

**The Strategy of Combining Rights, Productivity  
and Capabilities of Most Vulnerable Sections**

**Achieving Livelihood Security through  
Sustainable Use of Local Resources**

**An Approach Paper**



**'Resources and Livelihoods Group' of Prayas**

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# **Part I: Evolving the Strategy of Combining Rights, Productivity, and Capabilities**

## **1. The Challenge: Livelihood Security of Most Vulnerable Sections**

The prevailing situation of hunger, poverty, and deprivation in the large tracts of India and many other Southern countries shows that the development strategy pursued by these countries in the post-independence period has been ineffective. The core development strategy adopted by the economic and political mainstreams in these countries is based on the combination of two principles—viz., the macro-economic growth and the 'trickle-down' effect. The macro-economic growth is to be achieved mainly through the expansion of the urban-industrial system and also through the chemical-intensive, “modern” agriculture. The benefits of the macro-economic growth are expected to reach the bottom-most sections of the society through the "trickle-down" process. In the early seventies, various theoretical and practical limitations of this strategy were recognized and, since then, a “direct-attack” on poverty has been waged through various anti-poverty programs. In spite of the considerable macro-economic growth and massive expenditure on anti-poverty programs in India, the reality today is that millions of people continue to suffer from hunger, chronic malnutrition, and severe deprivation.

It is a well-accepted fact that the “poor” of the world overwhelmingly comprise of certain most vulnerable sections (MVS) of society<sup>1</sup>. These sections do include certain social groups such as *dalits*, tribals, and other backward castes (OBCs) in the case of India. But even within these social groups, the plight and vulnerability of children and women could only be described as a blot on humanity. This vulnerability remains as the primary concern even in the case of women and children from the other social groups. These MVS have suffered from the combined effects of centuries-long economic deprivation, socio-cultural exclusion, and political marginalization. As a result, they are caught in the vicious cycle of dependence (on local elite) and deprivation. As far as addressing these problems is concerned, it is now well accepted that the problems experienced by these MVS should be viewed through the “livelihoods lens” which is said to be more comprehensive and grounded as compared to the conventional “poverty lens” (please refer to Box 1). In this view, the “livelihoods security” of the MVS becomes the first objective of any development strategy.

### **The Three Components of the Objective of Livelihoods Security**

The term “food-security” has been used with two interpretations, especially in the Indian context. Many non-mainstream actors use the term by applying it to the household levels and try to focus on the failure of the conventional concepts and programs of ‘development’ to solve the basic problem of poverty. As against this, many mainstream actors who continue to place faith in the conventional concepts and programs argue that programs like the Green Revolution would

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<sup>1</sup> These sections are often identified by various terms such as "poor", “most poor”, or "severely deprived". However, it is felt that the term “most-vulnerable” focuses on the key deficiency—vulnerability—suffered and experienced by these sections not only in economic sphere but also in socio-cultural and political spheres.

bring the macro or national level “food-security,” which should be the prime and sufficient objective for eradication of poverty. To avoid this confusion, a different term viz., livelihood security is found to be more appropriate.

### **Box 1: Sustainable Livelihoods: The Basis for an Alternative Approach**

Based on the lessons learnt from more than two decades of participatory research and action with the poor in different situations, some development thinkers have put forth the view that one of the primary reasons for the failure of poverty eradication is the narrow definition of ‘poverty’ itself. Presently, poverty is defined purely in income and employment terms. The reality of the poor, especially in rural areas, is much more complex and the poor survive through a multitude of strategies and activities, which go much beyond the conventional categories of income and employment. Hence, ‘sustainable livelihoods’ is emerging as a central concept, which has the potential to overcome the limitation of conventional definitions of poverty and capture the living realities of the rural poor in a more meaningful way.

Livelihood needs refers to basic goods and services such as water, food and nutrition, fuel, fodder, shelter, clothing, health care and basic education. Of these, the MVS mainly access clothing, health care, and education through the cash obtained from wage labor or sale of produce. The other needs are mostly satisfied through a combination of self-production, procurement, and market-purchase. Hence, cash also forms an important livelihood need.

The most quoted and used definition of Sustainable Livelihoods was put forth by Chambers and Conway (Chambers and Conway, 1992). It views livelihoods as comprising three crucial elements: equity, sustainability, and capability. Chambers and Conway define sustainable livelihoods (SL) as:

*“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to the next generation: and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term” [Source: Chambers Robert, Conway Gordon R, (1992), Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century, IDS Discussion Paper 296.]*

A number of international agencies, donors, and NGOs are rapidly adopting the livelihood concept as a basis for their future policies and programs. Though the livelihood concept is definitely a major step ahead in addressing poverty issues, it still remains only at the conceptual level.

Early experiences of practical implementation of SL based programs indicate that they are fraught with a number of problems and limitations. Hence, while accepting livelihoods as an alternative conceptual basis to address poverty and deprivation, we have to proceed carefully in its practical implementation.

There has been considerable discussion on appropriateness of the “livelihoods security” perspective as against the conventional ‘macro-level’ “food security” perspective. While the former focuses on the household or on the sub-community groups and acknowledges the complex and diverse reality of livelihoods experienced by ‘poor’ families, the later focuses only on the food needs (based on the calorie intake) and often restricts itself to the macro-level (read national level). The occurrence of starvation deaths in July and August 2001 in different parts of India, while millions of tons of food grains were rotting in government storehouses in the same regions, has put a big question mark on the conventional ‘macro-level’ “food security” perspective.

The term livelihoods security does relate to the satisfaction of all livelihood needs in an assured manner. But, especially in the case of children and women from MVS, it should primarily begin with the nutritional security at the household level. The impact of the conventional development strategies on the nutritional security was evident during the studies conducted by Prayas in the Konkan region. It clearly shows that the recent deaths due to starvation are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg (please refer to Box 2). What remains hidden is the disastrous impact on physical and mental health of women and children (please refer to Box 3). Though nutritional security is often referred to in the academic literature, at the ground level, even many “pro-poor” elements restrict themselves to calculating calories and fighting for food-grains. Experiences in the past suggest that, in order to ensure nutritional security, the indirect strategies do not work. Instead, it is necessary that the efforts are accurately targeted to women and children and focused precisely on making nutritious food available to them.

### **Box 2: Impact of Conventional Development Strategies on Nutrition in Konkan**

Studies conducted by Prayas in the Konkan region of Maharashtra show that the intake of different varieties of fish has gone down, as the rivers, streams and creeks have become severely polluted. The rich diversity of the forest foods too has gone down as the forests are degraded and the access of the tribals and local people to these forests has been restricted. Also, the diversity of trees in earlier forests has been replaced by monocultures of Eucalyptus, *Subabhul*, and Australian *Babhul*, which produce no edible product. In Deogad area of Konkan, the cropping pattern has changed, where production levels of pulses and oilseeds have come down heavily as these crops have been replaced by Mango cultivation for export. This means a reduced availability of protein, mineral, and energy-rich diet for the rural poor particularly the children and the women.

The objective of nutritional security—though certainly a priority objective—is one component of the objective of livelihoods security. The second component of the objective of the livelihood security is satisfaction of all basic livelihood needs of all members of the family. The third component is protection against threat of different types of shocks and stresses to satisfaction of the basic livelihood needs. This protection could be obtained through creation of dispensable assets or of stores of commodities or resources. Further, both these components of objective could be achieved through augmentation of—i.e., addition of the new or strengthening of the old—livelihood activities. There is no need to emphasize that continuous improvement in the productivity will be the key aspect of efforts for augmentation of livelihood activities. Thus, there are three components of the objective of livelihood security—viz., nutritional security, satisfaction of basic livelihood needs, and protection against shocks and stresses.

This Approach Paper is an outcome of thinking and efforts that consider the objective as the central challenge for all those who want to address the objectives of poverty elimination and sustainable development. (Please refer to the Figure 1 placed at the end of the paper, which depicts the rationale underlying the strategy).

### **Box 3: Nutritional Security**

The growing incidence of Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) is evident from the data of the National Family Health Survey. The WHO figures indicate that nearly 80% of the children affected by PEM live in Asia. The reduced or nil intake of protein-rich foods in the regular diet causes PEM. Foods rich in proteins such as milk and milk products, fish, meat, oilseeds and some pulses and cereals barely form part of the diet of the rural poor. PEM disables children and leads to underdevelopment both at the physical level and the mental level. Thus assured supply of nutritious food in adequate proportion, i.e., nutritional security at the household level therefore becomes crucial. This has been well documented by the studies conducted by WHO where lack of control over resources, intra-household inequity in distribution of food, and lack of purchasing power are found to be the crucial factors responsible for increased nutritional insecurity at the household level leading to mal-nourishment.

Micronutrient malnutrition is a term used to refer to diseases caused by a dietary deficiency of vitamins or minerals. Micronutrient malnutrition is a major impediment to socioeconomic development and contributes to a vicious circle of underdevelopment, to the detriment of already underprivileged groups. It has long-ranging effects on health, learning ability and productivity. Micronutrient malnutrition leads to high social and public costs, reduced work capacity in populations due to high rates of illness and disability, and tragic loss of human potential. Overcoming Micronutrient malnutrition is a precondition for ensuring rapid and appropriate development. Vitamin A deficiency primarily affects children; worldwide, some 250 million children are at risk. Anaemia and iron deficiency affect more than 2 billion people in virtually all countries. Those most affected are women and pre-school-age children (as many as 50 percent of whom may be anaemic), but Anaemia is also seen in older children and men. Anaemia in infants and children is associated with retarded physical growth, reduced resistance to infections and slow development of learning abilities. In adults, it causes fatigue and reduced work capacity and may cause reproductive impairment. Blood loss in childbirth is very dangerous for anaemic women and is the main cause of about 20 percent of maternal deaths. Maternal Anaemia also leads to foetal growth retardation, low infant birth weight and increased prenatal mortality (death in the first week of life).

Poverty, lack of access to a variety of foods, lack of knowledge of optimal dietary practices and high incidence of infectious diseases are some of the factors, which lead to Micronutrient malnutrition. Policies and programs must be developed to assure availability of and access to an adequate variety and quantity of safe, good-quality foods for all people of the world. Foods such as dark green leafy vegetables, legumes and red meat are rich in iron, as are iron-fortified food products. This, therefore, suggests that the most effective way of handling this situation is to assure nutritional security at the household level from the small plots available for cultivation. However, such cultivation must increase the nutrient rich components of the production.

## **2. Limitations of the Mainstream Prescriptions**

The mainstream analysis dominated by ‘economist’ thinking traces the roots of the failure of ‘poverty reduction’ efforts to two main macro-level causes: (a) the low rates of macro-economic growth and (b) the problems in implementation. In addressing the first cause, the mainstream prescription has always been focused on increasing (only) the quantity of macro-economic growth. In the last decade, the emphasis has been on liberalization, privatization, and globalization (or LPG) of national economy for increasing the rate of macro-economic growth. As far as the second cause is concerned, the mainstream has been quite rightly very critical about various distortions and perversions in the functioning of the government machinery that implements the development and anti-poverty programs. However, little has been done in this regard which would address the core malady at the heart of this problem—lack of stringent

regulation of governance through effective public control<sup>2</sup>. Now, in the era of downsizing of the governments, many in the mainstream—in order to resolve the implementation problems—go to the extent of suggesting privatization of the social infrastructure and also of the delivery of poverty eradication programs.

However, it is feared that, while the promised benefits of these growth-centered measures might remain distant and elusive for the MVS for various reasons, the livelihood security of MVS would suffer concrete setbacks in the immediate term due to the LPG measures. First, it is feared that the so-called transitory economic slow-down induced in the initial years of LPG reforms would considerably reduce different types of crucial support received by the MVS from the state. The main casualty would be the expenditure and investment by the state on programs related to the livelihoods needs of MVS. Further, because of the continued neglect of the need for stringent regulation through effective public control, on the one hand, the distortions and perversions in the implementation of development programs would aggravate further, irrespective of the ownership—private, public, or non-profit—of the agencies that run these programs. On the other hand, again mainly due to lack of effective and stringent regulation, the LPG policies are seen to be creating new processes (or strengthening the old ones) that would adversely affect the livelihoods security of MVS. One such extremely worrisome process is the increasing scale of encroachment and appropriation—by urban-industrial interests—of the local natural resources in rural areas on which the MVS are critically dependent for satisfying their livelihoods needs. In short, it could be said that the prescriptions offered by the political and economic mainstream tend to be ineffective, if not counter-productive, in addressing the central challenge of ensuring livelihoods security of MVS, at least in the near terms.

### **3. Diagnosis and Prescription from Non-Mainstream Actors**

Quite different from the mainstream's diagnosis and prescription are the diagnosis and prescriptions that come from the non-mainstream actors—mainly the voluntary sector, non-party political organizations, and some sections of academia. Many non-mainstream actors have been conducting diverse experiments and initiatives based on different sets of diagnosis and prescriptions. Though most of the actual, practical initiatives begin as and continue to remain small and isolated, some of the successful initiatives have been integrated into the large-scale government programs. However, in many cases, this integration is marred by certain distortions, which effectively restrict benefits of these programs from reaching to the MVS.

There are three major strands of diagnosis—and that of the related prescriptive initiatives—which come from the non-mainstream actors. According to the non-mainstream diagnosis, the three main causes underlying the problems of threatened livelihoods security of MVS are: (a) lack of rights over (and access to) natural resources; (b) underdevelopment of local natural resources; and (c) weak organizational and other capabilities of MVS. To address these three causes, different non-mainstream actors have been working on the three broad categories of initiatives respectively: (a) political activism / struggles against the state and the resource-rich sections for securing rights and access to local natural resources; (b) "constructive" initiatives for community participation in management and development of local resources and those for technology development for productivity enhancement; and (c) efforts for building

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<sup>2</sup> In other words, because there is no effective public control on the governance of development function of the state, there cannot be significant improvement in implementation of development programs.

organizational and other capabilities of MVS. The following paragraphs discuss these three stands of diagnosis and the related initiatives in brief.

### **Political Activism for Securing Rights over Resources**

At the time of independence, as the result of the legacy of the feudal and colonial past, the MVS in India had extremely limited rights over (and access to) the local natural resources such as land, water bodies, and forests. The privately owned resources were in the hands of the social, economic, and political elite. The colonial masters who had appropriated community resources (such as forests and common lands) ravaged them and, after the independence, handed them over to the state, which again is dominated by the elite sections. Though there were government and non-government initiatives to transfer land to the MVS (such as land reforms acts and the "*Bhoodan*" movement), most of the MVS population remained without rights or access to the main natural resources, especially land, in the post-independence period<sup>3</sup>. As a consequence, many grassroots-level political struggles have been waged against the state and the resource-rich elite sections of the society by the MVS and their organizations to obtain rights and access to lands, forests, and water-bodies.

Such political activism by the MVS, led often by non-party political organizations, has been successful only at some places and often partially. However, the resources, especially lands, which have been secured for or by the MVS in such instances are often found to be of very poor quality and with low productivity. Further, the inability of the MVS to develop these lands—because of lack of resources and capabilities—made cultivation of these lands unviable and unsustainable. As a result, the lands, secured after long and costly struggles, have often been found not to be of much help in fulfilling the objective of livelihood security of these sections<sup>4</sup>.

However, in spite of these limitations, the efforts to secure rights over natural resource for the MVS are crucial and they need to be strengthened. This is because, though securing rights by itself is not an adequate guarantee for the livelihood security, without the rights over resources, the MVS would not be able to even begin the process of moving towards livelihoods security in the given situation<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The *Bhoodan* (meaning donating land) was a voluntary movement initiated by late Vinobha Bhave, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. The movement campaigned in rural India, urging the landlords and big-farmers to donate land to the landless to overcome inequity in distribution of land.

<sup>4</sup> Hence, migration (either to urban-industrial belts or irrigated agricultural tracts) today remains the only alternative source of livelihoods for many from the MVS. When this option is not available, they become victims of hunger, mal-nutrition, and even suicide. Even in the case of migration, the socio-cultural, health, emotional, psychological, and economic costs paid by the MVS, only serve to further deepen their livelihoods crisis and vulnerability.

<sup>5</sup> The increasing limitations and irrelevance of the other conventional development strategies employed for eliminating poverty are now clearly evident and well discussed. These include: through employment created by the urban-industrial growth and its trickle down; through expansion of "modern" agriculture, or through massive state-funded, anti-poverty programs. However, the focus of this paper is entirely different and the limitations on these strategies are not discussed here.



Another equally important outcome of the political struggles over resources has been the increased decentralization especially of natural resource development programs. This could be witnessed in the increasing scope of and importance accorded to community participation and community management (at least in rhetoric) in many "Community-Based Natural Resource Management"(CBNRM) programs sponsored by government and other mainstream agencies. Implications of these programs for livelihood security of MVS are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

### **Community Management of Resource and Productivity Enhancement**

The second major cause of the threat to livelihood security of MVS, which has been identified and worked upon by the non-mainstream actors is the underdevelopment (or low / reduced productivity) of local natural resources. The two main factors that are identified to be at the root of this underdevelopment are the low productivity of local natural resources (mainly of land) and the unavailability of water for irrigation. Especially in the peninsular India, water has been seen as the main constraint on the productivity of agricultural system. The implicit assumption is that, if the other "external" or "modern" inputs (such as fertilizers, pesticides and mechanization) are used along with water, the problem of livelihood security of MVS would be solved. However, it must be mentioned that many have realized and emphasized on vacuity of this assumption. Therefore, some of these people have worked on the first factor mentioned above—improvement of the primary productivity of local natural resource system—without using the "modern" or "external" inputs.

Thus, the non-mainstream initiatives towards development of local natural resource in India appear to have followed two different objectives: (a) development of local land and water resources and (b) enhancement in primary productivity of local natural resource system<sup>6</sup>. Those who felt concerned about development of water resource were worried about inadequacy, irrationality, and inequity in the mainstream initiatives for water resource development. These mainstream initiatives have been focused on basin-level planning and relied heavily on large dams and bureaucratic control. Learning from the failure and negative impacts of the mainstream initiative, the non-mainstream initiatives focused on development of local water resources with community participation and management. This is best illustrated by the comprehensive watershed development initiatives undertaken by voluntary sector in the early 1980's. Because of the success and efficiency of these initiatives coupled with the increasing failure of and resistance to the mainstream initiative, the governments gradually integrated the watershed development approach in their programs. These programs are now run on massive scale and with involvement of local communities and voluntary agencies. Similar is the case of many other community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) programs such as Joint Forest Management (JFM). As mentioned before, another factor that led to integration of CBNRM in government programs was the political struggles waged by the MVS and their organizations for rights over resources.

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of primary productivity refers to the productivity that an eco-system could achieve if all external inputs are withdrawn from it. The high-input agriculture practiced today leads to a loss of primary productivity and the apparent, visible productivity is based on secondary productivity contributed by external inputs. The primary productivity of the eco-system is ensured often in terms of biomass yields (Datye et al, (1997) *Banking on Biomass*, Center for Environmental Education, Ahmedabad, India.).

However, experiences from many CBNRM programs implemented during the past decade clearly demonstrate that the MVS of the society, such as children, women, tribals, and *dalits* have not benefited from these programs. Their livelihoods continue to remain insecure, unsustainable, and vulnerable in spite of these interventions. This is, first, because the MVS have little or no access and rights to local natural resources and therefore are not in position to derive direct and tangible livelihoods benefits from these broader, community-level resource development programs.

The second reason for the lack of livelihood benefits to the MVS is their marginalization even within the local community. The economic, social, political, and cultural realities rooted in the centuries of history involve highly skewed power-equations that invariably work against the interests of MVS. The agencies (mostly government and big NGOs) do not 'afford' to put in time and to take risk involved in working on changing these power equations within the community. As a result, despite the success of the CBNRM programs in the resource-development dimension, the local MVS receive little in terms of the livelihood security, mainly because the programs effectively neglect the equity issues such as rights of MVS over local natural resources.

Similar has been the case of the experiments and initiatives aimed at enhancing the primary productivity of local natural resources in a sustainable manner. Some of these experiments are rooted in economic need for reducing the costly external inputs, while some of them are driven by ideological, spiritual, or philosophical urges. Many of these initiatives have been instrumental in creating a great wealth of knowledge about new techniques and practices that have potential for significant improvement in productivity of land and water as well as in productivity and quality of different crops (agricultural, horticultural, as well as agro-forestry). These initiatives include initiatives often known as LEISA (Low-External-Input, Sustainable Agriculture), Natural Farming, Organic Farming, Permaculture, and the 'Ten Guntha' Experiments (TGE).

However, most of these experiments and initiatives suffer from two handicaps and have not helped the objective of livelihood security of MVS in a significant manner. First, they have not received due financial, research, or logistical support from the mainstream institutions. Second, and most importantly, these experiments and initiatives lacked explicit emphasis on the equity dimension and hence, failed to evolve techniques and practices that are suitable to the physical, socio-cultural, and economic contexts of the MVS. As a result, many environmentally conscious and health-conscious urbanites as well as the horticulturists with the necessary wherewithal and resources could make successful use of the knowledge generated by these initiatives. However, despite their technical potential, these initiatives could not make significant contribution to the cause of livelihoods security of the MVS.

### **Building Organizational and Other Capabilities of the MVS**

Despite the relatively successful experiment of parliamentary democracy in India, the MVS in the country continue to suffer from the handicaps that are the legacies of the feudal and colonial past. It is not the failure to identify the underlying causes but the failure due to the inadequate efforts and lack of commitment, which were at the root of the continued marginalization of MVS. In other words, there was clear absence of policies that genuinely and ably try to build capabilities of MVS in a well-targeted manner. As the result, their continued

political marginalization even after the independence coupled with the social fragmentation within the MVS (primarily due to the caste-system) made the MVS extremely powerless and vulnerable. The major impact of this powerlessness is the extremely small capability base of MVS, which has made it difficult for the MVS to overcome the internal and external barriers.

Many non-mainstream actors—especially the non-partisan political organizations and voluntary sector—have been working with these MVS to expand the capability base of MVS. In the past decades, these non-mainstream actors have undertaken diverse efforts for building and nurturing community level groups and organizations of the MVS as the vehicles for enhancing their organizational, managerial, and technological capabilities. These community-based organizations (CBOs) have taken various forms, such as self-help groups (SHGs) especially of women, youth groups, and small farmers' groups. Further, some non-mainstream actors have made significant efforts to build the technological, organizational, managerial, and other capabilities at organizational as well as individual levels.

Apart from developing individual and collective capabilities, these micro-organizations have also helped to build greater solidarity and co-ordination within the MVS, facilitating their political, economic, and social empowerment and hence have also helped in enhancing the bargaining capacities of the MVS. This solidarity and co-ordination arises from the ability of these organizations to build a collective orientation and mechanisms for social and economic co-operation among the MVS. Though some of these micro-organizations have helped the struggles for resources, these organizations and the capabilities they embody have not been effectively used for achieving the objective of livelihood security of the MVS. The main bottleneck in this is the lack of appropriate, viable, and sustainable livelihoods (economic / production) activities that could be taken up by the MVS through these organizations.

#### **4. Towards the New Strategy for Livelihoods Security of the MVS**

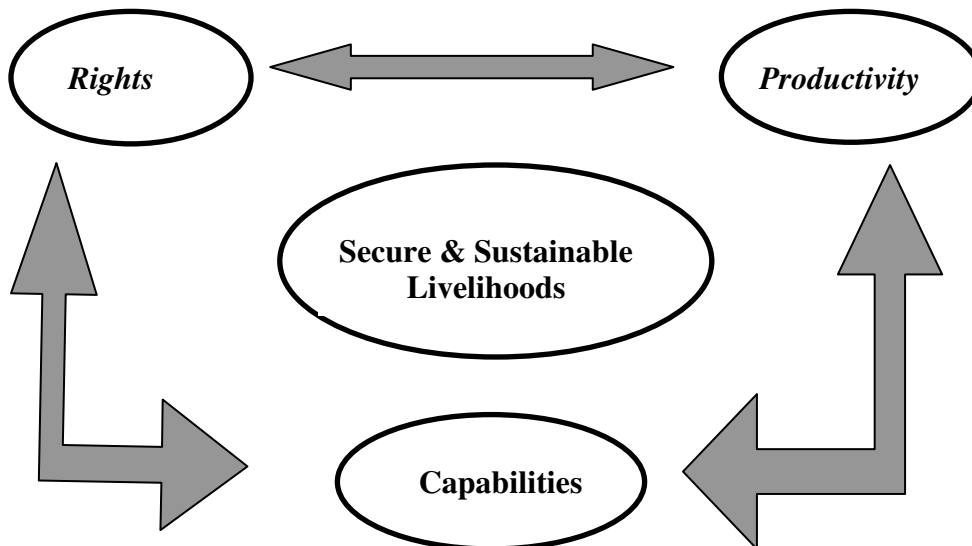
##### **Combining Rights, Capabilities, and Productivity in MVS Contexts**

The foregoing discussion shows that the three different streams of efforts by the non-mainstream actors have been effective in addressing respectively the three different causes of the lack of livelihoods security for the MVS, viz., (a) lack of rights and access to resources (mainly natural) required for conducting livelihoods activities; (b) extremely low productivity of resources to which the MVS have access to, and the resultant non-viability of livelihoods activity based on these resources, and (c) lack of organizational and other capabilities necessary to overcome different types of internal and external barriers faced by the MVS.

However, despite significant achievements by each of these three streams of efforts in their own objectives, little progress has been made in achieving the livelihood security of MVS. The main reason seems to be that, while addressing one crucial cause, the efforts in each of the three streams seem to have not been able to provide due attention to the other two equally crucial causes. This points at the need of evolving a new strategy for securing sustainable livelihoods which would facilitate simultaneous attention to all the three key elements, viz., rights to resources, productivity enhancement of resources, and capability building of the MVS. In other words, it is necessary that gains made by each of the three streams of efforts be integrated to arrive at an effective development strategy—rather a livelihood strategy—that is relevant and

appropriate to the situation of MVS. Such a strategy would be built on the synergizing of the strengths of the three key elements for meeting its central objective, viz., creating secure and sustainable livelihoods for the MVS. The conceptual map of this strategy is depicted in Figure 2. Further, this strategy of integration of three elements has to be designed in such a way that these elements complement each other to deliver immediate, tangible, and direct livelihood benefits to the MVS. To sum up, a new strategy for livelihood security of the MVS could be evolved, which is based on combining the three above-mentioned key elements—viz., rights over resources, productivity enhancement in sustainable manner, and building organizational and other capabilities. Such a Strategy would help the MVS obtain tangible, direct, and immediate livelihood benefits, helping, in turn, achieve livelihood security.

One of the key aspects of the strategy is the ground reality or contexts in which different MVS groups are situated. In order to ensure that the MVS would be able to obtain direct and tangible livelihoods benefits, the combining of the three crucial elements will have to be done in the given physical (resource), socio-cultural, and political contexts of MVS. In fact, the failure on the part of the mainstream to effectively utilize the lessons from the initiatives of the non-mainstream actors is rooted in the issue of context. The mainstream, while trying to learn from these initiatives, completely neglected the contextual specificity of these initiatives. Hence, while turning these initiatives into new programs and schemes, the methods and techniques evolved in these initiatives were completely de-contextualized. Further, while indiscriminately replicating these programs and schemes across the regions, diversity in the socio-cultural, physical, and other contexts at different locations and in different communities were again overlooked. Learning from these mistakes, it is important that the strategy of combining rights, productivity, and capabilities is implemented in a highly context-sensitive manner.



***Figure 2: Promoting Livelihood Security through Combining Rights, Productivity, and Capabilities***

## **Articulating the Strategy: Evolving a Self-Sustaining Process**

The issue of contexts is also linked to another key issue relating to the process by which this strategy is to be applied in real life situations. Our understanding of the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts of the MVS suggests that situations—wherein either certain rights to resources have been secured or considerable capability and / or organization building has been done—would provide appropriate conditions for making initial efforts to combine rights, capabilities, and productivity.

In practice, this means that the first step of the strategy would involve working with grassroots organizations which have been successful, to some extent, both in securing rights over natural resources (such as land and water) and in building capabilities (organizational or other) of the MVS. The key is to bring in the third crucial element, viz., the productivity enhancement of resources, over which the MVS have secured rights. This will have to be done first by developing or adapting the available technology for productivity enhancement to make it appropriate for the particular contexts of MVS. This should preferably be done in collaboration with the CBOs of MVS organized by the grassroots organizations (GrO). The next task is building capabilities of MVS families to utilize this adapted technology. While building technological capabilities of MVS, equal attention will have to be given to the building of organizational, managerial, and other capabilities

Thus, these MVS families/CBOs are able to secure the first level of livelihoods benefits through the combination of resource rights, capabilities, and increased productivity. These direct and tangible livelihood benefits will make the livelihoods (i.e., production) activities utilizing these resources viable, reliable, and hence attractive. At a certain level, these livelihood benefits will also enable the MVS to break-off from the vicious cycle of dependence and deprivation mentioned in the beginning. This freedom coupled with the enhancement in their technological, managerial, and organizational capabilities will spur the MVS to demand for more comprehensive rights over natural resources as well as for the right to get financial assistance and credit at affordable rate. At the same time, the MVS will also work on further enhancement of resource productivity and further building of their own capabilities. The more comprehensive rights on resources coupled with enhanced resource productivity and increased capabilities would result in increased livelihood benefits to MVS. Thus, the initial efforts to combine the rights, capabilities, and productivity would set in motion a self-sustaining and spiraling process that would allow the MVS, first, to ensure livelihoods security and then, to move toward livelihoods prosperity. (Please refer to Figure 3 at the end of the paper for the schematic depiction of this process.) In other words, this livelihood strategy has the potential to put the MVS on the path of livelihood prosperity in a self-reliant manner, starting from the basic livelihood security.<sup>7</sup>

## **Wider Dissemination of the Strategy**

It needs to be pointed out that this strategy has a distinguishing feature that has certain implications for dissemination for wider use. The strategy is highly context-specific. It

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<sup>7</sup> This is called self-reliant manner because, once MVS get out of the vicious cycle of dependence and deprivation, they will have internal wherewithal to keep on improving in all the three crucial areas and climb up the path to sustainable prosperity on their own. Probably, they might need some limited but crucial support from grassroots organizations, NGOs, and the State.

emphasizes that the strategy needs to be grounded in physical, socio-cultural, economic, and daily-life contexts of the target MVS group(s). As far as the physical or resource context is concerned, the strategy emphasizes on enhancement of primary productivity instead of relying on the secondary or external inputs to improve the productivity. Because there will be diversity in local ecological situation, the technologies required for enhancing the primary productivity will be different.

In the case of the socio-cultural and economic contexts, context-specificity becomes crucial. This is mainly because the strategy attempts to initiate a self-sustaining process that relies heavily on the capabilities of local individuals and local organizations, instead of relying on experts, bureaucrats, or agencies from outside. Again, because there will be considerable diversity in the socio-cultural, economic, and daily-life contexts of the local MVS individuals and organizations, it will be necessary to develop different pedagogies (for capability building) that are suited to local contexts. Similarly, in different locations, the main actors, their achievements in the areas of rights over resources as well as their organizational philosophies and cultures would be different. This will also require different program designs that would suit the local conditions and facilitate evolving coalition and collaboration among the actors.

Hence, various elements of the programs that will be designed to apply this strategy—including the technologies of productivity enhancement and the pedagogies for capability building—will have to be highly context-specific in order to be successful. In other words, this means that, for different MVS contexts, programs with different features (such as different technologies and pedagogies) will have to be designed. This would put considerable constraints on replicability of the programs and dissemination of this strategy.

One way to address this problem is to make an effort to develop *generic* methodologies and frameworks that would lay down concrete guidelines to develop program features, production technologies, and pedagogies to suit the particular MVS contexts. Thus, developing such generic methodologies and frameworks would be necessary for wider dissemination of the strategy. However, care should be taken that the generic methodologies and frameworks are adequately flexible to suit the diverse situations and contexts. At the same time, it is equally important that these methodologies do not become too abstract. Such abstract methodologies and frameworks could turn out to be too esoteric to be useful for local activists to apply in real-life situations. In order to ensure that the generic methodologies and frameworks do not become too abstract, it would be helpful to develop these methodologies and frameworks, while implementing this strategy in one concrete context.

Such generic methodologies then would be useful for the other support agencies to implement this strategy in other areas or with the other MVS, in collaboration with the grassroots organizations working with the MVS groups. In fact, these methodologies and frameworks should be designed in such a manner that even the grassroots organizations should be able to use them and implement the strategy on their own, probably with assistance from experts and practitioners in relevant fields.

These generic methodologies and frameworks need to be continuously updated and refined to make them amenable and useful even to the grassroots organization (GrO) and in as diverse physical and socio-cultural contexts as possible. With the improved generic methodologies, dependency on outside 'Facilitating and Support Organizations' (FSO) (for their

specialized skills and expertise) will be reduced, facilitating wider dissemination of the strategy through the leadership of the GrO and CBOs. As the accompanying Figure 4 (placed at the end of the Paper) shows, though in the initial stages the FSO lead the strategy, in the latter phases the GrO and CBOs will become independent by evolving collaborative relationships among themselves.

### **Expected Outcome and Implications**

It is anticipated that the strategy of combining of rights, productivity, and capabilities would have impact both at macro-level and micro-level. At micro-level, it is expected to provide tangible, direct, and immediate livelihoods benefits to MVS groups helping them to obtain livelihoods security. These benefits are also expected to lay foundation for moving to the livelihoods prosperity. In the process, it is expected to provide very strong impetus for strengthening of grassroots organizations working with the MVS as well as strengthening of the community level organizations of MVS. Further and most importantly, it is expected to strengthen the struggles waged by various organizations to secure rights for MVS over productive natural and other resources. The demonstration that the rights over resources would lead to meaningful, significant, and sustainable improvement in the livelihood conditions of MVS is going to help those waging these struggles at least in two ways. First, it will improve their bargaining power vis-à-vis the state and the resource-rich sections in the society. Second, it will also enthuse the MVS and make them confident to rally their support behind these struggles.

Apart from these direct micro-level gains, there are indirect but significant gains at macro-level. After breaking off from the cycle of dependence and deprivation, the MVS will be able to provide tangible and concrete support to grassroots organizations and support organizations. Apart from helping to increase the pressure for more and comprehensive rights over resources, this tangible and concrete support will also be helpful in strengthening efforts of the grassroots organizations and support organizations to effect pro-MVS changes in macro-level policies. The following are some examples of demands for changes in macro-policies where pressures from MVS will be created: (a) increase in support from the state, especially in the matters which are related to the livelihoods security of MVS; (b) increased accountability, transparency, and participation in governance of not only development programs, but that of the entire development function of the state and other agencies, and (c) according centrality to livelihoods security of MVS in all anti-poverty and resource-development programs.

## Part II: Outline of the Program to Implement the CRPC Strategy

### 1. Evolving the Program

#### Identifying the Program Components

The CRPC Strategy that involves combining of the Rights (i.e., rights over resources), Productivity (i.e., enhancement of the primary productivity of the local natural resources), and Capabilities (i.e., building of technological, organizational, and managerial capabilities) is evolved and outlined in the previous sections. Now, the question is how to implement this strategy? Or, in other words, what would be the programmatic platform to bring this strategy into reality? Designing a detailed program to actualize or implement this strategy is a difficult and major task. What is being tried in this Approach Paper is the evolution only of an outline of such a program.

The CRPC strategy has certain core features, which should be used as building blocks while evolving the program to implement the strategy. These features are discussed in this section to identify the main program components.

First, the strategy intends to combine three major elements—political rights, building of capabilities of individuals and organizations, and enhancement of productivity (especially of biomass generation)—that are too diverse in nature. These three elements define the following functional elements which will be the core components of the program: (a) *political activism* for securing rights over resources, mainly natural and financial; (b) *evolving and consolidating organizations*, especially the community-level organizations of MVS; (c) *building capabilities*—technological, managerial, organizational, and other—of members and activists of GrO, CBOs, and MVS groups; (d) *studies of the physical (or resource), socio-cultural, economic, and daily-life contexts* of the chosen MVS groups; and (e) *development and adaptation of technology* for enhancement of primary productivity of the local natural resources and productivity of certain crops.

Second, the strategy also involves bringing together different actors, viz., grassroots organizations (GrO), community-based organizations (CBOs) organized by the grassroots organizations and experts and researchers from diverse fields such as organizational behavior, communications, and project management. It is clear that these actors come from diverse backgrounds, have diverse styles of functioning as well as diverse organizational cultures, and even speak diverse ‘languages.’

It needs to be noted that, in this strategy, we are trying to build on what could be called intrinsic (accorded by the society) or mandated (often by oneself) functions of various actors. This is certainly important because each actor is comfortable and strong at carrying out these functions. But, it is important also because, in many instances, certain actors are the only actors who can carry out these functions that are crucial for promoting and ensuring livelihood security of MVS. For example, resource rights are the crucial requirement for the livelihood security of MVS. None other than the activist organizations working at the grassroots-level can carry out the function of securing rights effectively. In other words, leaving the grassroots-level activist



organizations out of the program would effectively mean sacrificing the “Rights” aspects and making the whole strategy politically unsustainable. Involvement of such diverse actors would require that the program has an in-built communication and coordination system that will facilitate synthesizing of the intrinsic / mandated functions of the diverse set of actors. The communication and coordination should also facilitate harmonization of the program functions entrusted to these actors.

Third, the strategy is highly location-specific as far as both its main aspects are concerned, viz., the physical or resource aspect and the socio-cultural aspect. As far as the physical-resource aspect is concerned, the strategy emphasizes on the enhancement of primary productivity instead of relying on the secondary or external inputs to improve the productivity. This requires intimate knowledge of local agro-ecology and agronomy of the local crops. The location specificity of the socio-cultural aspect becomes important because the strategy aims at initiating a self-sustaining process that is built on local organizations and local people, instead of relying on experts and bureaucrats from outside. This requires building capabilities of local people and local organizations and, hence, requires intimate knowledge of social structures and norms, cultural practices, and even political undercurrents in local communities.

Thus, location-specificity in both the aspects implies the involvement of and the leadership by local organizations and people in implementing the strategy. Effective leadership by the local organizations and activists would require higher and higher levels of organizational, technological, and managerial capabilities on the part of the local organizations and people. Hence, building of higher and higher levels of organizational, technological, managerial, and other capabilities will have to be the crucial component of the program in all the stages of the program.

Fourth, the main end-product of the strategy would be to install the self-sustaining and spiraling process of securing higher and higher levels of livelihoods benefits by combining rights, productivity, and capabilities and, then, attaining higher and higher levels of achievements in resource rights, capabilities, and productivity as described in the earlier section<sup>8</sup>. In addition to the program components that have been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, this self-sustaining and spiraling process would require two more important, interrelated program components: (a) production activity, using the adapted technologies for productivity-enhancement and (b) articulation of ‘policy’ demands for the state-support to the production activity by MVS.

The production activity would involve growing crops using the developed and adapted technologies for productivity-enhancement<sup>9</sup>. Securing direct, tangible, and immediate livelihoods

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<sup>8</sup> At this stage, it could be added that the self-sustaining process might also involve expanding the scope of program by extending from one component objective to any other. For example, the program that started with a project addressing the objective of nutritional security might subsequently be expanded to cover the objective of satisfaction of basic livelihood needs.

<sup>9</sup> This production activity could be aimed at any of the three above-mentioned components of the objective of livelihood security. Further, these activities would involve different routes for biomass production using the local natural resource base. These routes include, agriculture, horticulture, agro-forestry, and wasteland development.

benefits for MVS through production activity, is the main objective of the strategy and will, naturally, also be the mainstay of the program of activities evolved to implement the strategy. The production activity will be carried out in the following three different modes. In the beginning, the production activity will be carried out in the 'project mode'. This means that funds for all the expenses will be made available from the outside sources, protecting the MVS groups and the GrO from the risks involved. Once the activities are streamlined at one place and various technological and other parameters are firmed up, the production activity could then be carried out in the 'independent mode' by the same MVS group or even by the other MVS group. In the independent mode, the activity will be conducted as an enterprise on the basis of commercial principals. However, this may not be always possible everywhere for the MVS groups, because, in the given situation, the production activity may not be economically viable or may not be feasible due to some factors.

In situations where the activity cannot be carried out in the 'independent mode' even after firming up and optimization of the parameters, there is need for external help for the MVS. One dependable source of such help to a large number of MVS groups is the state. The state is already spending a large amount of funds and has elaborate administrative machinery for 'development' of the MVS through a variety of schemes and programs. Analysis of the production activities would help us identify what type of and how much support would be required from the state. The main strength of the strategy is its emphasis on the enhancement of primary productivity of local resources and, hence, the 'primary' productivity of the production activity. Hence, what will be required from the state will be in the form of initial investment—and not permanent subsidy—to increase the primary productivity. This investment might be required in the form of certain equipment (e.g., for irrigation system) or in the form of wages of the MVS families until the productivity of the farm is raised to the desired level<sup>10</sup>.

The type and quantity of support required from the state and the benefits it would produce will be articulated and, based on this articulation, 'policy' demands from the state will be evolved. These 'policy' demands would become the agenda for the political activism by the local GrOs and other Organizations. One important point needs to be stressed here. There is a severe problem of misuse of the state funds in the name of the MVS. Certain measures—such as linking disbursement to performance and joint monitoring of the scheme—will be built into the system to avoid this. Thus, the objective of installing the self-sustaining process of securing higher levels of livelihoods benefits would require two components to be introduced in the program—the production activity and the articulation of 'economic demands' from the state.

Finally, apart from this, another equally important end product of the program will be the evolution of generic methodologies and frameworks. As discussed in the earlier section on dissemination of the strategy, the element of location-specificity in the strategy makes it difficult to replicate the programs widely at different locations and in different communities. In order to disseminate the strategy wider, it has been suggested that generic methodologies and frameworks

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<sup>10</sup> The government has already started employment assurance schemes (such as Employment Guarantee Scheme of Government of Maharashtra or Jawahar Rojgar Yojana of the Government of India) that could provide the necessary wage support to the MVS families during the gestation period. The government agencies also provide subsidies, through various schemes, for equipment and material including chemical fertilizers. These subsidies could be appropriately redirected to serve the objective of the livelihood security of MVS by building the program based on CRPC Strategy

be evolved to design program elements, technologies, and pedagogies that are suitable to a particular location or a particular community. The program, hence, should specifically include this component in all stages of its design. Evolution of generic methodologies and frameworks needs to be treated as a separate program component. Otherwise, there is a danger that, under the pressure to provide demonstrable results, the program will get biased towards ensuring success of production activities. This would severely affect the prospects of dissemination of the strategy.

Thus, to begin with, there will be five core components of the program—political activism for securing rights, consolidation of organizational base, building (technological, organizational, and managerial or [TOM]) capabilities, context studies, and technology development and adaptation (TDA). Second, participation of a diverse set of actors would require that the program incorporate a sound and flexible communication and coordination system as a component. Third, the context-specificity involved in the strategy requires considerable emphasis on the capability development of various actors. Fourth, as the core objective of the strategy is to promote livelihood security of MVS, actual production activity would also be one of the main components of the program. The production activity would involve different types of operations that could be categorized as agro-forestry, wasteland development, intensive cultivation of small-plots, or extensive agriculture. Finally, another implication of the location-specificity of the strategy is the need to integrate, as a program component, evolution of generic methodologies and frameworks for program activities, technological and pedagogies. These program components are summarized in the accompanying Table 1.

**Table 1: Linkages between the Strategy Features and Program Components**

<i>Core Strategy Features</i>	<i>Related Program Component(s)</i>
Combining Rights, Productivity, and Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political Activism for Resource Rights</li> <li>▪ Consolidation of Organizations</li> <li>▪ Building TOM Capabilities</li> <li>▪ Context Studies</li> <li>▪ Technology Development and Adaptation (TDA)</li> </ul>
Participation of Diverse Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sound &amp; Flexible System for Communication and Coordination</li> </ul>
Location-Specificity of the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasis on Capability Building</li> <li>▪ Evolution of Generic Methodologies and Frameworks</li> </ul>
Self-Sustaining Process of Improving Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Production Activity in Three Modes—Project, Independent, and State-Supported</li> </ul>

### **Phases in the Program**

After identifying the main program components, we need to outline the steps or phases in which the program should proceed. As it is clear from the strategy depicted in Figure 3, we will have to begin by working with preferably one or two grassroots organizations (GrO) and then

reach to the community-based organizations (CBOs) that are organized by these GrO. In the beginning, the Facilitating and Support Organization (FSO) should take lead in initiating dialogue and convincing the leadership of the GrO about the utility and advantages of the strategy. This initial spadework—which will include some production activity in ‘demonstration’ mode and primary level work on technology development and adaptation (or TDA)—will create ground for collaboration with the GrO. This will also include identification of CBOs or MVS groups which will participate in the first stage of pilot-level production activities. This work could be treated as part of the Preparatory Phase (please refer to Table 2).

In the next phase, which could be called Phase I, the emphasis will be on developing the basic technological, organizational, and managerial (TOM) capabilities of the Lead Persons (LPs) and / or the ‘Lead Teams’ (LTs) from the GrO. These LTs or LPs would include CBO-level activists of the GrO, who—after building their capabilities—will be able to take lead in carrying out different tasks (not only technical) involved in the strategy. The capability building might include training of some pilot CBO or MVS groups. This initial training will be focused on implementing the pilot modules prepared by the FSO<sup>11</sup>. Apart from training LTs or LPs, intensive training activity for the ‘Training and Support Workers’ (TSWs) will also be started in this phase. The TSWs, after intensive training, will be expected to provide training and technical support to CBOs and GrO at the site. The LTs or LPs will also take up some trial or demonstration plots at the GrO sites in Phase I with the help of pilot CBO groups.

The Facilitating and Support Organization (FSO) will undertake Context Studies as well as TDA for designing the pilot modules that are suitable for the selected contexts of the participating MVS group(s). The FSO will continue production activity in ‘demonstration’ mode in collaboration with the Lead Teams at the FSO site. Apart from these, the GrO with the support from the FSO will undertake awareness-building activities. One major component of these awareness-building activities will be the nutritional education.

In Phase II, the emphasis will be on transferring the leadership (and even location) of activities to the GrO or to the chosen CBOs. The FSO will primarily work on building advanced capabilities of LTs, LPs, and TSWs, so that they can take up the responsibility of providing training, TDA, and support to increasing number of participating CBO members. In this phase, the FSO will start the work on designing the state-supported scheme of production activity, which will help evolve the ‘policy demands’. The GrO will also be working on: (a) carrying out production activities at chosen CBO sites in ‘project’ mode and (b) TDA in participatory mode (PTDA) in collaboration with members of the CBOs for new crops and /or further enhancement in productivity.

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<sup>11</sup> These Pilot-Modules would comprise of well-designed and detailed regimen for the production of limited number of crops. The CBO or MVS groups will be trained to implement these modules. It is expected that, once they grasp various principles, practices, and techniques involved, the CBO groups would innovate and further refine these modules.

**Table 2: Major Activities in the Five Phases of the Program**

<b>Facilities and Support Organizations (FSO)</b>	<b>Grassroots Organization (GrO)</b>	<b>Community-Based Organizations of MVS (CBO)</b>
<p><b>Preparatory Phase</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spade work on building coalition and collaboration</li> <li>- Experimentation &amp; Demonstration for primary (TDA)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Phase I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training &amp; building capabilities of LTs /LPs/ TSWs</li> <li>- Participatory context studies of selected MVS contexts</li> <li>- Design of pilot modules</li> <li>- Production activities at the FSO site in ‘project’ mode</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trial / Demonstration Plots at GrO sites</li> <li>- Awareness building &amp; Nutrition Education among CBO members</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Phase II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design of ‘state-supported’ schemes</li> <li>- Articulation of ‘Economic Demands’ for these scheme</li> <li>- Retraining &amp; building advanced capabilities of LTs, LPs, &amp; TSWs</li> <li>- Continued TDA work &amp; support to GrO for TDA</li> <li>- Evolution of generic methodologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training &amp; building capabilities of CBO members</li> <li>- Production activities at chosen CBO sites in project mode</li> <li>- Capacity building of CBOs by LTs</li> <li>- Participatory TDA activities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Phase III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing support only on key matters GrO and CBOs</li> <li>- Analytical support for political activism</li> <li>- Evolution of generic methodologies</li> <li>- Policy advocacy in collaborative manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political activism for concrete ‘Policy Demands’ and for resource rights</li> <li>- Establishment of TDE Facility</li> <li>- Training &amp; building capabilities of CBO members</li> <li>- Production activities at CBO sites in project mode</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Production activities in ‘independent’ and or ‘project’ mode by CBOs</li> <li>- Further PTDA for more crops or for more productivity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase IV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FSO reduces its role and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring of and support to CBOs for implementing state-supported schemes</li> <li>- Increased political activism for rights over other resources</li> <li>- Continued TDA work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dissemination &amp; implementation of state supported schemes</li> <li>- PTDA &amp; capacity building for moving to livelihoods prosperity</li> </ul>

Note: LTs = Lead Teams; LPs = Lead Persons; TSWs = Training & Support Workers; TDA = Technology Development & Adaptation; TDE = Training, Demonstration and Experimentation

In Phase III, the center of activities will move to the CBO-level. The LTs, LPs, and TSWs working with the GrO will help the CBOs to carry out production activities in either ‘project’ mode or in ‘independent’ mode, wherever possible. They will also help the CBOs to carry out TDA for further enhancement in productivity. Most importantly, in Phase III, the GrO will take up political activism directed at pressurizing the concerned state agencies for sanctioning of the ‘policy’ demands’ for the state support for production activities. In the initial stage, effort may be made to get the sanction for the demands on limited, say pilot basis. The FSO will continue to work with the GrO and CBOs on the key and crucial matters such as support to the production activity in independent mode, refining of the policy demands, and providing the necessary analytical support to the political activism in support of the ‘policy’ demands’. In this phase, the FSO will also begin collaborative policy advocacy with the ‘policy’ demands as the agenda.

In Phase IV, the FSO will practically move out of the program. The LTs, LPs and TSWs will help the old and new CBOs to implement the state-supported scheme for production activities. The livelihood benefits drawn by the CBOs are expected to create demands—as well as the MVS support—for more rights, higher capabilities to more people, and increased productivity, thus, setting the self-sustaining and spiraling process in motion.

Thus, the program to implement the CRPC strategy is divided into five sequential phases. These phases identify the major steps in implementing the strategy and need not be considered as watertight compartments. Based on the strategic needs dictated by the local situation, there could be addition, deletion, or shifting of activities from one phase to other. In other words, this is an illustration of the program and not ‘the’ program. For any such program, the CRPC Strategy would remain at the core.

As the next step of implementing the strategy, the Operational Plan (OP) for individual project will have to be designed based on this program outline. The physical and the social context of the participating MVS group or CBO coupled with the exact objective of the project (e.g., nutritional security or satisfaction of basic needs) would decide the scope of the project (i.e., number of MVS members to be covered) and the depth of the project (i.e., the size, scale, and nature of production activity, intensity of training of MVS groups, time and resources dedicated to the TDA)<sup>12</sup>. The detailed design of the operational plan of the project will, in turn, depend on the four major factors—the contexts, the objectives, the scope, and the depth. The activities and their sequence in the operational plan could be different from those in the program outline.

Before ending this brief discussion on various activities in the program, two crucial elements of the program needs to be stressed here. The first is effective collaboration between the FSO and GrO. As mentioned before, often, both have different objectives, priorities, types of people, styles of functioning, and organizational cultures. All these often make effective and close collaboration difficult. This program, though fitting more to the objectives, style, and culture of FSO, might not fit the immediate priorities, style, and culture of many of the GrO. In

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<sup>12</sup> Here physical and social context would cover a diverse set of factors, including the available assets and capabilities, the deficiencies and barriers faced by the MVS, the daily life-schedules, social and cultural practices, current livelihood activities, priorities and preferences in livelihood needs and livelihood benefits.

such situation, the key lies in the commitment of the leadership of the GrO to the collaboration and success of CRPC strategy. In the initial stages, this commitment is expected to come from the realization of the urgent and acute need to further expand the agenda of “rights over resource,” in order to promote the livelihoods security of MVS with whom they are working. It is also expected that initial success in demonstration activities, and more importantly, in delivering direct and tangible livelihood benefits would further strengthen the commitment and active participation of the GrO leadership in the program. The skepticism and even limited cooperation by the GrO leadership in the initial phases should be addressed with understanding and patience, considering their previous discouraging experiences of efforts to implement the technology-improvement programs.

The second crucial element is engagement of MVS groups, especially of the pioneering MVS groups, in actual production activities. For sustaining this, the FSO and GrO will have to work on many aspects—not only on the technical and economic, but even the managerial and psychological. The gradual increase in the engagement is envisaged through the transitional step of the production activity in the ‘project-mode’. In the ‘project’ mode, the FSO and GrO are expected not only to provide assistance and support in techno-economic, financial, and managerial aspects but also to work with the MVS groups to maintain their confidence and moral, to resolve communication and coordination problems, and to help MVS overcome the external barriers. In doing this, they will have to build upon what these MVS have already achieved. These achievements might include, for example, the confidence to deal with external barriers achieved through successful political activism as well as the institutional capabilities achieved through smooth functioning of thrift-groups. Equally important is the continuing interaction with the MVS families for maintaining their confidence and keeping the production levels high. This could be done through activities like retraining camps or sessions for sharing experiences. In short, success of the program depends not only on its structural sophistication but also on such crucial elements, which need to be identified and acted upon.

## **2. LEISIC: Technology for Productivity Enhancement**

It is now clear that one of the important aspects of the CRPC program is development and adaptation of technologies for enhancement of primary productivity of the chosen crops as well as that of the micro-eco-system, i.e., of the plot of land on which cropping is to be done. Further, the technological component involves the context studies of the chosen MVS contexts, which would guide the technology development and adaptation effort. It also involves development of technological capabilities of the CBOs of MVS and GrO who work with these CBOs.

As mentioned in the earlier section, the CRPC Strategy relies on learning from the initiatives and experiments by the protagonists of different streams of efforts for enhancement of primary productivity, viz., Organic Farming, Natural Farming, LEISA (Low-External-Input, Sustainable Agriculture), and the ‘Ten-Guntha’ (i.e., “A Quarter of Acre”) Experiments (please refer to Box 4). Based on our understanding and analysis of the efforts from the first three of the above-mentioned streams of efforts as well as based on our study and experience of the last set of experiments, we have come up with a different approach to the technological aspect of the productivity enhancement of natural resources. We call this “Low-External-Input, Sustainable, and Intensive Cultivation” or (LEISIC).

LEISIC is the technological approach to enhance productivity of biomass generation, which, in turn, is a component of the broader CRPC strategy. The approach will contribute to the core objective of promoting livelihoods security of MVS, by facilitating further addition of livelihoods benefits to the livelihoods basket of MVS families. This could be done by starting new livelihoods activities that either supplement or substitute current livelihood activities of the MVS families. It could, in some cases, involve strengthening of the current livelihood activities. It needs to be made clear that LEISIC is one of the many possible technological approaches that would help realize the CRPC strategy.

### **Important Features of LEISIC**

In LEISIC, the operative part is ‘intensive cultivation’, especially of small plots of land. In order to appreciate LEISIC, this “intensive cultivation” needs to be contrasted with the “extensive agriculture”<sup>13</sup>. The term ‘intensive’ refers to application of high levels of internal (to the MVS household) inputs (such as skills, work organization, and labor) on natural resources that are scarce or less available for the MVS families (such as land and water)<sup>14</sup>. In other words, ‘intensive’ refers to cultivation on small plots and using the scarce resource of water in judicious and strategic manner in order to maximize the output (in a suitable manner)<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, the term ‘cultivation’ indicates kinds of operations that are significantly different from those in the ‘agriculture’ (such as tilling and sowing).

Intensive cultivation (as against extensive agriculture) is thought to be more conducive to the situation of MVS. This is because most MVS are outside the periphery of traditional agricultural systems as they have less or no access not only to lands but also to agricultural tools, skills, and knowledge due to their social and economic exclusion and geographic seclusion<sup>16</sup>. In most situations, women—even from the landed families—are also at the periphery of the conventional agricultural ‘systems’ though they are major contributors of agriculture labor.

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<sup>13</sup> The word ‘cultivation’ has two dictionary meanings (a) to prepare and use land, soil etc. for growing crops and (b) to develop a relationship or attitude (Ref. Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary). Thus, here cultivation stresses on the one-to-one relationship between the land and its manager or the cultivator, which is not emphasized in extensive agriculture.

<sup>14</sup> The labor part includes both – physical and intellectual labor. It needs to be mentioned that the amount of hard physical work required will be less compared to the conventional agriculture. In LEISIC, intellectual or labor of the mind is given equal or more importance than physical labor.

<sup>15</sup> It also implies developing an ‘intense’ relationship between the land (nature) and the cultivator (human). Thus, the intensity is present at both, the bio-physical and socio-psychological (mental) levels.

<sup>16</sup> This description fits to most of the MVS groups such as the women, *dalits*, and nomadic tribals. However, some MVS do have a strong agricultural tradition and a great wealth of agricultural know-how, skills, and even resources. This is especially true for many tribal families in forested areas.



#### **Box 4: The Ten-Guntha Experiment**

The concept of “*Ten-Gutha Experiment*” (TGE) was put forward by the late Prof. Dabholkar. One *Guntha* is equivalent to thousand square feet. Ten *Guntha* is equivalent to ten thousand square feet or about one-fourth of an acre. Prof. Dabholkar hypothesized that output from this area of land—using low-external input, sustainable cultivation technique—should be sufficient to produce food, fuel, fodder, and fiber requirements of a typical household of five members (three adults and two children). This hypothesis was based on certain parameters of the primary productivity.

“Social Development and Research Institution”, an NGO based in Solapur district of Maharashtra, conducted an experiment based on this hypothesis. A detailed investigation of this experiment was conducted by ReLi Team of Prayas after completion of two years of the experimentation. It showed that the income (based on the value of farm products at local on-farm prices) at the end of the second year was approximately Rs. 35,000 per year. In a period of two years, around 40 crops of different types (cereals, pulses, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, spices, and fuel and fodder) had been cultivated. The gross cropped area was twice the land available, indicating intensive (two times) land-use through careful crop rotation and innovative inter-cropping. The technical and managerial inputs into this experiment were of a very high order. The total capital investment, which included expense on land, water facility, seeds and saplings, light-equipment, starter-biomass, seed money for small animals (poultry and goats), and miscellaneous was Rs. 1,20,000. Besides this, the recurring expenses on labor and maintenance, were approximately Rs. 40,000 per year. This was required for the first two years. However, there is a lot of scope for reducing the capital expenditure, especially if the same initial investment could be used for a larger area, especially the expenditure on water facility and if the labor input is provided through anti-poverty and employment-generation programs.

During the experiments, many new practices and techniques have been evolved. The detailed documentation maintained by the experimenters has made it possible to learn about these techniques and practices and adapt them in different situation. As a result, relying on this documentation and experiences, an effective (i.e., economically viable, socially acceptable, and environmentally sustainable) program could be developed for livelihoods security of MVS.

Apart from these differences, there is another equally important difference between the ‘intensive cultivation’ and ‘extensive agriculture’. Normally, ‘agriculture’ refers to ‘mono-cropping’ practices, i.e., taking one or two crops in a single season on a large piece of land (extensive). As against this, the ‘intensive cultivation’ would involve ‘multi-cropping’, i.e., simultaneous cropping of many crops in small plots. Mono-cropping in agricultural systems contributes in two ways. First, it requires limited effort for land husbandry and, therefore, allows moving from intensive to extensive practices. Second, it creates marketable surplus, which has emerged as one of the major objectives of the ‘modern,’ extensive agriculture. Here again, in the case of both these features, the MVS have different priorities. By increasing effort on husbandry, i.e., by going for intensification, they can optimize on the most scarce resources they have, viz., land and water. Further, their primary objective, at least initially, is ensuring livelihoods security and not producing marketable surplus<sup>17</sup>. Hence, multi-cropping through intensive cultivation is more favorable to MVS situation.

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<sup>17</sup> The lack of priority to marketable surplus does not mean complete rejection of market and adoption of subsistence economy as a matter of principle. Rather, this is a strategic decision. In the initial stages, it is strategic for these vulnerable sections to avoid, as far as possible, going to the markets, especially non-local markets. There is sufficient scope for absorbing the production for self-consumption to ensure nutritional security for carrying out barter or sale in local community-level market, mainly for obtaining cash needed for livelihood security.

In LEISIC approach, the aspect of ‘low-external-input’ (LEI) contributes to economic sustainability through reduction in inputs coming from outside the local economy and local ecology and hence requiring cash. This also means intensive use of internal resource, viz., household-labor and biomass from local ecosystem. This, again, suits the situation of the MVS whose access to the external resources and cash is extremely weak.

The LEI aspect also contributes to environmental sustainability, as it completely rules out use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides<sup>18</sup>. In addition to the LEI, the term ‘sustainable’ also helps stress on environmental sustainability as it emphasizes on the improvement in the primary productivity, by setting the internal natural cycles of soil nutrients and energy.

Thus, to summarize, LEISIC emphasizes the use of high levels of ‘internal’ inputs, the optimum use of scarce resources of land and water through ‘intensive cultivation’, the ‘multi-cropping’, and the rejection of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. As a result, it is most suitable for situation surrounding the MVS who have less access to resources, to cash, or to the traditional agricultural knowledge and tools, and who are more vulnerable vis-à-vis markets. (Please refer to Box 5 which lists the basic features of the LEISIC approach.)

The exact operational design of LEISIC (i.e., choice of crops, cultivation cycles, and practices) will depend mainly on the exact objective of the project (e.g., nutritional security or satisfaction of basic needs) as well as on the physical-social contexts of MVS. However, there will be some common, broad categories of practices, which have been developed, using the experiments and studies done so far. They are: (a) soil composting; (b) building ‘green’ fence; (c) tending of plants (sowing, watering, pruning, harvesting); (d) pest and disease management; (e) methods of preserving and processing the ‘farm’ produce, including seeds.

#### **Box 5: Basic Features of the LEISIC Approach**

- Shift from 'agriculture' to 'cultivation' that is suitable to the social, economic and cultural conditions of the MVS
- Cultivation of small plots and using available water
- Use of simple tools and practices, as compared to conventional agricultural equipment (such as pumps, bullocks, and plough) and practices (such as tilling).
- Strategic uses of various techniques such as composting and soil building, creating microclimate, precise tending practices, and integrated pest-management
- Simultaneous cultivation of many crops, shift from ‘extensive mono-cropping’ to ‘intensive multi-cropping’
- Shift from ‘cash-intensive and high-external-input’ mode to ‘labor-intensive and low-external-input’ mode
- Amenable to exercises on a very small scale (household) involving collaborative effort of all the members of one household or more than one household or of a group of women

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<sup>18</sup> This rejection of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is less due to the ideological reasons and more due to the strategic reasons. It is now well accepted that the high-cost chemical fertilizers and pesticides are required in increasing doses, and, hence, they would make the whole exercise highly vulnerable, especially because the MVS are cash-starved. As a result, in certain situations, judicious and strategic use of chemicals is not entirely ruled out.

- Strategic utilization of produce, which involves securing of livelihood benefits through strategic combination of self-consumption, processing, exchange, and market sale, therefore shift from ‘vulnerability due to market-dependence’ to ‘strengths through the combination of self-consumption and strategic use of markets’
- New operational and work management practices integrating the domestic work and 'farm' work
- Suited to the realities of rural women from the MVS households

Before we end this section on technology for productivity enhancement, it must be made clear that the initial emphasis on the ‘intensive cultivation’ does not mean that the ‘extensive agriculture,’ agro-forestry, or other categories of production activities are permanently precluded from the strategy or the program. As mentioned before, there are many MVS contexts in which extensive agriculture will have to be considered in order to ensure livelihoods security of these MVS groups. This will be especially true in the case of tribal communities, which have access to agricultural lands and have strong tradition of agriculture. The choice to begin with the intensive cultivation is guided by two major factors. First, intensive cultivation approach is found to be more convenient for the women from the MVS sections—because they are marginalized from the land resources as well as from the traditional agriculture systems—who are the first MVS groups with whom we have chosen to work. Second, in Maharashtra (the state where we are currently working), a great wealth of knowledge about the productivity-enhancement technologies in the ‘intensive cultivation’ mode has been generated through the “Ten Guntha” experiments, which could be utilized with some adaptations and without requiring much inputs of time, expertise, and resources. Third, and most important, it is found that intensive cultivation by women from the MVS and other nutrient-deficient families will be helpful to serve the priority objective of nutritional security of children and women mentioned in the beginning of this paper.

### **3. Role of Facilitating and Support Organization**

In the earlier sections, it is noted that the CRPC Strategy emphasizes the location-specificity and hence it would rely more on the GrO and CBOs for wider dissemination. However, it must also be mentioned that the most difficult part of the entire scheme is initiation of the program based on this strategy. The strategy envisages bringing together of diverse actors, build a coalition of these actors, and then organize collaborative activities among them. The strategy also envisages amalgamation of four different types of work or activities, viz., political activism, organization building, capability building, and technological adaptation.

There is no need to emphasize that this cannot be brought about without planned and concerted efforts by a team of individuals with broad understanding, diverse capabilities, and adequate experience. This team is called here the ‘Facilitating and Support Organization’ or FSO. The role to be played by the FSO is multi-faceted and will require diverse capabilities and faculties. It is understood that it is extremely difficult to find a team with all these capabilities and faculties. The more realistic approach would be to start with a team having the basic potential and gradually acquire these capabilities through training and other capability-building exercises.

The main functions of such a FSO would include: (a) awareness building, motivation, and building coalition with the GrO and CBOs; (b) maintaining communication and coordination among diverse actors; (c) carrying out context studies; (d) carrying out technology development and adaptation; (e) building technological, organizational, and managerial capabilities of the members of the GrO and CBOs; and (f) developing generic methodologies and frameworks for dissemination of the strategy. In carrying out these functions, the FSO will have to acquire many capabilities and faculties, which include:

- Understanding and appreciation of political dimensions of the problem of livelihoods security of the MVS
- Experience and ability to work in the diverse organizational environments and cultures of the diverse actors to be brought together in implementing the strategy
- A good understanding of the substantive as well as pedagogic aspects of the task of building, especially, technological and managerial capabilities<sup>19</sup>
- Adequate analytical ability to bring together inputs from different disciplines as well as apply and utilize them in a coherent and effective manner in a given situation.
- Adequate project planning and management skills and expertise.

#### **4. Praxis: The Process of Articulating and Implementing the Strategy**

##### **Learning from the Practice**

This concluding section attempts to elaborate on the two major distinguishing features of this Approach Paper and of the strategy it proposes. First, this approach paper is not a product of the fertile imagination. It, rather, is an outcome of thought-processes embedded in the work of members of the ReLi Team of Prayas. This work includes a broad range of activities undertaken in the past two years. In addition, the paper has, indirectly but substantially, benefited from the work—as well as the knowledge, experience, understanding, and contacts developed through this work—done by members of the Prayas Team even prior to the formation of the Team.

Coming to the thought-processes and activities, the immediate impetus for launching of Prayas' activities in the ReLi area came from the study, conducted by a Prayas member, of the impacts of the urban-industrial expansion on the local natural resources and livelihoods of people in the Konkan region. The findings of the study pointed at the need to focus Prayas' analytical as well as practical efforts on the issue of the severely threatened livelihoods' security of the most vulnerable sections. The findings also pointed at the increasing limitations and irrelevance of the conventional poverty-eradication strategies that relied on urban-industrial expansion or on the expansion of the "modern" agriculture. It was also realized that this threat to livelihoods security of MVS is the result of two simultaneous processes: (a) erosion in the availability or access to the local natural resources for the MVS and (b) extremely low (or reduced) productivity of local natural resources due to their destruction, defilement, and neglect. These findings directed Prayas' efforts for search of the livelihood strategy addressing these two processes.

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<sup>19</sup> This includes knowledge and understanding of as diverse fields as the organizational behaviors and agro-ecology.

In the twelve months, the Prayas ReLi Team has been engaged in three major activities. The first activity involves review of conceptual and theoretical literature from the international agencies on the emerging theme of ‘sustainable livelihoods’. The review vividly brought out the severe limitations and irrelevance of the ‘sustainable livelihood’ approach (i.e., strategy) developed by highly-paid consultants of international agencies. The consultants were told by their professional colleagues working with various national and state governments that their approach (in the form of frameworks and tools) was too complex to be of any direct use in the field<sup>20</sup>. The main lesson is that no amount of conceptual and analytical sophistication and intellectual toil could guarantee success in coming up with an effective strategy to address the challenge of livelihoods security of the "poor and vulnerable." It is necessary that the theoretical and analytical efforts be grounded in the grassroots-level reality of livelihoods of the poor. Further, this grounding, again, should not be attempted as an intellectual exercise but should come through active collaboration with and participation of the organizations working with the ‘poor’ and of the ‘poor’ themselves. The centrality accorded in the CRPC strategy to the process of building collaborations and coalitions among the FSO, GrO, and the CBOs is rooted in this realization.

The second major activity undertaken by Prayas involves diverse efforts to learn from the initiatives and experiments aimed at enhancement in the primary productivity of the local natural resources. As mentioned before, these efforts come from different streams such as LEISA, Organic Farming, Natural Farming, Permaculture, and the "Ten-Guntha" Experiments (TGE). These efforts included the review of literature (on LEISA and TGE) as well as the study and analysis of various field-experiments based mainly on TGE. The first major finding was confirmation of the immense potential in the practices and techniques developed by these experiments. However, it was also found that these techniques are not easily amenable and adaptable for the MVS in order to help them enhance security of their livelihoods. The CRPC Strategy evolved in this Approach Paper is aimed at bridging this gap.

The third major activity is the support work for two grassroots organizations that are active in the Konkan region. The support activities that were planned and carried out have been focused on the livelihoods and local natural resources. However, in the course of the work, it was realized that the grassroots organizations are in a desperate search for an effective program that would enable them to help the MVS groups to ensure livelihoods security. It is a common experience of these organizations that, on one hand, the governments’ policies encouraging urban-industrial growth in the region are further aggravating the threats to the livelihood security of MVS. At the same time, on the other hand, no effort on the part of the governments or these organizations—including various government anti-poverty or development programs, the struggles for rights over resources, or efforts for building capabilities of MVS—could provide direct, tangible livelihoods benefits to the MVS in the short run, which has become the urgent need. The CRPC Strategy, essentially, is an effort to respond to this desperate search for an alternative program for livelihood security of MVS.

Thus, the Approach Paper is the product of the thought-processes generated by first-hand experiences as well as the analysis of the micro and macro-situations. This makes the CRPC

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<sup>20</sup> This sounds ironical in the context of the admission on the part of these consultants that their frameworks and tools—which were found to be too complex by their colleagues—were too inadequate to capture the complex ground reality surrounding the livelihood of the poor.

Strategy an organic component of the thinking and action of Prayas' ReLi Team. This brings us to another distinguishing feature of this Approach Paper.

### **Translating Ideas into Practice**

The second distinguishing feature of this Approach Paper is that it is not meant to be a sterile intellectual exercise. Because it was the product of the processes embedded in the activities of the Prayas ReLi team, it was natural that the activities would shape themselves in response to various elements of the strategy even before it was documented in the form of the Approach Paper. The major lead came from our work on LEISA review and our efforts to study the TGE experiment. As mentioned before, it became abundantly clear that, the practices and techniques evolved through the local-level TGE experiments could be extremely useful for the MVS, however, they need to be adapted and made amenable to the MVS. It was also realized that, unfortunately, there is no easy way in the given political and institutional situation to make these practices and techniques amenable to and hence available to the MVS groups.

This prompted us to think about the possible role that Prayas' ReLi Team could play in the given situation. We could see a considerable role for a support organization like Prayas to facilitate the process of combining of the three crucial elements of the strategy—rights, productivity, and capabilities—that had remained separated within the domains of the disparate types of organizations. We felt that Prayas is eminently capable of taking up many of the responsibilities involved in this support and facilitating role. Members of the Prayas team have academic training in diverse areas such as technology, social science, and social work. The three senior team members, among themselves, have a combined work experience of about thirty years of working on research, analysis, and action-research with grassroots organizations on interdisciplinary issues in the areas of environment and development. A newly-added member of the Prayas team has seven years of hands-on, field experience of working on the TGE under the guidance of Prof. S. A. Dabholkar, who pioneered the TGE movement.

At the same time, we were also acutely aware of two glaring deficiencies on our part. First, as we are a city-based organization providing analytical support, we have neither grassroots base nor the popular mandate necessary to undertake efforts for dissemination or advocacy of the strategy. Second, we did not have any in-house professional expertise in agriculture, horticulture, or agronomy, which appeared to be a crucial requirement. We felt urgent need to work on both these deficiencies before undertaking further work on this issue.

To deal with the first issue of popular mandate, we decided to approach those organizations, which are working with people at the grassroots level and hence would be considered to have the mass-base and, hence the popular mandate. Our support work as well as our previous work with the grassroots organizations from Konkan helped us develop close rapport with them and confidence about us in their members. Building on this, we initiated a dialogue with them on our concerns, analysis, and our conceptualization about the need for a new strategy. We wrote a concept note (which was a precursor to this Approach Paper) in Marathi (the local language) which we shared with many grassroots-level activists and organizations. As we had expected, the activists and organizations found considerable overlap between their concerns and analysis and what was elaborated in the note. The response was very encouraging. This led to organizing of a workshop for the leading activists from some grassroots organizations in the northern Konkan region. The workshop was aimed at explaining the various

components of the strategy and discussing them thread-bare. The deliberations in the workshop were tremendously helpful to us in many ways. It gave us extremely valuable insights into the ground reality and also into relevance of the strategy. As the feedback of the participants suggests, the deliberations also helped the grassroots organizations to get a clearer picture of the strategy. At the (very emphatic) request from the participants, another workshop was organized for the members of CBOs that are connected with these grassroots organizations. The second workshop also received very encouraging response in terms of attendance and deliberations, despite the then imminent planting season. The workshop ended with a resolve to continue the process by organizing study meetings, which will be hosted by these grassroots organizations by turns.

Regarding the second deficiency related to the lack of in-house agricultural and agronomic expertise, we felt that we need not make development of new ‘technology’ as the pivotal element in our program<sup>21</sup>. It was thought that, despite these lacunae, Prayas could still work on the ‘technological’ aspects of the strategy through a combination of measures. First, Prayas could rely on the knowledge, understanding, and insights of its own members. Apart from the knowledge and information, the senior members of Prayas, among themselves, have about five years of combined experience of analytical and practical work in the area of TGE. As mentioned before, Prayas’ systematic work in this area attracted a new member who has seven years of field experience in the TGE area and who has worked with the one of the pioneers of the TGE movement. Second, Prayas has also developed good rapport with those who have worked on the TGE and related experiments successfully and who would be ready to assist in Prayas’ activities as consultants. Third, it was also thought that members of Prayas team could develop further understanding and expertise by engaging into experimentation and demonstration of the TGE practices and techniques. The Prayas team has started working on experimentation and demonstration since March 2001. The initial focus was on the techniques of soil preparation and building micro-climate. By the end of September 2001, the Prayas team had prepared high quality composted soil adequate to initiate demonstration activity on the small plot of land. In addition, Prayas is also continuing experimentation on soil preparation and micro-climate building. Prayas is planning to continue to work on both these deficiencies. In addition, after articulating the CRPC strategy and the program to implement the strategy, Prayas is now preparing to initiate the Preparatory Phase mentioned in the program outline.

## **5. Conclusion: Supporting Policy Advocacy and Activism for Resource Rights**

Before concluding, another major potential implication of the CRPC Strategy needs to be mentioned. The strategy needs to be viewed in the light of the fate met by the previously mentioned efforts by consultants of the international agencies. There is a danger that despite this rejection by their own staff, the programs based on the same approaches, tools, and methodologies—albeit, in the ‘refined’ or ‘revised’ forms—would be thrust by international funding agencies down the government as well as non-governmental channels. Despite the irrelevance and limitations of these programs, the government agencies and big NGOs—more

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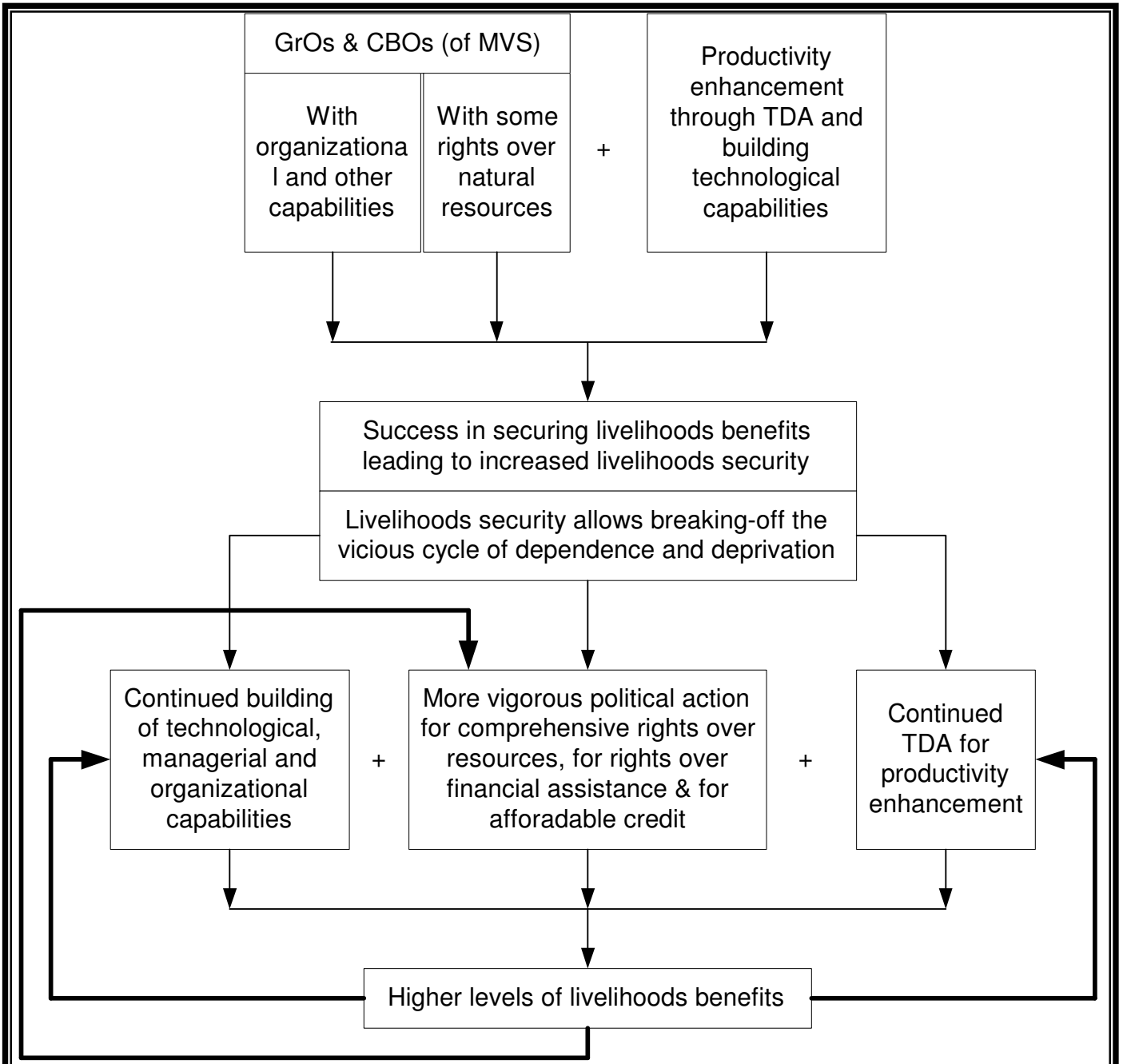
<sup>21</sup> This was in contrast with the model adopted by the organization called AME in their efforts to disseminate organic farming in Karnataka, wherein professional experts of AME played very critical role as technological experts.

acquiescent due to the financial crunch—would implement these programs, spending large amounts of money. Apart from the wastage, this also implies increased impact on the livelihoods security of MVS, as most of these ‘new’ programs are bound to repeat the past mistakes that were committed while designing and implementing the disastrous old programs. These new programs and the accompanying rhetoric are using the term—without accepting their substance—such as sustainability, livelihood, and vulnerability. There is a danger that such hollow use of these key terms by these agencies and in these high-visibility programs would severely undermine the credibility of the newly emerging ‘livelihoods’ focus in the theory and practice of development. Equally worrisome is the possibility that this loss of credibility of the ‘livelihood’ focus would, in turn, adversely affect efficacy of the struggles on the issues of resource-rights and livelihood security.

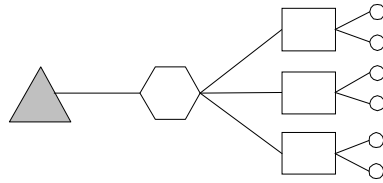
In this situation, if strategies such as the CRPC Strategy could be put forth as reliable alternatives, they would make substantial difference. The challenge is to puncture the all-pervading TINA (i.e., there is no alternative) Syndrome that allows free run for such irrelevant and potentially harmful programs. In other words, the challenge is to develop strategies (and programs) similar to CRPC Strategy, validate them through experimentation, and refine them further to make them economically viable, socially desirable, environmentally sustainable, organizationally feasible, and politically emancipatory. If such a strategy is demonstrated to be viable and emancipatory, it would give the much-needed boost to the political activism and policy advocacy on the issues of rights and livelihoods, by strengthening the arguments and expanding the agenda.

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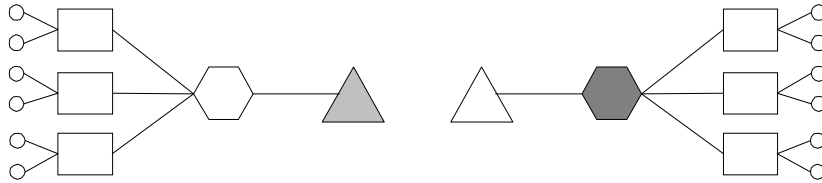




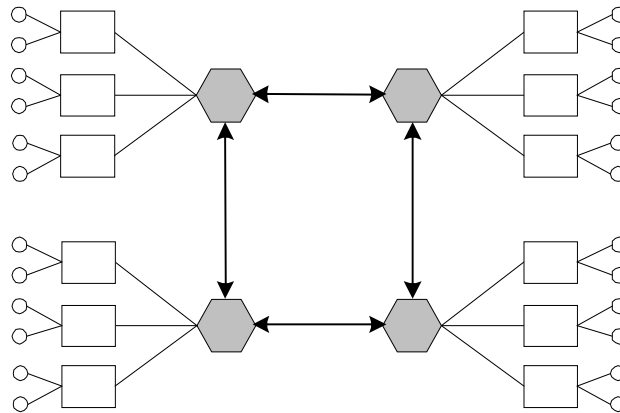
**Figure 3 : Schematic Depiction of the Self-Sustaining Process**



*Early Stage : The FSO [shaded Triangle] is leading activities of the GrO and the*



*Middle Stage : The FSO [Shaded Triangle] is leading activities of the GrO and the CBO at the new location, but, at the first location, GrO [Shaded Hexagon] is leading the activities with support from FSO*



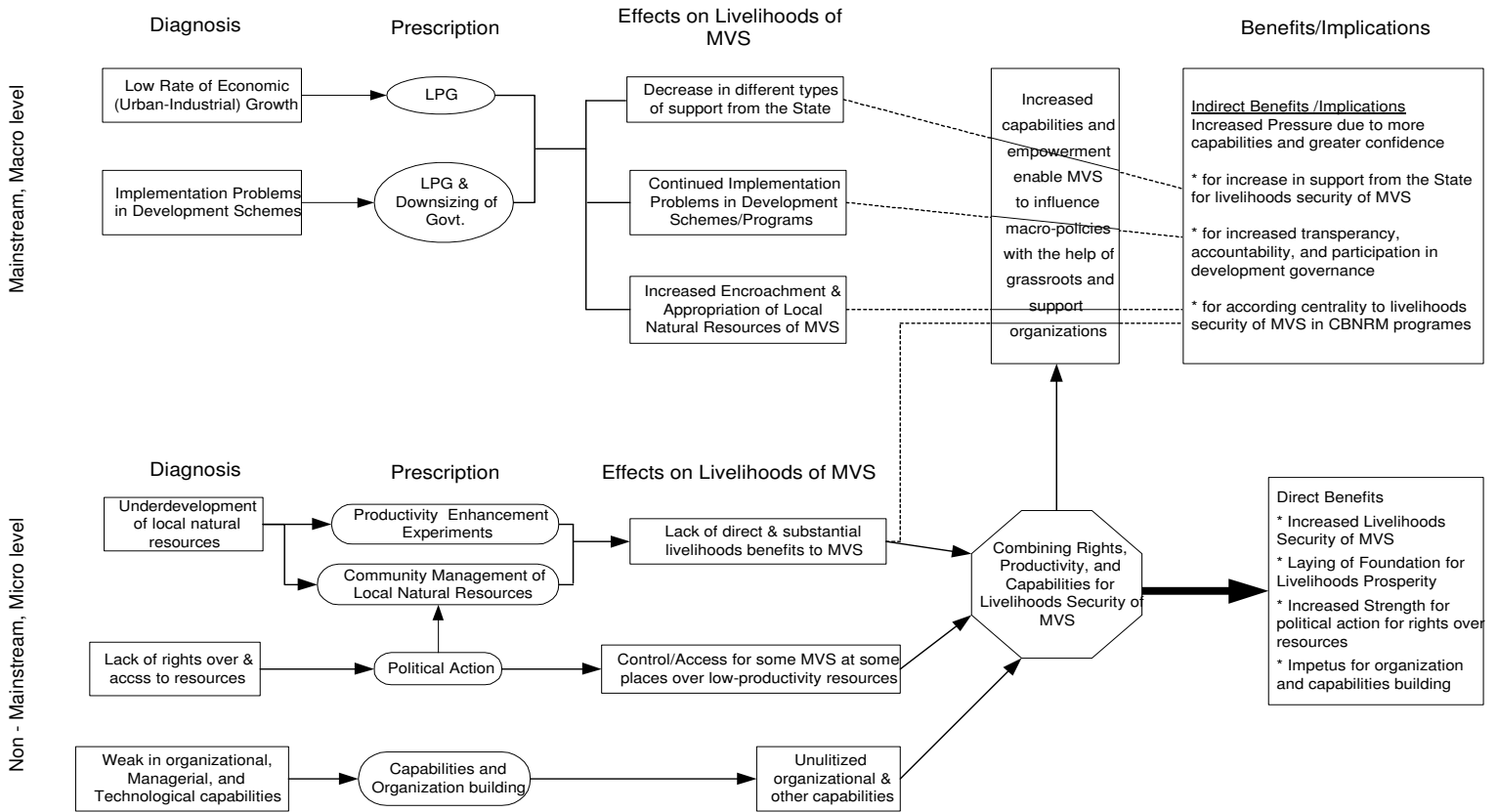
*Advanced Stage : Here, FSO is not in the picture, whereas the networking [Shaded Hexagon] are leading activities at different*

**Legend :**

[i] — FSO — GrO — CBO — MVS-HH

[ii] The darkened figure indicates that the respective organization is in the lead positions.

**Figure 4: Figure depicting different collaborative arrangements among the actors involved in the program**



**Figure 1: Rationale Underlying the Strategy**