is the poor who are hit worst in this scheme of things. Hence, to give one example, any policy reform like defining a category of Below Poverty Line people, means opening of huge money making opportunities while pushing poor people further out of the ambit of any social safety net.

Neglect of the Agriculture Sector

Specifically, almost 65% of the population is dependent on agriculture, while producing less than 20% of GDP, pointing to an urgent need for livelihood diversification options along with the need to strengthen the small-scale agriculture. According to some surveys, 40% of the farmers would leave agriculture given an option. One of the clear reasons for the same has been the gradual disinvestment from this sector pursued by successive governments. It stands at less than 1% of GDP today as against the projected 4%. Even other infra-structural support has been largely missing. For example, barely about 8% of the total

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bank credit finds its way to the micro and small enterprises, a sector catering to a large mass of the people.

Also, women's condition in this scenario has become even worse. While more than 84% of women are involved in agriculture carrying out about 60% of the labour work, only about 10% of them are actual land holders. Similarly, the Tribals and the Dalits fare even worse with more than 60% of the Dalits as landless wage earners in the rural areas.

So on the one hand we have a largely over-dependent and under employed population on agriculture with a vast mass of landless casual labour, on the other we have very little infrastructural support available for the diversification of livelihood options in the rural areas. Also, some of the relatively new policies pursued by the government like Special Economic Zones, mining and natural resources rights being contracted out to the large, private companies have led to further eviction and subsequent increase in vulnerability of the rural poor.

High Exposure to Disasters

A total of 241 districts in 21 states (constituting roughly half of India) are termed as prone to multi-hazard risks. About 57 % of land is vulnerable to earthquakes, 28 % to drought (2009 has seen 246 districts being declared as drought affected) and 12% to flood. This vulnerability is increasing only further. Annual floods in Brahmaputra-Ganga flood plains affect millions of poor leading to forced displacement. Some of India's most poor and unequal states such as Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Uttar Pradesh are also most disaster-prone states.

In India, the direct losses from natural disasters amount to 2% of its GDP and up to 12% of central government revenues.

Further, a 2007 report by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change forecasts that the average global temperature in this century could rise by 3 degree Celsius against 0.74 degree Celsius during the last century. This obviously has implications for a country like India with such a large coastline leading to further impoverishment of the people.

High Vulnerability to Climate Change

With a long, densely populated and low-lying coastline and an economy tied closely to its natural resource base, India is very vulnerable to the impacts of climate change on precipitation patterns, ecosystems, its agricultural potential, water and marine resources, and incidence of diseases. India's choices on how it pursues a high, future growth trajectory feeds directly into wider climate change developments.

Long-term changes in temperatures and precipitations have direct implications on agricultural yields. Moreover, resilience is typically low in rural areas as the existing asset base is weak and services provided by infrastructure and institutions are often insufficient.

Rainfed farming is the predominant feature of agriculture in India. Therefore, the pattern of rainfall (onset, duration, spatial extent) and the total precipitation are crucial to determining not only the

In India, the direct losses from natural disasters amount to 2% of its GDP and up to 12% of central government revenues.

Table 2: Natural Disasters Impacts in India (1990 – 2008)

Country	Population ('000)	Death ('000)	People affected ('000)	Population affected (%)	Damage in US$ ('000)
India	1,071,608	53.4	885,224	82.6	25,743,100

Since it is total number of people affected over 18 years, % affected can be higher than 100% since it indicates multiple exposure to disasters
Source: Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) and United Nations World Population Prospects

[7] A very recent announcement by the government has increased this quota for women to 50% across India.

livelihoods of the majority of people in rural areas but also India's larger growth in terms of GDP. Global warming is already affecting the rainfall patterns in the country. Monsoon rainfall has decreased by approximately 5% - 8% since the 1950s and such pattern could contribute to more intense, longer and more widespread droughts across the region, as indicated by the recent droughts. There is, however, a greater need for research for change in agricultural practices for climate change adaptation.

Similarly, the area affected by floods more than doubled between 1953 and 2003. Some of the largest Indian cities (Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata) are on the coast and will be vulnerable to rising sea levels.[8]

It is feared that the sub-continent may also face an increased problem of climate refugees, with people forced to flee their homes because of extreme weather events. Climate change will also have a major impact on public health, with changing diseases patterns that will affect first and foremost poor people, with limited access to health services.

Climate change has also a direct impact on the glaciers in the Himalayas. The retreat of the ice mass of the Himalaya-Hindu Kush (the third largest ice mass in the world, after the polar icecaps) could pose a threat to the region itself.

While the per capita Green House emissions of India, is comparatively low, India is already the fourth largest polluter in the world. It is clear in this sense that India might not have created global warming but the situation certainly calls for urgent steps to be taken.

Some of the initiatives that can be taken would also be opportunities for private sector to develop low-carbon energy based technology, which would prove to be long-term solution to the economic problems as well.

Failure of the Public Services: A New Caste System in Place

A broad look at some of the essential services in India will tell us the severely stressed situation under which these sectors are right now. The poor have been constantly hit disproportionately in accessing these services.

India spends less than 1% of GDP on health and less than 3% on education, much less compared to other developing countries. This means that almost 80% of the total health cost is borne out of pocket resulting in 40% of the population borrowing money to meet the cost of hospitalisation. The paradox is that while it is known as the 'Pharmacy of the Third World' due to supply of generic drugs, just about 30% of its own population has access to essential drugs. Similarly, on the education front, low levels of investment have led to huge drop out rates of children reaching up to 40% at the primary stage and 52% at elementary level despite the official version of more than 90% enrolments. Of course the most vulnerable sections like Dalits, Tribals, Muslims and girls are the worst hit in this scenario (refer annexure 3). Various reports by UN agencies say that out of a total of roughly 1.3 crore out-of-school children, more than 80% are girls.[9]

On other fronts like water and sanitation which are crucially linked to the issue of public health as well, even today the sustainable coverage for water is only approx. 50% population and for sanitation only about 25% population.

The other crucial aspect is food security but here too even in the existing scheme, 58% of subsidized food grains do not reach the BPL families, 22% reach APL (Above Poverty Line) and 36% is sold in the black market.

A severe lack of governance and effective implementation of the existing schemes has led to further impoverishment of the poor. A sober analysis will tell us that the problem faced on all these fronts, though part of a long historical legacy,

The access to basic services in India in a way reflects the existing multi-layered caste system, where each person is entitled to get the quality of services according to his or her caste/economic status.

has worsened over the last couple of decades due to certain key shifts in the developmental trajectory of India. It tells us that there has been a gradual disinvestment from the public services from whatever meager resources were available earlier. Over the years, a kind of 'normalization' took place with the perception that the people's basic rights are not rights but actually 'services' to be bought from the open market. Those who could afford could buy better education for their children, better health care for themselves, safe drinking water and so on. The rest, a vast majority of the people, were left to fend for themselves. A clear hierarchy of services, first rate for those who could afford, second rate for those who couldn't has been established. In the words of a scholar, the access to basic services in India in a way reflects the existing multi-layered caste system, where each person is entitled to get the quality of services according to his or her caste/economic status.

Continued Impact of Social Exclusion

There has been continuing exclusion based on caste, ethnicity and religion. Among all the poverty indicators, it is the Dalits, Tribals and Muslims who are found to be worse off than the others. In fact, according to the government's own reports following the findings submitted by the Rajinder Sachar Committee, Muslims now stand almost at the bottom of the ladder. It is for this reason that it needs to be highlighted that together these three categories constitute about 40% of India's population and as a socio-economic category herein lies the basket of Indian poverty. These are the groups which are deprived of the 'mainstream' professions both in rural and urban India. Hence while majority of the Dalits and Tribals are land less wage labourers, a majority of Muslims (even in urban centres) are in self-dependent petty professions, distinctly excluded from the services sector. Doubtlessly a part of historical legacy, their situation has not really improved during the last sixty years of development..

While there has been a growing assertion among the Dalits led by its middle class intellectuals, and politicians, a similar pattern is yet to emerge among the Tribals and the Muslims on the scale achieved by the Dalits. While there is a positive trend of empowerment in the Indian democratic process. Marginalised people themselves must increasingly begin to ask for accountability, both

from the state and the society while asserting their rights.

Gender Inequality

Despite positive changes in the policy environment and progressive legislation, Indian women continue to face discrimination on all fronts, including inside and outside their homes. It is now increasingly argued and agreed that in most of India, gender discrimination begins before birth and continues throughout women's lives.

India ranks 113th in the Global Gender Gap rankings[10] which are based on indicators of the gendered gap in outcomes (and not just inputs) across four key areas:

- Economic participation and opportunity,
- Educational attainment,
- Political empowerment and
- Health and survival.

More than 60% women are chronically poor in this country[11] and according to the National Family Health Survey –III (2005-06), almost half the women suffer from anemia and malnutrition. This data also reveals that two out of five married women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their husbands. Moreover, there have been growing incidences of public forms of violence against them especially during times of caste and communal conflicts, and also due to policing by the religious fundamentalists imposing their stricter norms of behavior on women. Hence 'honor killings' have become as common as female feticide and female infanticide leading to a continued downslide in the sex ratio. A whole gamut of issues like early marriage, early

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[8] South Asia Regional Vision Strategy Document, Oxfam GB, N. Delhi, 2009
[9] Refer to Children Out of School Report (UNICEF/ UIS) as well as EFA Global   Monitoring Report 2007 (UNESCO).

[10] WEF-Global Gender Gap Report 2008, cited in South Asia Regional Vision and Change Strategy Document, Oxfam GB, 2009
[11] Report of the 11th Plan Working Group on Poverty Alleviation Programme, Planning Commission, 2006

conception, pressure on girls to give birth to sons, dowry and bride burning are in-house manifestations of the entrenched patriarchal structure.

While there has been considerable focus on the education of the girl child, the 2007 target of the gender parity in the classrooms has already been missed by India. Women continue to face discrimination in accessing health rights despite selective targeted schemes like Reproductive Child Health (RCH) and Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY).

There has been some progressive movement towards political empowerment of women through reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (ranging between one-third to half.) However, a similar move in Parliament has failed to fructify so far in spite of repeated efforts by various governments.

Even in terms of economic empowerment, while women continue to do bulk of the work, yet they often remain deprived of economic remuneration or even a formal acknowledgement of their contribution. They remain without any control over assets and largely form the casual, informal and hence the most exploited labour force of the country.

International conventions like CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women), Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have led to successive policy formulations at the national level with a focus on state accountability to uphold women's rights. Such strategies mostly focus on legislative and policy reform in the area of women's access to justice VAW (Violence Against Women), support services, political leadership (quota in local and national government), overall budgetary allocations for women related issues, and legislation around 'family' laws (marriage, divorce, inheritance etc).[12]

The other set of attempts have been to facilitate economic empowerment of women through access to basic services, economic opportunities and other allied services. While the state accountability and provision of economic opportunities could be seen as an effective strategy in general, discrimination against women is a more complex phenomenon where a set of other factors too play their role. For example, family and society at large play a crucial role very often packaged through a

religious discourse restricting women's life choices, their mobility and decision-making abilities. It is this set of barriers which has been widely recognized, but is yet to be tackled efficiently with different contextual nuances.

It is in this context that the question of women's agency becomes paramount. While the debate has now gone on for long, the ways however to address a woman's agency both inside and outside the family have been hard to come by. This is despite the fact that their emancipatory role has been widely recognized at least on the twin issues of lower fertility rate and the better chances of the child survival (especially the girl child) in the family[13].

Impact of Conflict and Violence

The role of conflict as a barrier to socio-economic progress has been long recognized. Conflicts impoverish people by pushing the societies out of the development track. Unfortunately, large-scale conflicts have continued to erupt frequently in various regions of the country. They are results of both the socio-historical legacy of India as a nation state and the kind of development paradigm that has continued to keep certain sections of the people on the margins.

One of the major forms of this conflict has been witnessed in the pockets of severe stress i.e. the extreme poor states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. These are the states which are also partially or largely Tribal dominated isolated terrains which have not really tasted any fruit of development. If at all, it has been a bitter fruit in the form of continued exploitation by the state, large and middle level land holders, private contractors,

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large-scale private companies etc through a constant extraction of the natural resources leading also to large-scale displacement. It has resulted in a sustained armed mobilization among these communities often branded as the Naxalite problem, which now affects more than 160 districts of the country. This conflict is not only a result of socio-economic marginalization but has further led to continuing exploitation of the people, often from both the warring sides. State has largely seen it as a law and order issue often taking it as a questioning of its own 'undisputed' claim over the natural resources without really addressing it with a broader developmental vision.

The other kind of conflict has been identity based conflicts around caste and religion. While it has been mentioned above that there has been an assertion of Dalits in the last few decades politically, it has also led to a resistance from the upper castes, sometimes in the most violent and brutal manner. Caste-based atrocities continue in different parts of the country ranging from Bihar, Maharashtra to Punjab.

A more menacing form of identity-based conflict has been the one based on religion, mainly between Hindus and Muslims but also between Hindus and Christians, Hindus and Sikhs at different historical junctures. While the partition of 1947 did leave a legacy of continued mistrust among these identities, it has taken newer forms and unprecedented heights in the last few decades. Hence, even as Gujarat is seen as the model of economic development, large-scale massacres of Muslims in 2002 and Kandhamal massacre of Tribal Christians in Orissa (a relatively poor state) in 2008, are two faces of the same coin. In both these instances, while a contextualized material politics is at the root of these massacres, they are also a part of broader national divisions which have continued to wreck this nation.

What is important to note, however, in all these instances is that in most of the cases once again it is the most marginalized communities like Dalits, Tribals and Muslims who have been at the receiving end. It underlines the need for a comprehensive strategy of development which also takes into account the social fissures as much as the economic ones.

On a different level, continued conflict in North-east and Kashmir is also part of a historical legacy

almost from the beginning of the independence. The causes for the same need to be examined more closely looking from the people's perspective. It has led to these regions always being on the boil also because of the border disputes with Pakistan, China and Bangladesh in particular.

HIV and AIDS

In India, the impact of HIV and AIDS is not very visible due to the low prevalence rate (approximately 0.36% as per NACO AIDS prevalence estimate-2006) and a large population. However, 118 districts out of around 600 districts have HIV prevalence of more than 1% among mothers attending ante-natal clinics. This reveals that HIV infection has taken deep root in India and poses a threat to the development process. As per the National AIDS Control organization (NACO) estimates, the people living with HIV in India are 2.31 million. Of these 88.7% are in the most productive age group (15-49) and 60% of them come from rural India. The growing number of women at risk is another factor which needs to be recognised as the 'feminine' face of the epidemic.

Apart from the mounting human costs, the epidemic threatens to wipe out the economic and development gains of the past decades. A study conducted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reveals that HIV will have an overbearing impact over the next decade on economic growth and livelihood of the people, in the absence of remedial policy action. The HIV epidemic in India is likely to bring down the average GDP growth rate during 2001-2003 to 2015-2016 by one per cent. Another study conducted by National Council for Applied Economic Research for NACO in 2005 argues that over the 14-year period between 2002-03 and 2015-16, "economic growth could decline by 0.86 percentage points over this period and per capita gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.55 percentage points, if the spread of HIV goes unchecked in India."

Drivers of Change

All the participants in the development process , namely the state, civil society, private sector and the media have their role to play in accelerating change. In this sense, they are the drivers of changes both in the short-term and the long-term.

[12] This analysis is borrowed from Oxfam GB's South Asia Regional Vision and Change Strategy Document, 2009
[13] Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, Oxford University Press, N. Delhi, 2005

State

By state we mean here a gamut of people who include the political class, bureaucracy, legislature and judiciary. Given the large-scale power that the state wields and the vast amount of resources that it commands, no other stake holder can bring about changes at the scale that are required. Despite the recent withdrawal of the state from various sectors, it still commands the effective decision-making power.

The political class and the legislature have brought in key policy changes recently which can now effectively be seen within justiciable rights framework as against the welfarist mode in practice till now. The passing of Domestic Violence Act, Right to Information Act, NREGA, Right to Education Act and the upcoming Food Security Act and National Health Bill are just a few examples which increasingly show the changing nature of the governance in the country. There has been a long pressing demand, however, on the accountability of bureaucracy, its need to perform from the top to the grass roots. But in many instances the crucial difference has been made by a pro-active bureaucracy, wherever it exists. There is, therefore, a greater opportunity now to work with the government on the deliverance of its own intent and its schemes through a constructive alliance as a partner.

One of the long-standing demands in this respect has been for an effective decentralization which not only means devolution of power to the bureaucracy at the grass roots but a mechanism through which people themselves have the wherewithal to manage their lives, resources, schemes through local governance and even generate resources at the local level. While the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments show some intent in this regard, the effective decision-making power reaching the people is a dream yet to be realised.

Notwithstanding the fact that judiciary is identified as one of the most corrupt institutions in some surveys, it has also brought in far reaching changes recently through its 'judicial activism' to ensure people's rights and livelihoods, e.g. its intervention on Right to Food. The institutionalisation of various rights through a legal framework will only lead to a greater leveraging of judiciary for the realization of these rights in the coming years.

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Civil Society

Within the spectrum of civil society, there are many elements interacting and influencing one another. Today in India, these include class, caste and religion based groupings, rights based grass roots movements, trade unions, very often working at cross-purposes with each other. While there is a pull towards articulating demands on behalf of the greater number of poor and the marginalized, there is also specific fight for the resources based on class, caste and religious identities.

It is crucial in this sense, to identify those progressive levers of change within the civil society which articulate their role at two levels: by critiquing programmes and policies, which go against the interest of the poor and the marginalized and also articulate an alternative vision of change which is all inclusive.

While the tradition of civil society movement has been a long-standing one in this country, some of the far reaching policy changes in the recent years can be directly attributed to the mobilization of the people brought in by the various social movements in this country.

Narmada Bachao Andolan, Right to Food Campaign, Right to Information Campaign and Right to Employment movement resulting in NREGA are just a few examples of the people's power. It certainly manifests the continued power of the poor and the marginalized and their continuous struggle for the right to be heard.

Alongside, various identity based movements fighting for the rights of the people against social and economic discrimination e.g. Dalit movements, women's movements etc have brought in not just effective mobilization of the people but have also led to a reconfiguration of political equation at the state and national level.

One of the recent but strong voices among the civil society has been that of the middle classes which is now viewed as a crucial contributor for larger policy changes. This gradually manifests itself in its new avatar of an enlightened citizenry which has led towards a mobilisation of people for a development oriented polity rather than the one based on primordial identities like caste and religion. In this sense, even a poor state like Bihar has seen electoral politics geared through this lens as well as the recent national elections. Though, this trend would need to be harnessed more pro-actively through a rigorous political training of the people.

As has been mentioned above, India is a country of youth many of whom come from the 'self-sufficient' middle classes. While it has often been argued that both the youth and the middle classes are non-political entities not really interested in any broader social engagement, it has been our experience that very often it is their involvement which brings in sustainable change. There are tremendous opportunities and potential for the youth to be in the forefront of social transformation and development. Equitable distribution of prosperity and peace is likely to happen faster when youth are perceived as being inextricably linked with community development. Therefore, it is imperative to engage with them and facilitate opportunities and spaces for them to explore and apply their creativity and energy to effect meaningful changes in their own lives and in those around them.

Equitable distribution of prosperity and peace is likely to happen faster when youth are perceived as being inextricably linked with community development.

Private Sector

In the last couple of decades India has seen a rapid growth in the private business sector driven mainly by services and technology exports (particularly IT and financial services) to the world. These decades have also seen accelerated exchange of goods and services across the world through a complex yet efficient form of supply chains spanning across informal and formal economies. The process has also been marked with increasing power of the multi national corporations and large companies on the economic and social conditions of people.

Recent global crisis - rising food prices, climate change, the credit crunch, recession and social unrest - point to a markedly different relationship between businesses and their relation to the poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Many companies are inextricably linked with these various problems, able to either exacerbate or to relieve them.

Despite a rapid growth of the organized sector, most of the private sector is in fact in the informal sector, which is yet to evolve standards of transparent and accountable corporate governance. Small and medium enterprises working in the informal sector employ majority of the workforce. In terms of employment conditions, women are the worst hit within the unorganized/ informal sector as very often they are placed in low skilled, unskilled occupations, working in home based industries at exploitative wages and poor working conditions.

Coming of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and land displacement of poor people is just one of the recent examples of state facilitated unequal power wielded by the corporate sector. Low level of corporate governance and accountability has also had significant impacts on the environment in terms of increased carbon emissions, loss of habitat and rampant pollution particularly in mining, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing industries. Increased urbanization, rising production and population are changing the consumption pattern at an unprecedented rate resulting in immense pressure on resources.

Across India, industry associations, lobbying groups and chambers of commerce are increasingly becoming engaged in working with the government, the civil society and the international

community to mitigate as well as adapt to the risks and opportunities being posed by these challenges.

Nationally, businesses have started working on corporate social responsibility ranging from developing ethical standards in the supply chains, innovation to reach poor consumers at the bottom of the economic pyramid (BOP), social venture capital and philanthropic giving that is primarily to the cause of education, health, communications and livelihoods. However the efficacy and ability of these initiatives to address the larger issue of growth with equity are yet to be substantiated.

Media

Media in this country has always played significant role even during the independence struggle. With the rise in literacy levels, the role of vernacular media and the later 'information revolution' brought in by the electronic media has increasingly played a very significant role in shaping of the social changes as well as the political decision-making in this country.

While the English media is seen as representing the interests of the elite and middle classes where most of the decision-making power lies, it has also seen some very progressive positioning championing the rights of the people. Its stellar role in the highlighting of the victims of Gujarat massacre in 2002 was in stark contrast to the divisive role played by the vernacular local media. Of late, it has also become the harbinger of mobilization of the middle classes on key issues of terrorism, security, political reforms especially the electoral ones though its larger emancipatory potential for the good of the whole is yet to be fully exploited.

Vernacular media remains fraught with social dissension reflecting the ongoing conflicts in the hinterland but has also been more vocal and expressive in giving coverage to the plight of the

Media has become the harbinger of mobilization of the middle classes on key issues of terrorism, security, political reforms especially the electoral ones.

poor which very often get left out of the radar of 'national media'. It is this potential of this media which needs to be harnessed further.

India in The World

With the recent emergence of India as the new economic power, fuelled by its image as the world's largest democracy', its ambitions have taken more radical international dimensions. Its foreign trade, though rapidly growing, is still a relatively small share of world trade but its resilience in with standing the recent economic crisis compared to the 'developed world' is also recognised. Its medical industry is booming for 'medical tourism' while it is supplying affordable drugs to the poor countries. But beyond its high end service-sector led reputation as the 'back office of the world', India is now also recognized for its 'soft power' i.e. cultural contributions led by the global influence of Bollywood cinema, sports like cricket where its money power is defining the rules of the game and its global intellectual influence have defined much of development debates in the recent years. More importantly, India has also witnessed some of the pioneering civil society movements, role model for many in the world. An act like National Rural Employment Guarantee is seen as something to be emulated in the other developing countries. Its overseas influence is also backed by its strong Diaspora or Non-Resident India (NRI) power which has also defined developmental trajectories back at home in many ways.

India's role in the international arena has been under transition during the last few decades. Known as a regional super power in South Asia for long, it is now eyeing for a much larger space internationally. Even after independence and the following years during the cold war, India had nursed ambitions to posit itself as a global leader mainly driven by its rich legacy of non-violent anti-colonial struggle. This translated into it becoming a leader of a third 'neutral alliance' of Non-aligned Movement. At the same time recurring conflicts on its borders mainly with Pakistan and China during these very years forced it to be pegged down to the region itself. In a way, thus, it has constantly struggled between its wider global ambitions and the real politik of containing its regional neighbours along its borders.

The world too is busy in some ways acknowledging India's new found status hence its acceptance in

the elite nuclear club. But the transition could also be seen within its inner conflict to seek legitimacy at the older forms of global institutions like United Nations and its constant striving for a seat in the Security Council. Its parallel attempts have been to redefine these very institutions asking for a more inclusive world order through conglomerations like G20, call for a more broad-based World Bank and IMF through new power alliances like BRICS. It is important to note, however, that it still remains one of the largest suppliers to UN peace-keeping force.

Globally it is now an active member of new formations like G20, ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), BRICS and looking for greater role in other forums like Shanghai Cooperation. Still, they are not necessarily the alignments on homogenous common grounds. For example, with each of the countries in BRICS, India has a different set of bilateral equations. India and Brazil are friends on the issue of free trade on cheap drugs (a cause crucial to India's many pharmaceutical companies producing generic drugs) while along with Brazil and South Africa it has been a pioneer in changing the terms of debate on WTO (World Trade Organisation) championing the causes of the developing countries for removing agricultural subsidies in the rich countries. Despite coming together for a greater cause to challenge the dominance of the traditional G8, India and China still attempt to contain each other. With the coming of BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) on the issue of Climate Change, a new and more fruitful alliance seems to be emerging on the international arena.

What is crucial in all this is that now India is seen as both a major 'deal breaker' and a 'deal maker' on some key issues. For example, its position on climate change is seen as 'rigid' by the rich countries, where it pushes for the latter's obligations on both mitigation and funding for adaptation. It has been a blocker of many proposals by the rich countries on trade but has recently given indications of a shift in line with its shifting priorities. Yet, within the available models of emerging powers, India would do well to recognise the global goodwill that Brazil has earned by clearly championing the cause of the developing and poor nations by clearly articulating positions on issues ranging from nuclear non-proliferation, access to inexpensive generic drugs to that of agricultural subsidies.

Hence with the changing shifts between its politics

of international expansion and regional containment, its crucial role on major international deals like trade, climate change and financing for development, its perceived emancipatory role on the drug front, there are ample opportunities to engage with the Indian government on its international commitments and obligations while also building an international forum for civil society coalitions on some of these.

The above analysis attempts to show the pockets of poverty at different levels; lists some of the key factors which are crucial in terms of addressing the issues of poverty and inequality while also outlining a brief list of key stakeholders who could be a partner in the change process for equitable development, especially from the point of view of the most marginalized.

Key Conclusions

There are sharp inequalities and disparities in terms of lagging states versus better performing states and different social groups along the lines of caste, class, religion and gender. There is a clear lack of key pro-policy framework which looks at issues from the perspective of people's rights rather than welfarist measure. There are serious issues of governance, a gap between existing programmes and their implementation especially with regard to the poorer states. There is a clear need to build a synergized active citizenship which builds strong linkages between the ongoing poor people's social movements and youth and middle classes. Similarly, there is a need for India to play a pro-poor role in the global arena using its newly enhanced bargaining power. It is along these axes that the Oxfam India Programme would need to build its future strategic directions.

India known as a regional super power in South Asia for long is now eyeing for a much larger space internationally.

Oxfam India Strategy

The Way Forward - from Poverty to Power

Oxfam India believes that there are three key pillars of change which are: an active citizenship, an effective and accountable state and a responsible and accountable private sector. By active citizenship, we mean a dynamic combination of rights and obligations involving faith in Constitutional rights (though not only including those who have a right to vote), paying taxes, being an active participant in the growth but also who are exercising the full range of political, civil and social rights. They can use these rights not just for themselves but for the larger good of the public, while those without these rights become active to demand these rights collectively.

By effective and accountable state, we mean a state which can guarantee security and the rule of law, design and implement an effective strategy to ensure inclusive economic growth, and is accountable to and able to guarantee the rights of its citizens.[14]

In this context, it needs to be acknowledged once again that there has been a series of progressive policy changes which provides a framework for addressing the issues of poverty and inequality in an effective manner. The Eleventh Five Year Plan document and associated National Development Goals, India's commitment to Millennium Development Goals and the series of policy changes in the Rights Based Framework (as mentioned earlier through various Acts) provide an excellent opportunity to engage with the government and the larger issues of governance itself. More importantly, it would be a crucial task of civil society groups to work towards mitigating the severe gap which exists between the policies, programmes of the government and their implementation. To build and strengthen civil

society movements around it would be a greater task for Oxfam India. One of the effective tools in this context would be the Right to Information itself, which has great potential for ensuring governance accountability.

While the private sector has both its supporters and detractors, an enabling interaction between active citizens and the effective state can create conditions for a flourishing private sector which is equitable and sustainable and on which much of the economic growth-led development relies.

Oxfam India's strategy will focus on an effective combination of these three sectors to bring about lasting change in the lives of women, men and children.

Oxfam India Strategy Goals (2010-2015)

a) To bridge the gap between two India's through promoting inclusive development in the lagging states and with lagging groups

b) To build a supporter base among the youth and middle class for social change

c) To influence India to play a responsible role in the fight against global poverty

Focus on Lagging States and Lagging Groups

Oxfam India will work with others to bridge the divide among the regions and the communities. Oxfam India has chosen to concentrate its work geographically in the north and the eastern states

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[14] Duncan Green, From Poverty to Power, pp. 12-19, Oxfam International, Oxford, 200

that are characterized by highest levels of income poverty, and score low on range of social development indicators. The aim is to focus the strategy on explicitly addressing inequality issues and not just poverty issues.

Oxfam India will focus its work in seven states that have above average poverty rates and have lagged in the post-liberalization period and would require strategic intervention: Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Since roughly two-thirds of poverty is concentrated in these states, Oxfam India will focus two-thirds of its resources here and use one-third of its resources to respond to specific issues in the rest of India. In view of the increasing number of urban pockets of acute poverty, it will include an urban component in its programs and address urban-specific issues.

Oxfam India has also recognised certain cross-cutting perspectives to its work. Given India's young population, we will try to engage with young people to develop active citizens amongst them. Our work will also be towards building partners capacity to address communal conflict and foster peace. Oxfam India will seek to build up a program of support to tackle the special issues of peace building in Jammu and Kashmir and the North-East of India.

Based on our analysis, there are particularly large gaps in the economic and social indicators between 4 groups of people that we will focus on closing.

I. Women and Men;
II. Dalits and non-Dalits;
III. Tribals and non-Tribals; and
IV. Muslims and non-Muslims.

At Oxfam India, we believe that the change can be brought about if the poor (right-holders) become aware about their rights, are organized and begin to demand their entitlements from the Government. Social change also requires that the state (duty-bearers) responds to the demands of its citizens and improves its governance practices and policies. We also believe that youth and middle class can play a powerful role in social transformation.

Thematic Priorities

I. Economic Justice

Change Goal

More women and men will realize their right to secure and sustainable livelihoods.

Context[15]

While India is currently experiencing high economic growth over half of its population remains poor; their livelihoods precariously balanced on the verge of food insecurity, bankruptcy, and indebtedness. Agriculture continues to represent over one-fifth of India's GDP, with over 60% of the population depending on this sector for their livelihoods. However, growth of the agricultural sector has stagnated (less than 2% per annum in the last five years). Of this 60%, the majority (80%) are smallholder farmers deriving their livelihood from production, processing, and trading of agricultural products or from employment in the sector.

Consequently, many small-holders are in despair with farming - to the point where over 25,000 farmer suicides were recorded over the past eight years. In a recent survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), 40% of small-holders declared a loss of confidence in agriculture. Nearly 84% of economically active women in the country are engaged in agriculture but their contributions are not always recognized, they are often denied rights to land, and their work remains mostly unpaid. Lack of agricultural growth is one of the reasons why the poor are not being able to benefit from the economic growth that India is seeing.

Further, many of the poor SC and STs lack access and control over the livelihood resources i.e. land, forests and water. Central to the problem of inequitable and inadequate growth in rural India is land. Land is the most valuable and often only substantial asset in rural India. The asset is not possessed, or is possessed on very uncertain terms, by the majority of poor, especially those belonging to scheduled castes (SCs).[16] As per the eleventh five year plan, nearly two-thirds of the rural scheduled caste households are landless or near landless. Research has shown that even a tiny plot of land or control over resources can be a

big enabler helping poor move out of poverty. The government enacted the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. The Act recognises the right of Tribals to cultivate forest land that they are occupying and traditional and customary rights in the forest areas. Oxfam India will work with others to ensure that these rights are realized on the ground. India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) recognises the negative impact that climate change will have, and is already having, on agriculture, fisheries and forestry because India has a long, densely populated and low-lying coastline and an economy tied closely to its natural resource base. Climate change is expected to bring losses in the Rabi crop, a decline in total run-off in all except two river basins, sea level rise, loss of forests and biodiversity and vulnerabilities to increased climate-induced recurring disasters and weather extremities.

Poor and socially marginalized people, especially women, who shoulder the burden of providing fuel, fodder, water and food to the household, will be hit first and worst. India cannot achieve its Millennium Development Growth if climate change acts like a barrier for poor women and men to overcome poverty. Recognising that rural and urban development is a must for India to overcome poverty, the NAPCC rightly advocates a low-carbon development pathway that will help mitigate India's own emissions in the medium to long-term. As India contributes only 4% to the global emissions, as Amartya Sen says, the lack of access to basic energy for half of India's people is aggravating poverty[17].

Opportunities

The agricultural sector holds huge potential for lifting people out of poverty. A major transition towards modernization of the retail industry and related linkages to food processing, supply chains and contract management with small farmers poses risks, but also brings potential opportunities for small holders, especially the young, to gain power in markets.

Climate change offers new opportunities to involve the young and the higher classes to spread awareness and adopt more eco-friendly lifestyles. There are opportunities for the rural poor: renewable energy can generate alternative livelihood options and investing in low cost

sustainable/organic agriculture can rejuvenate the natural productive resources and improve crop diversity and investment ratios.

The policy environment with regard to agriculture and climate change is conducive and there are opportunities to bridge the 'implementation gap' and address the rights and concerns of the 'faceless and voiceless' poor and socially marginalized women and men who are affected the most by climate change though they are the least responsible for the accumulated emissions.

Rationale

Oxfam India has been working with small holders for a long time to help them demand rights over productive assets, benefit from government programmes and create opportunities to gain power in markets with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged social groups, particularly Tribals, scheduled castes and other minorities groups. There are new opportunities of various kinds and our work over the years has paved the way and mobilises the social groups to grasp these new-found opportunities.

Last but not least, Oxfam India's longest and largest programme has been on livelihoods and offers rich lessons and successes that can be further built upon.

Programming areas

Ensuring Rights over Natural Resources

Oxfam India will work to ensure poor and marginalised women and men have a right to resilient and sustainable livelihoods. Poor Dalits, adivasis and other minority community groups, especially women, secure legal rights over productive resources (land, water and forests), participate pro-actively and effectively in their governance and ensure sustainable use of these resources.

Proving the Viability of Small-holder Agriculture

Oxfam India will demonstrate improvement in livelihoods of small-holder producers (men and women) and work to scale up the impact of this on poverty reduction and gender inequality. The evidence generated from these grassroot interventions delivered at scale will be used to

influence the government, both national and state, to invest and formulate appropriate policies to support smallholder agriculture. Oxfam India will engage with companies to ensure that they develop more equitable supply chains and deliver better business services and products to smallholder farmers. The learnings from this programme will be shared widely to influence others.

Reducing Impact of Climate Change on the Poor

Oxfam India will work with others to ensure that Government Policies and Programmes provide support to poor and vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change. Oxfam India will also highlight the adaptation models being followed by the poor women and men farmers and lobby for their scaling up with government support. Oxfam India in its work with youth will generate awareness on climate change issues and advocate with them to adopt a low carbon life style and play a proactive role in asking Government to adopt a low carbon development pathway.

Oxfam India will join with the national networks to lobby for an equitable and pro poor climate deal post 2012.

II. Essential Services

Change Goal

People living in poverty, especially women and girls, will realize their rights to accessible and affordable health, education and social protection.

Context

Access to quality essential services is not merely a human need but also a human right. It is our understanding that inequities in access to quality essential services perpetuate further inequality. Unequal access also hampers the ideal of inclusive growth in a nation. In this sense, provision of quality basic services are interlinked to growth led equitable development. The Indian context also includes right to social protection within Oxfam India's mandate in the essential services.

Opportunities

Oxfam India has been part of a nation-wide

process to work for improving access to quality, universal and free education through the mainstream education. Similarly, it has also worked towards issues of improvement in the delivery of public health services through improving the space for community's role in monitoring of government schemes like National Rural Health Mission, specific programmes on HIV and AIDS etc. It has been working towards greater realization of food and employment rights through effective implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. It has also been part of a national network to bring in larger policy reforms through a call for greater accountability of state, greater investment through a regular budget tracking and build a constant pressure to include the most marginalized in the delivery of quality essential services.

The passing of the Right to Education Act, coming up of Food Security Act and National Health Bill provide further opportunity for Oxfam India to work towards the realization of these services as fundamental rights of the people.

It is in this context that there are clear opportunities for Oxfam India to adopt a twin strategy i.e. strong grass root backed movements to realize the potential of the existing policy and plans while also pushing for greater policy reforms at the state and national level.

Rationale for Programming

Access to essential services needs to be looked through four broad lenses namely, legal, financial, systemic and accountability to community. Except the recently passed Right to Education Act, none of the basic services like health, food security etc has available legal, justiciable framework barring a few minor provisions. Similarly, there is an acute shortage of financial investment by the government in these services despite long-standing demands leading to a direct impact on the quality and accessibility issues. There are huge lacunae in terms of systemic delivery of these services which have led to inequity in access based on geographical location, social status, economic capacity and religious identity; severe implementation gaps between programmes and policies and extremely poor governance system further affecting quality and reach. Growing commercialization of these services has further pushed the poor out from the delivery mechanism. In the end, the most important issue is that of lack of any strong social regulation of both private and

public delivery systems where community could play a meaningful role. Any strong programming and campaigning on the effective delivery of essential services as rights, needs to take account of these factors.

Programming Areas

Accountable and Universal Basic Health Services

Oxfam India will work towards improved realization of the implementation of Government Programmes and Schemes including National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) through an effective monitoring and mobilization of civil society in its focus states. This will also include support to context-specific traditional health practices. It will work with other civil society groups to build a strong grass root campaign to advocate for an effective national health act including user fee free basic health services to all. It will also push for increased accountability and regulation of commercial private sector providing health services and access to essential drugs. It will work to push for greater investment in the health sector for up to 3% of GDP in the health sector.

Right to Universal, Inclusive and Quality Education

Oxfam India will work towards the effective implementation of the Right to Education Act and existing government programmes through grass root community groups and networks in its focus states. It will also work towards a synergized civil society action for advocating inclusive and quality education in formal systems by working through effective modeling of quality and inclusive education in formal systems in key focus areas. It will work with civil society networks to advocate for 6% GDP investment in education through an equitable and progressive spend plan to be achieved by 2015.

Ensuring Access to Social Protection

Oxfam India will work towards an effective entitlement to a progressive Employment Guarantee Act including NREGA in its focus states. It will work towards accessing entitlements to Right to Food and reduction in malnutrition through work on Early Childhood Care and Development in its key priority areas.

It will work with civil society groups to bring in progressive policy reforms towards employment guarantee and food security as fundamental rights to the people.

III. Gender Justice

Change Goal

Women from all communities will gain power over their lives and live free from violence through changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs about gender relations, and through increased levels of women's active engagement and critical leadership in institutions, decision making and change processes.

Context

The various human development indicators demonstrate substantial gender gaps for women in India. Discrimination against girls begins even before they are born and continues till they die as is evident by the declining sex ratio.

Oxfam India is committed to and believes that "Gender Justice" is the goal of full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life; resulting in women jointly and on an equal basis with men defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole, based on their own interests and priorities[18]. The terms 'gender' and 'gender equality' imply concern for both men and women, and the relationships between them. Nevertheless, specific attention to women's rights and empowerment is required in order to address the multitude of gender gaps, inequalities and discrimination that historically have disadvantaged women[19]. This does not preclude activities that address men where doing so will contribute to gender equality.

Opportunities

Addressing issues of gender based discrimination needs both structural (institutional) and social change. Persistent efforts of women's movement in India have led to progressive legislations and positive changes in the policy environment for women. There exist strong regional and national networks of vibrant and robust movements and organizations working on various aspects of women's empowerment and gender justice.

[18] GJ Conceptual Framework, Oxfam International
[19] The Concept of Substantive Equality and Gender Justice in South Asia by Savitri W. E. Goonesekere

Oxfam's previous work experience on gender equality has created spaces and linkages for the organization to engage with the different stakeholders who can bring about this social change either through intense programming or by widespread grassroots to policy makers campaigning.

The official environment both nationally and internationally provides scope for addressing specific women's rights. India is a signatory to most international instruments specifically on women's human rights like the CEDAW, BPFA, MDGs etc. As a follow up various national plans, policies, programmes and institutions have been set up including an independent Ministry for women and child development, National Commission for women etc. Constitutional guarantees and amendments including new legislations demonstrate the commitment of the state to gender quality and empowerment of women.

Rationale for Programming

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS III) data has brought forth disconcerting statistics - 37.2% of married women have reported experiencing spousal violence, as many as 56.2% of married women in India in the age-group 15 to 49 are anemic; only 52.5% of women said they participated in household decisions. Domestic violence as an issue is considered very private and includes forms like emotional cruelty and harassment, deprivations etc. which women would not identify with as violence. High rates of maternal mortality and anemia are indicators that lead us to conclude that gender based violence is more widespread than revealed by statistics. When we juxtapose this against other gender development indicators like worsening sex ratio, increased sex-selective abortions, increasing crimes, lack of women in decision making forum for engendered governance it becomes clear that Oxfam India intervenes in these two critical areas – violence against women and empowering women in decision making forums for effective socio-structural changes.

Programming Areas

Ending Violence Against Women

Oxfam India will work towards reducing social acceptance of all forms of Violence Against Women by ensuring effective implementation of Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence

Act (PWDVA) and Pre-Conception Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT). Its work would focus on ensuring that women from marginalized communities are empowered to access formal justice system. The fundamental reason for gender bias is the power imbalance between men and women and hence we would focus on women and men in project areas taking on non-stereotypical roles thereby challenging the patriarchal power structures.

Women's Political Empowerment

Oxfam India will work for increased and effective representation of women in decision making forums in governance institutions by forging alliances with movements/networks for analyzing, influencing and advocating for gender sensitive policies and ensuring state accountability for promotion and protection of women's rights. It would join the movement for enactment of the Womens Reservation Bill for reserving seats in the Indian parliament. Specifically it would work for effective realization of the spirit behind the 73rd Constitutional Amendment providing reservations for women in local governance institutions and building their capacity and social acceptance of elected women representatives in local governance institutions as effective leaders.

IV. Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction

Change Goal

All women and men in humanitarian crises will be assured both the protection and the assistance they require, regardless of who or where they are or how they are affected, in a manner consistent with their human rights. Fewer people will suffer deprivation as a result of conflict, calamity and climate change. And to reduce risks and building community resilience to disasters, one of the critical areas of specialization and pillars of Oxfam India's humanitarian work is disaster risk reduction programming.

Context

India is among the most disaster prone countries in the world. Disasters and poverty are closely linked to each other. Experience has shown that disasters drives poor people further into a spiral of poverty, and undermines their capacity to recover from social and economic losses, that they incur during

a disaster. [20]

Opportunities

Distinctive Competence and Identity as a Humanitarian Actor

Oxfam has more than 50 years of experience working with the world's poorest and most vulnerable disaster hit communities across the country. Over the years, Oxfam has worked to assist poor rural people living in marginal or vulnerable geographies to be prepared and manage their hazard risks thus reducing their vulnerability to disasters. Much of this work has been conducted under conditions of change – frequent disasters, rising population densities, deteriorating natural resources, and increasingly uncertain and unpredictable climatic conditions.

Oxfam's humanitarian imperative makes it critical that response and risk reduction programming is part of the overall development strategy of the organisation. It is clearly visible that India is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. Some of the defining disasters over the last 2 decades have taken place in India and the sub continent, which includes the 2001 Gujarat Earthquake, 1999 Orissa Super Cyclone, 2004 South Asia floods, 2004 Asian Tsunami, 2005 South Asia Earthquake, 2007 East India Floods, 2008 Kosi Floods, Cyclone Aila Response and South India Floods 2009.

The enactment of the Disaster Management Act 2005 provides a good opportunity to work with the government to strengthen disaster preparedness, prevention and response.

Rationale

North and East of India are the most vulnerable geographies in context to recurring disasters and hazards. In order to be more effective, Oxfam India's Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction work in these vulnerable regions will be the major area of programming and significant resources are anticipated for allocation in these regions. Each year, disasters in the region continue to aggravate the overall vulnerabilities of the poor and weaken their coping strategies, driving communities to abject poverty. The combination of poverty and yearly disasters make it a critical area for Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction intervention.

[20] Rethinking Disasters – Oxfam study on Disasters and its impact on growth

Oxfam India's humanitarian imperative would be to respond to crisis situations across the country. Its response will be determined by the scale and intensity of the crisis, external factors and Oxfam India resources and capacity.

Programming Areas

Oxfam India's humanitarian work covers three types of actions - enhancing our capacities and those of our partners to provide timely and quality relief assistance to disaster affected population, preparing the communities to cope with disasters through undertaking risk reduction initiatives and working with others to influence the Government Disaster Management Policies and agencies.

Building Oxfam India's and Partners Capacity for Humanitarian Response

Oxfam India will invest in strengthening its own capacity and that of its partners to respond to disasters all over India. While Oxfam India will build a core group of partners and equip them with the necessary capacities to respond to localized disasters, we will also maintain a light touch engagement and support networks in rest of the country. Oxfam India will invest in building its own technical skills and capacities as an organization on water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and emergency, food security and livelihood. Oxfam India will strengthen its relationships with corporate and humanitarian specialist agencies for accessing skilled human resources for the response.

Grassroots Models of Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction will be the second area of focus. Oxfam India's Disaster Risk Reduction work will include lessening peoples' vulnerability to potential shocks by reducing risks to lives and livelihoods. This will include building communities skills and capacities to deal with disasters through activities such as developing village level contingency plans, identifying evacuation routes and safe structures and formation of task force groups. Oxfam India will support communities and partners to build livelihoods that are resilient to disasters through supporting them with technologies that help communities change agricultural practices, improve water harvesting and management, diversify into non climate dependent livelihoods, building appropriate infrastructure.

Advocacy and Campaigning for Wider Change

Advocacy will be an integral part of our programme. Oxfam India will work with others to ensure effective implementation of the Disaster Management Act of 2005 and strengthening the state and District Disaster Management Agencies. We will use our experience to collaborate with others and campaign for timely, appropriate, equitable and well funded assistance for response work for disaster affected and vulnerable people throughout India. We will also work towards large scale adoption of the DRR models by the Government and other agencies.

Cross-cutting Perspectives

(I) Gender

Gender equality perspectives must be integrated into all analysis, policies, programs and resource allocations. We must also build Oxfam India's capacity to 'engender' all our work and to shift the internal culture and practice of affiliates. Oxfam India believes that gender issues should be mainstreamed in the organization by developing gender responsive policies and procedures. Mainstreaming is not about adding a "woman's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda. It would involve ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality become central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

(ii) Youth and Active Citizenship

Oxfam India recognizes the potential of working with the youth and believes that influencing their ideas, beliefs and attitudes is essential to challenge the causes of poverty and discrimination and to bring about lasting changes. The attempt will be to encourage young people to engage as volunteers for Oxfam India and for our partners by partnering with other agencies that are promoting volunteerism in India to create active citizens of the future. A process has been initiated for a broader

understanding of the youth question to explore the possibilities to engage with youth activism based upon which youth active citizenship programme will be initiated in 2010.

(iii) HIV and AIDS

Oxfam India believes that addressing HIV and AIDS is an integral part of overcoming poverty and injustice. A clear analysis of the HIV and AIDS context in programs must be undertaken. Context specific actions should be integrated into programmes wherever appropriate to combat the pandemic and cushion poor women and men, and increasingly orphaned and vulnerable children, from the consequences of HIV and AIDS affecting their human rights and livelihoods.

(iv) Social Discrimination

Social discrimination and exclusion is a denial of basic opportunity where some individuals/ communities are being kept out, discriminated, isolated and deprived of their basic rights to life with dignity. In this context, citizenship cannot be defined by a set of rights and responsibilities alone. It is also an identity, an expression of one's membership in a political community. Minority groups and historically deprived social groups experience marginalization not only because of their socio-economic status but also because of their socio-cultural identity. Oxfam India will focus its efforts on building the capacity of its staff, partners and communities to understand as well as address discrimination by making people aware of their own perceptions, prejudices and facilitating an understanding of others.

(v) Communalism and Peace Building

In most of the cases, the most marginalized and the poor face the brunt of communal conflicts. Oxfam has been working on this issue both nationally and globally for years recognizing the crucial worth of peace for reducing poverty and inequality. It has consistently provided immediate relief and rehabilitation during times of conflict while also looking for long-term solutions for peace building. Oxfam India would be working towards building partners capacity to address communal conflict and peace building while supporting national advocacy work towards a progressive Communal Violence Bill and revision of National Curriculum framework towards this end.

(vi) Engagement with the Private Sector

Private sector plays a key role in augmenting a nation's income and growth though its provision of employment opportunities for the poor, corporate taxes and mainly as a driver of the economy. At the same time, private sector is also liable to wield an unequal power over the political system for policies that favour its interests very often at the expense of the poor, e.g. unethical business practices, profit-driven unsustainable market solutions and exploitative labour practices.

Directly or indirectly, Oxfam India has influenced the way the poor interact with the private sector globally i.e. developing enterprises and entrepreneurship as part of its livelihoods programmes - helping poor producers to gain greater power in markets, change corporate policies and core business practices in support of poverty reduction through advocacy and campaigning, for example, in the pharmaceutical and coffee industries.

Given the dominant role played by private sector and its impact on environmental, social and economic aspects of poor people's life, it is imperative that private sector engagement is integrated into analysis and interventions across the organization. Oxfam India will work with other stakeholders to influence the terms of debate on the role of private sector in poverty reduction. It will influence their role in few sectors like essential services, agriculture and climate change. Oxfam India will get support from businesses to deliver social & ethical value for poor people through their skills, capital, and technology. At the same time it will also facilitate development of equitable & healthy local private sector that helps men & women overcome poverty and is a part of equitable growth. Before engaging in partnership with a private sector entity, rigorous ethical screening will be undertaken.

New Directions

(i) Urban Poverty

Urban poverty in India needs engagement at two levels: exploring livelihood options for the large-scale informal labour and working towards access to quality essential services (tenurial rights in particular) and social safety nets. Though urban poor provide a variety of services to the city and

help make the city clean and habitable, their very presence in the city is not recognized and very few efforts are made by the government to improve their lives.

Oxfam India in partnership with a large number of civil society organizations has been working towards addressing urban poverty challenges over the last one decade. Given the growing urbanization of poverty Oxfam India has decided to increase the share of urban programming. Currently, a process has been initiated to design a comprehensive strategy to address urban poverty. In this regard, Oxfam India will also seek to build its perspective on informal sector workers in urban areas.

(ii) India and The World

As outlined earlier in the analysis, Oxfam India will explore the key aspects of India's growing role at the international level from the perspective of influencing policies which help the poor and developing countries.

Towards this end, Oxfam India would approach a three layered strategy to build a civil society consensus within India on key issues of international significance e.g. trade, climate change, financing for development, international drug trade etc. It will also use this consensus towards influencing the government on key policy issues both towards its own role as well as towards influencing other bi-lateral and multi-lateral institutions. In collaboration with Oxfam International and other likeminded civil society organizations, it will also seek to build an active and international platform of civil society groups across northern and southern countries. One of the other focus areas in this respect would be to develop cross-linkages for south-south learning and benefit from other countries experiences. For example, the coming of Right to Information Act and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act are globally being seen as worth emulating especially in the developing countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and other African nations. It would be a good opportunity to leverage some of these possible linkages.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Standards for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) ensure that we (a) use empirical data to improve our work, (b) engage people and partners, we aim to empower in the design of such systems and assessments of what is and is not working, (c) provide credible, unbiased public evaluation of our work to donors, governments, partners, and (d) use the most rigorous methods and learning processes for the resources we have available for monitoring, evaluation, and learning. We must be able to provide solid evidences about the degree to which our interventions are making a significant and sustainable difference to the power and lives of men and women living in poverty.[21] This framework will ensure a two-way accountability and sharing of learning at all levels which will contribute to the programme quality enhancement.

One of the key purposes to use MEL is also for establishing a two-way cycle of working at the grassroots to inform the state and national policy advocacy and bringing the national perspective down to the state and grassroots level. MEL, therefore, would not just be a tool to inform internal and external stakeholders about our learnings but to use that learning for further equitable change for the poor.

Oxfam India has publicly committed to set some of the key processes in place towards this aim. They are:

- Develop and agree on a monitoring framework with partners and participating communities;

- Set up community based monitoring systems and track and use the outcomes to enhance programme quality and ensure rights based approach in programmatic interventions;

- Strengthen in-house monitoring and evaluation capacities of Oxfam India and partner organizations;

- Regular publication of evaluations;

- Implementation of a periodic planning and reporting cycle that creates space for critical reflection and learning at all levels;

- Investing in systems and capacities to support MEL;

- Public accountability (including to those people with whom we work);

- A certain percentage of program budgets to be allocated to MEL activities;

- Where programming is being done largely through grants to partners, verification of partner reports and claims in those reports is required (even though the intensity and type of verification may differ from place to place, and from grant to grant);

- Explicit and clear mechanisms for partners and the community to influence programmatic strategies, decisions, revisions, and definitions of and future declarations of success or failure;

- Evaluation of outcomes and impact through independent evaluations and impact assessments;

- Evaluations must be made available to stakeholders and constituents in ways that allow them to fully understand the strengths, weaknesses, and progress of Oxfam India's work.

Figure 2: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

Advocacy

↑ ↓

Policy Positioning

↑ ↓

Knowledge Base

↑ ↓

Grassroots Programmes

[21] Oxfam International's Programme Standard Document, draft, 1July, 2009

Partnership Policy and Ways of Working

The purpose of this policy on partnership is to describe the objectives, values and principles of the reciprocal relation between Oxfam India and its partners.

Partners are defined here as civil society organisations with whom Oxfam India has or considers to have a funding – but in certain cases also to non-funding – relationship. Relations and interactions with the government, and private sector therefore do not fall within the purview of this section.

Approach to Partnerships

Oxfam India will work in partnership to achieve common goals, with the understanding that we can have a greater impact working in partnership with our allies rather than separately.

Principles Regarding Partner Relationships

Whilst recognizing and respecting differences, sufficient common ground in terms of shared values and beliefs must be found. As a start we must share a desire to work towards a common position on important issues, including a commitment to gender equality and respect for diverse identities, a belief that people living in poverty should enjoy their fundamental rights, and that poor and marginalized people are agents of their own development.

Mutual Accountability and Transparency

Oxfam India as well as its partners should be transparent and accountable in all aspects of their work. Oxfam India will establish an institutional practice of regular consultation with its partners, to define policies and to enhance its own learning.

Organizational Autonomy

There is mutual respect for institutional autonomy and each organization is exclusively responsible for determining and implementing its own institutional policies. This includes acceptance that each organization has the right to set the final agenda for its own work. At the same time it is recognized that co-operation involves interdependence and might create opportunities for synergy.

Reciprocal Dialogue and Working Together for Achieving Results

Oxfam India and the partner communicate openly and honestly with each other, in a spirit of critical dialogue. While respecting each other's institutional autonomy, Oxfam India and the partner may nevertheless challenge each other on goals, values, results and impact.

Commitment and Flexibility

Whilst short-term interventions can be appropriate, our humanitarian, development, and campaigns programmes are more sustainable and effective when based on long-term partnerships.

Oxfam India will work in partnership to achieve common goals, with the understanding that we can have a greater impact working in partnership with our allies rather than separately.

Proposed Patterns of Funding Relationship:

*   Maintain diversity of partner size (micro, small, medium and large) but establish limits for each category;
*   To establish longer term relationships with partners and to fund each partner for a maximum 10-12 year cycle (through two strategy periods); the exact funding and length of funding contracts would depend on the nature and source of funds raised;
*   Wherever feasible, also depending on the nature and source of funds raised, provide core funding rather than project-by-project funding to partners;
*   Fellowships and Internships for activists – to individuals in grassroots work and advocacy;
*   Very small one-time grants to promote innovation (less than Rs. 3 lakhs) to be disbursed through a simple "Small Grants Program" that is not cumbersome;
*   Monitor the balance between small, medium, and large grants since it affects costs and impact:
    *   Small grants: Rs 5-10 lacs per year ($10- 20k)
    *   Medium grants: Rs 10-50 lacs per year ($20-100k)
    *   Large grants: Rs 50-100 lacs per year ($100-200k)

Oxfam India as well as its partners should be transparent and accountable in all aspects of their work. Oxfam India will establish an institutional practice of regular consultation with its partners, to define policies and to enhance its own learning.

What also needs to be emphasised in this case is the non-funding relationships which Oxfam India envisages as part of its strategy. This would involve working with networks, key civil society groups in a non-funding relationship to strengthen its work for grassroots backed advocacy work. On a different level, non-funding relationship would also feed into its vision of promoting the spirit of volunteerism in India to create and strengthen a large cadre of volunteers working towards a more broad-based public participation. A separate volunteer's policy will be evolved.

Link to Branding and Visibility Policy of Oxfam India

Oxfam India will discuss with partners how partners can and want to contribute to the branding and visibility of Oxfam India. The partners will ensure visibility of Oxfam India in all reports, publications, IEC materials, events and workshops carried out with the support of Oxfam India. This will help Oxfam India to gain brand recognition in India and to help build a base of support for our work that will translate into continued fundraising income in India and support for our partners and our causes.

Non-funding relationship would also feed into Oxfam India's vision of promoting the spirit of volunteerism in India to create and strengthen a large cadre of volunteers working towards a more broad-based public participation.

Branding and visibility policy will help Oxfam India to gain brand recognition in India and to help build a base of support for our work that will translate into continued fundraising income in India and support for our partners and our causes.

Grievance Redressal

In the event of any difference with Oxfam India, both Oxfam India and the partner organization would refer to a prior agreement created between them to communicate openly, transparently and constructively and try to resolve any issues locally. In the event the partner organization feels that communication is not open, transparent, or constructive or feels that it cannot resolve an issue locally, the organization may use Oxfam India's Grievance Redressal Policy which aims to provide partner organizations with an easily accessible mechanism for settlement of their grievances.

Oxfam India adheres to a Whistle Blowing Policy as well whereby the purpose is to provide an effective procedure for partner organizations to raise their concerns when they believe that abuse, serious malpractice or professional misconduct has taken place.

Fundraising, Marketing and Communications Strategy

While the bulk of Oxfam India's funds still come from the five foreign affiliates that integrated their programs to create Oxfam India, we have also been trying to raise funds in India. Oxfam's fundraising in India began during the Tsunami, and later floods in Mumbai in 2005 and on a regular basis from January 2006 onwards. Oxfam India's fundraising is also intrinsically linked to its attempt to become a leading national NGO in India with popular brand recognition.

From 2006 till early 2008, we worked towards getting systems in place like data management systems, procedures, structures, etc. We focused on starting with fundraising channels that would provide us a continuous income and a new donor base. We started working together with the agencies that are available in India, trained them in our ways of working and our requests. We also started in-house activities for Face 2 Face fund raising due to an inadequate number of good agencies in India. Over a period of time we realized that for the very purposes of scaling-up and efficiency, it is good to have in house operations, which are also most cost effective. As of now, we are raising funds through face 2 face, telecalling, telefacing, that include major donors, Corporates, Indian Institutions, Trusts and Foundations besides individual donors.

We have tried to improve the systems to make the process of donating as simple as possible. We are also working with banks and other agencies to service the donors with the least time lag. We are going to set up processes which would help us communicate with the donors, on a real-time basis.

At this moment we are upscaling the fundraising operations across various cities for better connectivity and servicing for donors. Our experiment with running in house operations, which initially faced a lot of challenges, are proving to pay off and become successful. With all the

learnings from running fundraising operations at Bangalore as a centre for excellence, we replicated the model in a more successful manner at New Delhi and would be opening six new fundraising offices, on similar models in the next six months. These offices would be located at Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, besides multiple operations in the existing cities.

In the next five years, we are also going to test various new techniques of fundraising like Internet and web direct mailing, trail walker, special events, mail facing and direct response television, which were not used by us till now.

Brand-awareness and communicating with donors is provenly crucial for connecting with larger numbers of people. We would be dedicatedly working on these issues in the years to come, to make Oxfam India a household name.

We have the ambition and the plan to reach an income figure of US $ 10 million income by 2013-2014 through a steady base of supporters and donors.

In the next five years, we are also going to test various new techniques of fundraising, like internet and web, direct mailing, trail walker, special events, Mail facing and direct response television, which were not used by us till now.

In our efforts to fulfill our ambition, we would be focusing on the following:

- Upscale our existing activities to minimum 21 cities;

- Testing new fundraising channels;

- Constantly improvising the activities from the donors' perspective;

- Starting brand-awareness activities;

- Improving the communication to our existing donors, and making it more fulfilling and meaningful; and

- Making the process of donation giving as simple as possible.

Oxfam India will develop rigorous mechanisms of ethical check ups for its fund raising purposes which go in sync with its values and mission to address poverty and inequality.

Communications Strategy

Oxfam India is the result of a merger of various Oxfam affiliates which have been working in the country for the past 60 years. During its past one-year journey, it has started the process of transformation from a "donor agency" to a "rights-based advocacy organization." This process involves a perception shift as well as a program shift and for both, communication is crucial and critical.

The communications strategy for Oxfam in India is therefore derived from this shift – both in perception and programming that aims to create a brand that exhorts people to reach out while at the same time building the "voice" at the grassroots that can put pressure on planners and policy-makers to have policies in their favour. It is therefore both a "verb" (call to action) and a noun (inclusive society as a desirable change.) The call for action and the change is captured in the tagline "Demanding Rights for All".

The objective of the communication strategy therefore is three-fold:

- To support the Oxfam India aspiration to be one of the leading players and actors in the Indian civil society firmament by helping it to reach out to concerned stakeholders and duty-bearers in innovative ways.

- To support the Oxfam India strategy in linking innovative grassroots programmes to policy-making by helping to support "voices" that can make it possible.

- To help include more and more people in our mission and vision by exhorting them to join us in our endeavor to create a "just, equitable and fair society."

The communications strategy for Oxfam in India aims to create a brand that exhorts people to reach out while at the same time building the "voice" at the grassroots that can put pressure on planners and policy-makers to have policies in their favour. It is therefore both a "verb" (call to action) and a noun (inclusive society as a desirable change.) The call for action and the change is captured in the tagline "Demanding Rights for All".

The key message for Oxfam India is therefore captured in these introductory lines :

Oxfam India strives to secure the right to life with dignity for all by actively engaging people and policy makers in the inclusive development of society.

What Do We Want to Communicate

Our messages are also derived from the goal of all our efforts and the clarion call to everyone in society to join us in our mission. Active citizenship is the concept which encapsulates this clarion call while the mission of inclusive development is captured in "dignity of life for all". We are aware of the fact that we cannot do it alone and that we want others to join us in this movement.

The key message for Oxfam India is therefore captured in these introductory lines :

Oxfam India strives to secure the right to life with dignity for all by actively engaging people and policy makers in the inclusive development of society.

We are working to ensure that everyone has access to education, health and social security; people are able to earn a decent livelihood and have fair trade opportunities; women lead a life of dignity, free from violence; and everyone is prepared to deal with the impact of climate change, natural and man-made disasters.

DON'T LET HER FUTURE BE ERA

Next Steps and the Way Forward

As laid out in this strategy, Oxfam India is seeking to focus its programs in a few key thematic and geographic areas so as to maximize impact. It is also seeking to gradually transform itself from essentially being a grant administering and monitoring agency to an active member of Indian civil society and a rights based advocacy organization, just like many of the partners that we support. This will require quite a transformation in what we do, where we do it, and how we do it. It will require a transformation into a knowledge based organization that is able to evaluate and learn from the grassroots work we support, to understand what works well and what does not, to take policy positions based on that knowledge, and finally to be able to carry out advocacy at state, national and global levels based on that knowledge.

In each of the program areas that we will work in, we are now developing a detailed strategy that will lay out the context, the opportunities for work, and the outcomes that we will seek to achieve. Oxfam India's entire program will change from being a set

This strategy is meant to provide an overall vision of what Oxfam India wants to do in the coming years to be relevant and meaningful in India's emerging contexts and to make a difference.

of sometimes unrelated activities that don't add up or can't be scaled up, to a set of about 10-15 program clusters (depending on our financial strength in the coming years) that will lay out a program with clear objectives and outcomes so that all the partners that are supported by the program are working together to deliver the same outcomes. While partner approaches might vary, the overall objective of the program is one that should be shared by all partners supporting the program. Once the programs are defined, partners who can work together with Oxfam India to deliver those program goals will be identified and supported.

Oxfam India is also seeking to gradually transform itself from essentially being a grant administering and monitoring agency to an active member of Indian civil society and a rights based advocacy organization.

This strategy is meant to provide an overall vision of what Oxfam India wants to do in the coming years to be relevant and meaningful in India's emerging contexts and to make a difference. We realize, however, that the implementation of the strategy (by aligning our program to this strategy) might take 2-3 years so that it is not too disruptive for our partners and programs.

Annexure

Annexure 1: Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) across select states in India

MMR across Indian States

State	MMR per 100,000 live birth (2004-2006)
All India	254
Assam	480
Bihar / Jharkhand	312
Madhya Pradesh / Chhattisgarh	335
Orissa	303
Rajasthan	388
Uttar Pradesh / Uttarakhand	440
Andhra Pradesh	154
Kerala	95
Tamil Nadu	111

Source: Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India 2004-06 (April 2009), Sample Registration System, Office of Registrar General, GoI

Annexure II: Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) across select states in India

IMR across Indian States

States	IMR per 1000 live births		
	Total	Rural	Urban
All India	53	58	36
Assam	64	66	39
Bihar	56	57	42
Orissa	69	71	49
Uttar Pradesh	67	70	49
Kerala	12	12	10
Jharkhand	46	49	32
Chhattisgarh	57	59	48
Uttarakhand	44	48	24

Source: SRS Bulletin (October 2009), Sample Registration System, Office of Registrar General, GoI

Annexure III: Drop Out Rates of Students in Classes I to X for 2005-06

	All Students			SC Students			ST Students		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Assam	76.97	76.26	76.66	73.78	70.14	72.15	79.09	75.93	77.77
Bihar	80.73	84.61	82.26	89.65	92.05	90.52	87.49	89.35	88.27
Himachal Pradesh	25.68	32.47	29	47.64	53	50.28	24.22	32.32	28.21
Jharkhand	65.61	61.31	63.88	56.72	54.66	55.79	63.59	58.66	61.48
Kerala	7.44	2.42	4.98	20.51	11.82	16.31	53.75	48.26	51.1
Orissa	67.87	60.85	65.03	70.23	73.92	71.87	82.44	81.71	82.15
Uttar Pradesh	39.05	47.36	42.26	64	86.8	72.56	49.77	60.35	54.18
India	60.41	63.44	61.74	68.42	73.42	70.57	76.9	77.49	77.14

Note: Drop out rates are shown combined with respective parent state

Source: Statements 8, 9 & 10, Annexure-I, Annual Report 2007-08, Dept of School Education and Literacy & Dept of Higher Education, MoHRD, GoI