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**MAPPING THE QUESTIONS OF RESOURCES,  
LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS:  
A CASE STUDY OF ADIVASI COMMUNITY FROM  
SOUTH INDIA**

**Introduction**

Policy initiatives that are being initiated by the State and different agencies for improving the life situation of the marginalised sections of Indian society are generally not showing the expected outcomes. There has also been a sizable body of work, which explains the conditions of the marginalised people and the development programmes directed at them. These sections are swelling in number and are in a condition of destitution. It is apt to mention here that Jhabvala & Standing (2010) had observed, “Although India has a very impressive economic growth record over the past two decades, it does not have the same achievements in implementing social policies that could reduce poverty, income insecurity and income inequality.”

The primary means of understanding their situation has been through the rubric of deprivation. While this approach continues to be useful, it also runs the danger of reducing the subjects of its study to mere victims of larger processes (Kasi, 2007). In other words, there is a tendency to see the marginalised as totally lacking in agency support. It is as an important corrective to this tendency that the livelihoods approach was taken up by scholars like Carney (1998), Scoons (1998), Farrington, *et al.* (1999), Ellis (2000), Reddy (2001), Reddy, *et al.* (2001), Mariella (2002), Rakodi (2002), Reddy *et al.* (2004), Deshingkar (2004), and Prowse (2008). One of the important features of livelihood approach is that it focuses upon people’s assets (physical, natural, financial, human, social and political capitals). It also looks at how people utilise these assets and try to solve their problems.

The tribal communities in India, to a large extent, are overwhelmingly marginalised not only economically but also spatially, culturally, and otherwise. Andhra Pradesh has a significant proportion of tribal population and is ranked fifth in the country in this regard. Several laws promulgated by the pre- and

post-British India have affected the tribals adversely. These laws have threatened their livelihoods and existence. These groups, who were forest dwellers, have been denied usufruct rights over forest produce. Recent incidents, for instance, which got attention because of the vibrant media and other sources at Nandigram, Singur (West Bengal), parts of Orissa, and Sompeta (Andhra Pradesh) reflect the severity of the existed situation which portrays the destitute conditions of the tribal/Adivasi people. Land reforms have not benefited them in any significant way. Hence, they remain landless and, to some extent, even homeless. The lack of education has resulted in their exploitation by the non-tribals. Government officials have often colluded with other vested interests, or remained apathetic to this situation (Kasi, 2007).

As Bokil rightly pointed out, the first and foremost problem before the tribal communities in India is to earn and sustain livelihood. This problem has assumed alarming proportions because the traditional means of obtaining livelihoods are being increasingly threatened. In the past fifty years, the access to and control over the resources has undergone radical changes. Thus, it is in this context demonstration of the tribal communities which can make use of the available natural resources and obtain sustainable livelihoods (2002: 163-165).

It has been pointed by many scholars that by just providing or helping the under-privileged sections of the society would not serve the purpose (Behera and Basar, 2010; Kapoor, 2011 & 2012; Kasi, 2012 and Sabar, 2012). Instead, governments and other development agencies must facilitate these sections of the people to sustain their livelihoods by strengthening their resource base. Thus, in order to understand these processes, an attempt has been made in the paper to map out the questions related to livelihoods, resource availability and development interventions in the locality. Before switching to these discussions, here I am quickly proposing the methods and tools used while carrying out the study among the adivasis of Andhra Pradesh.

### **Methods and Methodology**

This paper is based on the data collected from Anantapuram district in Andhra Pradesh, south India. The present study is basically qualitative and is aimed at understanding the livelihood systems of the marginalised communities and shocks, stresses and trends involved in their livelihood processes. In order to fulfil the objective of the study, qualitative anthropological tools and techniques have been employed. These include: Observation (participant and non-participant type), Interviews (formal and informal) detailed checklist, Key-Informant interviews, Case Studies and Focus Group Discussions. Understanding the views and concerns of the affected individuals regarding their livelihood systems, the existing system of utilisation of available resources, local knowledge of the different capitals involved and, most importantly, the vulnerability context in their daily life systems.

This paper will largely depend on the empirical and ethnographic work among the Sugali, one of the Adivasi communities in the Rayalaseema region, during the 2007-2008, and 2010-2012 in south India. It will also base its inferences on the data gathered from official reports and records, Census records, published, as well as unpublished, research reports, papers, etc., with reference to the region. Besides, it also draws its inferences from the studies made by the authors and other scholars in south India.

### **Locality and Community**

The settlement under study is situated in the Penukonda Mandal in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, South India and is about 10 kilometres away from Penukonda, the Mandal headquarters. Adadakulapalle is a multi-caste village consisting of 439 households of which 155 (35.6%) households belong to Sugali, a Scheduled Tribe, who have a distinct presence in the village. The habitations of Sugali are known as Thandas, which are located a little away from those of other castes in the village. Scholars like M.N. Srinivas and Mckim Marriot have written about such villages. However, there are some multi-castes village, which incorporate the tribal populations also. Adadakulapalle is one such village (Kasi, 2009).

The Thanda under study is included in Adadakulapalle village Panchayat of Penukonda Mandal. The Sugalis are divided into two Thandas: Jalapalle Thanda or Patha Thanda (old Thanda) and Kothapalle Thanda (new Thanda). One member from each of these Thandas is a member of the Adadakulapalle Panchayat, which is reserved for Sugalis. Kothapalle Thanda is a new colony of houses built during the earlier Congress rule during 1989-94 in the same old Thanda area. The inhabitants of the Thandas belong to two different clans. Further, these two clans are affiliated to two different factions of the main village, who incidentally belong to two different political parties.

The present paper will try to describe Sugali tribe (also called Lambadi in the area), of Andhra Pradesh, which is the principal tribe in the area - numerically, educationally, economically, politically and otherwise. Its members are largely concentrated in Chittoor, Cuddapah and Anantapur districts of the State. According to Reddy (1991: 613), *Sugalis* are not the autochthones of South India. Their original home is believed to be the Marwa region of Rajasthan. They came to the Deccan as transporters of supplies, or merchandise, for the armies of Delhi emperors in their raids in the south early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the *Sugalis* returned to the north but some stayed behind and carried on petty trade with their pack-bullocks. They became a useful medium of transaction between the South and the North during periods of peace until the 1850s. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, they had also taken up service under the Maratha rulers of Satara, Peshwas of Poona, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the British in their Mysore and Maratha wars (Bhukya, 2010).

## Resources in the Locality

The available resources, their potential in generating, as well as sustaining, the livelihoods of the local communities are important issues to be taken into consideration. Also, the constraints, as well as the normative structures of access, are also factors that need to be understood. The following discussion will attempt to assess the available resources in the locality and the patterns of their utilisation and access.

## Common Property Resources

The common property resources available in the Adadakulapalle settlement are:

- a) Adadakulapalle Tank
- b) Forest (reserved)
- c) Temple land
- d) Road side plantations/avenue plantations

**(a) Adadakulapalle Tank:** Adadakulapalle tank covers Adadakulapalle, *Kotha* (New) *Palle* (Village) *Thanda* Patha (old) *Palle Thanda* and Busaiahpalem village. The tank is located on the southern side of Adadakulapalle settlement and is half a kilometre away from the settlement. Majority of the lands under the tank belong to Reddy and OBC farmers and a few tracts of these are owned by *Madiga* and *Sugali* farmers. Fishing activity is carried out by the *Sugalis* and others occasionally, when there is water in the tank.

The tank is important for the villagers for cultivation of crops like Paddy, Groundnut, PKM Chinta<sup>2</sup> (Tamarind), and sunflower. Because of the tank, the open or ground wells and tube or borewells get recharged and the ground water potential increases.

People who were not having lands under the tank use its water for washing clothes, watering cattle, etc. Grass (*Jammu*), which grows in the tank water, is used for making mats, covering of roof of houses or huts, and construction of sheds for small ruminants. It is also used for fencing the houses by a few *Sugali* and *Madiga* families.

Another important benefit from the tank is fishing. Fishing activity is of two kinds, one is for domestic purpose, where all the people of the village do fishing activity individually, and also as a group. People, who do fishing activity in a group, share the outcome equally, by giving an extra share to the person who brings the nets. The second type of activity is of commercial nature, where Fishermen Cooperative Society auctions the catch and whoever agrees to pay more is given lease rights for one year term. It depends upon the water available in the tank. If water is more and the tank is full, they go in for auction. The

auction is done by the Cooperative Society, which is under the Village Panchayat.

During the summer season, when tank becomes dry, people of Adadakulapalle grow cucumber crop in the tank. Also, the villagers take their cattle for grazing in the tank bed. Majority of the beneficiaries are landless labourers, marginal and small farmers. Because of the tank, landless people get more number of wage days. The tank has both direct and indirect benefits for the villagers. People also feel that importance of tank has increased due to the watershed programme<sup>3</sup>, which has increased the water level in the tank, as well as in the borewells of the farmers. Under the watershed development programme, Adadakulapalle tank was repaired and plantation work was carried out around the tank.

People distribute the tank place according to their land share near the tank. *Sugalis*, who do not have land near the tank, also benefit from the tank, in terms of wage works. These works are available for two months, according to the crop duration. Farmers pay Rs. 40/- per day to both men and women for the cucumber crop. The *Sugalis* also get bunches of cucumber, which they share with their relatives and neighbours.

**(b) Unreserved/ Revenue forest:** People of the Settlement collect fuel wood, graze cattle, *Bandaru* grass (which is used for roof and house fencing) and *Bodha* grass (roof and sale purposes). People strongly believe that the forest is very useful for them. Those who do not have cattle feel that forest is useful only for collecting fuel wood. It is observed that due to the threat from the forest (wild) cows, people are hesitant to go to forest for collecting fuel wood.

*Sugali* farmers mentioned that wild cows used to spoil their crops and four years back, one of the *Sugali* farmers got the fence to his field electrified to keep the wild cows away. Unfortunately, two wild cows died and from then onwards, wild cows started attacking *Sugali* farmers. As a result, they also fear to go to forest either to get fire wood or for other purposes. The *Sugalis* believe that the wild cows may attack whoever they see in the forest. Hence, *Sugali* people stopped going to the forest from then onwards.

**(c) Temple land:** There are 20 acres of temple land available in Adadakulapalle. Earlier, the land was given to any farmer for cultivation on the basis of auction, which was for a one-year period. The modalities, terms and conditions and money or amount on acreage basis is decided in a meeting of the village elders. The amount received from the farmers was used for development activities of the temple and the celebration of temple festivals (*Rathotsavam*) and rituals in that particular year.

After taking up the watershed programme in the village, the situation has changed completely. Villagers are now choosing to go in for raising

commercial crop (*PKM Chinta*) on the temple land. Now, it is called '*Chinta Topu*' (Tamarind grove). The temple land is now being used for village development activities. After raising *Chinta Topu*, the income has substantially increased. The residents also feel that there are benefits from *Chinta Topu*. For instance, they can use the tender leaves – *chiguru* (used in curry and also mixed in *Dal*), dried branches as fuel wood, etc. Generally, women collect the *chiguru* and sun-dry it for a few days and use this during the period of non-availability of vegetables, or during vegetable scarce seasons. Majority of the villagers believe that the temple land has now become more useful than before and it fetches reasonably more income and benefits.

### **Beneficiary Case Study**

Tirupal Naik, 40 years old, only BA graduate who preferred not to go for government job, is one of the beneficiaries of the temple land prior to 2001. Tirupal is the eldest member in his immediate family and has two sons. His wife also studied up to intermediate. Tirupal's mother is illiterate and is staying with him in Adadakulapalle Settlement.

During 1995-96, Tirupal completed his graduation from the SK University, Anantapur, and later decided to enter politics. He returned to Adadakulapalle settlement and discussed the matter with his mother and settlement elders. They welcomed his decision and suggested to him to earn money. In the year 1998, when auction was held for the temple land, he was the highest bidder among all the *Sugali* people. Tirupal paid Rs. 10, 000/- for one year lease of the temple land. During that time, there was good rain and the *PKM Chinta* crop yielded a very good income for Tirupal. He got Rs. 30, 000/- from the crop. He incurred some expenditure during the harvesting time and spent about Rs. 2000/- on labour and other charges.

From the year 2001 onwards, temple land is not being given for cultivation. Instead, this land is being distributed to the people of the settlement who did not have permanent house in the settlement. The people who were cultivating the land earlier have no other choice than to migrate to other areas in search of livelihood. Though the land was given to all the communities, majority of them constructed houses and a few others were using the land for cattle sheds. The trees that were there in the temple land earlier were sold by the Gram Sabha Committee and the money given to the new temple constructed in the middle of the village in the year 2001. The name of the temple is *Narasimha Swamy* temple and all people in the village, including the settlement, offer their prayers for their betterment. Once in two years, they celebrate the *Narasimha Swamy* festival and take the idol of the God into all the streets of the village and settlement in a big procession.

**(d) Road side plantations/Avenue plantations:** Road side plantation was initiated in the district by the then Telugu Desam government

to provide fuel wood for the people of the settlement. SEDS (NGO) has taken up this activity in Adadakulapalle settlement. Under this scheme, *Kanuga* (pongamia), *Vepaku* (neem) and *Seema Jali* (*Acacia juliflora*) trees were planted. *Vepaku* is one of the nutrient feeds of their goats in the settlement. Likewise, *Seema Jali* also, where its pods (*kayalu*) are very nutrient food for the sheep and goats, especially during the summer season. In addition, farmers are also using leaves of *kanuga*, *vepaku* as *rota* (leafy manure) for the paddy fields. Further, all the *Kanuga*, *Vepaku* and *Seema Jali* are also useful as fuel wood and also using for fencing to keep their small ruminants. The *Sugalis* also stated that, initially, they got some wage works from the NGO when they planted these trees across their roads in the settlement.

Thus, the above resource in the locality gives us an idea about the existing resources in the locality, vis-a-vis to the marginal sections presence and their utilisation, access and security. In the next section an attempt will be made to briefly discuss the development initiatives in the locality.

### **Development Initiatives**

Though majority of tribal/*adivasis* lives in forest areas, a significant number of them can also be found in the plain areas of India, which are not included under the list of Scheduled areas. Hence, in order to develop these groups, the government initiated the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The Government of Andhra Pradesh implemented the IRDP in order to improve the livelihood patterns of the people through agricultural development. This programme aims to bring about an integrated development involving various agencies like forest, agriculture, education, health, etc. The main thrust of the programme is towards holistic development of the people. An integrated approach helps to bring about effective administrative control, monitoring and evaluation of the entire programme. Besides these efforts of the Government, non-governmental organisations have also been involved in the development of tribal livelihoods. Given these efforts of both the Government and NGOs, it would be important to study the impact of these efforts on both the livelihoods, as well as the cultures, of the tribals. Mere adoption of a livelihoods approach would not lead to sustainable development. It has to be seen in the context of the lives and aspirations of the tribal people. In fact, the analysis has to be integrated into traditional anthropological concerns for a better understanding of the tribal development (Kasi, 2007).

As mentioned earlier, the development agencies can play a very significant role in implementing the developmental efforts among tribes/*adivasis* and other marginalised sections of the rural India is also very essential to put-forward the nexus prevailed between the state and development agencies. Thus, an attempt is made in the next section briefly discussing about the watershed development programmes and its related effects on the marginal people in the locality.



### **Watershed Development Programmes in Andhra Pradesh (A.P.)**

With a total geographical area of 159560 square kilometers, Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest state in India. The state consists of 13 districts comprising 664 revenue mandals. The economy of Andhra Pradesh is predominantly agriculture oriented. According to the population census of 2011, the population of the state was 49.67 million the population density being 308 persons per km. Almost 75% of the population lives in rural areas with 70% depending on agriculture as the main source of living. The importance of agriculture sector is further underlined by the fact that almost 70% of the state's work force is engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Due to the high population growth, the share of agricultural labourers shows an increasing trend, indicating that increasing man-land ration leads to severe problems of productivity absorbing the growing rural population in the agriculture sector. Andhra Pradesh has one of the highest shares of agricultural labourers in the total work force of all Indian states. Landless families constitute upto 60% of total households in certain districts of the state.

Though productivity has increased in the last 25 years, the standard of living has not improved. About 54.2 percent of the land holdings are still classified as marginal. Recent demographic interpolation estimates that 18% and 4% of the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh population belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. According to the latest estimates, almost one quarter of the total population of undivided Andhra Pradesh lives below poverty line.

### **Watershed Development in Anantapur District**

Anantapur District is a hot arid district and falls in rain shadow zone, with a very low estimated annual rain fall of 520 mm, which is second lowest in the country after Jaisalmar in Rajasthan. In the district, the area is fully undulating with ridges and valleys, with black cotton soils in certain areas. Out of the total rainfall received, only 10-15 percent is arable, the rest is going waste through streams into sea, or lost due to evaporation. Due to large number of water conservation and water harvesting structures taken up in the district during 1993-94 and 1994-95, 1000 M.cub metres of additional ground water recharge was made possible.

The entire district is declared as hot arid due to severity of soil erosion, high temperatures, and low and erratic and uneven distribution of rainfall (resulting in 'soil and moisture stress'), excessive evaporational losses and crop losses as the ultimate effect of drought and high aridity index. Trends of desertification are also seen in parts of district. Ground water levels are alarmingly receding, despite some recent water harvesting initiatives. Further degeneration of existing marginal and degraded forests had happened in the last four decades and acute scarcity of drinking water, fodder and fuel is taking place in every alternative year which is a serious drought year. All these factors



are creating tremendous concern and awareness regarding the danger that is looming large among the masses of the district. Ananthapur district mainly depends on South-West and North-East monsoons. Normally South-West monsoon rains are useful for rainfed dry crops. But failure of two monsoon hits the district drastically, leading to drought. The following physical symptoms are indicative of the beginning of desertification trends. In this connection, the following facts are worth mentioning:

- Hardly 10 percent of land mass available in the district is covered with forest
- Most of the hillocks and hill ranges are barren, without any sort of vegetation. The top soils having been washed away due to very strong erosion factor.
- About 30% of hills are declared to be dead where nothing can grow because there is no top soil on the hills, except granites boulders and weathered rocks.
- Levels of ground water are going down year after year owing to low rainfall and over-exploitation and improper use and wastage of water.
- A remarkable and unique feature of the district is the high intensity of winds after experiencing the maximum temperature during summer and at the time of onset of monsoons.

To combat the recurring drought and to bring comprehensive development, the DPAP programme was introduced in the year 1975 covering all the blocks in the district. This programme is being implemented on area approach basis with watershed development concept. Accordingly, several developmental strategies were implemented with a view to conserve soil, harvest and conserve rain water, bringing out change in cropping pattern, organising people in Self-Help Groups (SHG's), development of dryland horticulture, sericulture and promotion of social forestry and integrated rural development.

### **Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)**

This is centrally sponsored programme funded by Central and State governments on 50:50 basis. It aims at developing the drought prone areas with an objective of drought proofing by taking up soil and land moisture conservation, water harvesting structures, afforestation and horticulture programmes on a comprehensive micro watershed basis. During 1994-95, the programme was implemented in 69 blocks of 8 Districts. From 1995-96, this programme was extended further in 11 Districts with 94 blocks under the scheme and in Ananthapur District, 16 blocks under the Desert Development Programme (DDP).

While DPAP is targeted towards the semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, the DDP is designed specifically for improving natural resource management and environmental protection measures in the arid areas of AP State. Besides this delineation of geographical target areas, there are virtually no differences between DPAP and DDP as regard to operational guidelines, eligibility of erosion control and SWC measures etc., except that under DDP, the cost norms are higher (Rs. 4500 to 5000 per ha.) than for DPAP projects (Rs. 4000 per ha.). The main criterion for inclusion into DPAP is the share of irrigated land at the block level, the current ceiling being 20%. The total number of blocks covered under DPAP is 94, while 16 blocks have been identified for DDP. These 110 blocks represent one third of the total number of 330 blocks in the undivided AP State.

In the next section, an attempt will be made to explain about the livelihood pattern in the locality and its relation with special reference to the prevailing institutional systems in the Adivasi community.

### **Livelihood pattern in the settlements**

Livelihood diversification is related to the certainty of stable dependable resources or lack of it. This is clearly observed between Adadakulapalle (ADP) and NC *Thanda*. The latter has lesser diversification and migration, as compared to the former.

In Adadakulapalle, majority of the *Sugalis* are small and marginal farmers. The type of land available in the village is dry and only one *Sugali* farmer has a tube (bore) well in his land, as against 90 bore wells owned by the other castes in the village. The *Sugalis*, by and large, depend upon the monsoon. The major crops cultivated are: groundnut, maize, ragi, mulberry and paddy (Table 1). Ragi and Paddy are the staple crops and the staple diet of the farmers and agricultural labourers in the settlement.

The livelihood activities of majority of the people are based on cultivation, followed by daily wage works, petty business (running own autos and *kirana* – provisions) shop and hotel (tea and tiffin stalls). Majority of them depend on agricultural labour, construction or repair works in and outside the village (Table 2 (a) and 2 (b)).

It is observed that the households depending on wage labour are more among *Sugalis* because they consist of more landless people. Though majority of the wage labourers own small plots of land, the land is unsuitable for cultivation. It is pertinent to note that a significant number of *Sugali* of Adadakulapalle *Thanda* is earning their livelihoods from migration to other areas like Bangalore and Mumbai. There are 35 households depending on migration throughout the year. In contrast, in N.C. *Thanda*, there are five families that migrate to Mumbai for their livelihood. It is found that in Mumbai, they are involved in activities such as petty business where they

buy rice in wholesale and sell it in the colonies by transporting it on bicycles. Liquor trade is another means of livelihood for nine families of Adadakulapalle *Thanda* and two families in N.C. *Thanda* settlements. In case of N.C. *Thanda*, in every household, we find an employee either as a teacher or Group I or II government employee. It is observed that agriculture contributes more share of livelihood, followed by agricultural labour in the two settlements.

To understand the existing livelihoods in the settlements, it is necessary to see the availability and accessibility of land, labour and credit facilities, which are crucial in the determination of livelihoods, in the area. Hence, in the following section an attempt will be made to explain these institutions in order to have better understanding of the livelihoods in the settlements.

### **Land**

The type of available land in the study settlements constitutes both dry and wet lands. *Sugalis* from Adadakulapalle do not possess records of rights (*Patta*), though they have been cultivating these lands with the permission of the Mandal Revenue Department. Lands in the two settlements are assigned to the household head (preferably the eldest male member). To disburse the crop loans to the farmers, government made the title deeds compulsory to claim the loans. Hence, all the farmers from both the settlements have made the *patta* passbooks available with them. There are 100 farmers who have received the crop loan from the banks in the preceding year, according to the Velugu programme Secretary of Adadakulapalle. The process of granting the land-use certificates has been slow in the *mandal* office of Penukonda. As a result, many farmers in Adadakulapalle had not received the official title deed for their land.

In Adadakulapalle *Thanda*, each household of *Sugalis* got 5 acres of land from the government way back in the year 1982. However, beneficiaries complain that the land is neither cultivable nor useful for grazing. The land is located near the Penukonda hillock, which is 3 km from the settlement. If they go for a crop during favourable monsoon, there is the problem of forest pigs and forest (wild) cows, as brought out by the respondents. There is no electricity facility also if they want to go for borewell in that land. *Sugali* Farmers have given many letters to the officials requesting them to make the land suitable for cultivation. Till now, no one has taken any initiative to help them, not even the local NGO. While the land given to *Sugali* in Adadakulapalle *Thanda* is not cultivable, the land given to N C *Thanda Sugali* is cultivable. Many of them have bought extra land due to good harvests, apart from support from their children who are in government service. Farmers of NC *Thanda* have title deeds with them and majority of them (75 farmers) have received the crop loans in the preceding year.

Availability of grazing land is also difficult in the Adadakulapalle *Thanda*, as compared to the NC *Thanda*. The latter *Thanda* is surrounded by hillocks and there were plenty of grazing fields which belong to the *Thanda* people. On the other hand, this is not the case in Adadakulapalle *Thanda* since their fields and lands are far away from their habitation. Households of Adadakulapalle *Thanda* had to spend more time to graze animals on the common land than on their own land since these areas are 2–3 km away from their homes. Due to this, *Sugalis* in Adadakulapalle have cut down their livestock population. Elder people in both the settlements take the cattle for grazing.

Dry land is more in area as compared to irrigated land in both the settlements. This is due to the non-availability of rivers or canals in the region and also due to the continuous drought situation prevailing in the areas. In case of NC *Thanda*, they have some support of water due to the location of their settlement, wherein their agricultural lands and their *Thanda* are situated around the hillocks. Their lands and borewells get charged once there is some rain. Persistent drought conditions seriously have hampered the availability of wage labour activities which force them to migrate to the nearby towns and cities.

Irrigation potential in the study areas is quite low as there are no canals or rivers in the region. Added to this, due to continuous drought, the ground water levels has also got depleted. This has an adverse affect on the cultivation in wet lands. Cultivation in dry land is completely dependent on the vagaries of nature and because of recurrent drought, they could not raise any crops. Thus, long periods of drought has a direct bearing on their livelihoods. However, there exists some contrast between Adadakulapalle and NC *Thanda*. In case of the latter, as their lands are located around the hillocks when there were some rains the ground water gets recharged and their tube wells become operative, thus facilitating cultivation.

## **Labour**

The three main types of labour arrangement observed in Adadakulapalle and NC *Thanda* are household labour, exchange labour, and daily wage labour. Household labour is the dominant type for agricultural activities. Gender division is recognised in households according to the type of tasks. Some heavy tasks such as ploughing and spraying herbicide and insecticide are the works of men, while weeding, manure application, and caring for livestock are the activities of women. However, there are some tasks where the division is less clear. These tasks include: harvesting, land clearing, and planting, which are shared by both men and women in the household.

When we compare the *Sugali* of Adadakulapalle and NC *Thanda*, in case of the former, agricultural labour is the predominant means of livelihood,

while in the latter, more people are involved in government service, followed by agriculture and other activities (Table 2 (a)).

Exchange labour was a reciprocal arrangement whereby if one household had worked for another, it could call on members of the latter household to contribute the same number of work-days. Labour is exchanged for similar types of task and it is always between families. The work could be contributed by male or female labour, depending on the type of task. However, exchange labour is more prevalent in the NC *Thanda* than in Adadakulapalle *Thanda*.

Another means to supplement additional labour is to hire labourers. The daily wage rate for hired labour varies according to the type of task and gender of the worker. It ranges from Rs. 50 to 100 for such tasks as planting and sowing and Rs. 150/- for ploughing.

### **Credit**

Households could access credit either through formal credit providers such as the agricultural credit and Regional Rural Banks or informal networks such as private creditors. However, the procedures for getting a loan from the regional banks are complicated. Farmers have to have a letter from the Panchayat office or Sarpanch stating that they are residents of the settlement. They need someone standing as collateral for the loan. Also, they have to give a business plan providing information such as what they would use the money for and how they could repay the loan.

Although the loans from the Regional Rural Banks (RRB) are for a long-term with a lower interest rate, because of the complicated bureaucratic requirements, *Sugalis* generally prefer to get credit from informal networks. Most of the loans from private providers are short-term ones. Farmers repay the capital in cash in one go after one or two years. The interest rate is much higher than borrowing from the Bank and ranges from 2% to 5% per month. Majority of the *Sugalis* from both the settlements took crop loans from the State Bank of India after the Congress government came to office. These crop loans are given as a compensation package for the crop failure due to frequent occurrence of the drought in the area.

### **Situation of Livelihoods during Drought in the Settlements**

Farmers, labourers and petty business people are equally affected by the drought. People who were practicing animal husbandry, i.e., dairying, have felt that milk yields have reduced due to droughts. However, due to the watershed programme in this area, according to the *Sugali*, the losses have reduced and they are somehow able to sustain themselves.

### **Impact of drought on marginal communities and landless people**

Drought has affected the livelihoods of most households in the study settlements in various ways. The recurrent drought conditions have resulted in loss of crops, reduction of acreage under crops (Table 1), reduction of incomes, severe shortage of fodder, distress sale of livestock, reduction of employment opportunities and increase in distress migration in the settlements. Continuous drought increased their vulnerabilities in terms of basic household consumption expenditure, availability of credit, food security and maintenance of livestock. Most households are compelled to adopt various coping strategies to tide over the crisis.

The various traditional coping mechanisms, like patron-client relations/attached labour, more subsistence and food crops, depending on land-based Common Property Resources (CPRs), credit from moneylenders, etc., have been found to be inadequate in mitigating the ill effects of drought, as agriculture and agriculture-related diversification, as also non-farm diversification, was limited in these settlements. In addition, the short-term nature of the government interventions has not really helped people in coping with the severe drought. Migration, therefore, became an important livelihood diversification and coping strategy. In fact, migration and remittances through migration overshadowed all other coping strategies for most households in the study settlements. The following case study illustrates how a *Sugali* woman coped with the drought situation.

#### **Case Study: Coping with Drought**

Anasuya Bai (24) is an illiterate woman from Adadakulapalle. Both she and her husband, Shankar Naik (31), are agricultural labourers. They have two daughters, Rajitha Bai aged 7, and Manjula Bai, aged 4. Rajitha is mentally retarded. They own two acres of dry land. Of the two acres, only ninety-four per cent land is patta (legally registered) land. They do not have a well or a bore-well in their field. They were compelled to sell their livestock because of the drought. They used to go for agricultural labour work like weeding and sowing. Her husband would migrate to the neighbouring villages like Basavanapalle and CK Palle for work. The drought had nullified all their investment in agriculture. Two years ago, they borrowed money for cultivation. But the land produced no yield. Recurrent losses in agriculture forced them to migrate. They went to the neighbouring villages. They also went for contract work and canal work. But even this work was not available regularly. So her husband decided to migrate to the city to earn money. Shankara Naik accompanied a group which went to Kurnool since they had prior information about work being available there. There, a contractor took them for work, promising to pay them Rs. 50 per day. The work included construction, cable laying and road laying work. Initially, they used to sleep on the footpaths and at the bus shelter.

Later, they took a room, paying a monthly rent of Rs. 170. They used the room to store their implements. Cooking and other chores were done outside. During this period, his wife's health suffered. The children too fell ill. There was no money to attend to their health problems. Shankar Naik borrowed Rs.500/- from the contractor and took his wife and children to a doctor in Hindupur. After some time, again he has gone back to Kurnool for the labour work. Due to his sincerity and hard work nature, the contractor made him a supervisor and increased his wage work as Rs. 100/- per day. Shankar Naik has taken two more people from his settlement and now they are also working with him in Kurnool. Shankar Naik is sending Rs. 1000/- every month to his wife and he has also cleared his debts in the settlement.

His wife is now cured and she is taking care of children at home. She is also going for wage works available in the settlements. She has purchased a TV set recently with the savings from the money which her husband sent. Shankar Naik comes to the settlement once a month and stays for 4-5 days and again goes back to Kurnool to attend to his work.

### **Findings and Concluding Observations**

Despite the consistent effort by the state and different agencies to improve the condition of the adivasis communities in India, in general, and Andhra Pradesh, in particular, there is no improvement in the condition(s) of the Adivasis, either in the countryside or in the Adivasis regions in the country. As long as the State neglects the Adivasis and their livelihoods, their condition will continue to be pitiable. Thus, sustainability of resources needs the attention of the state and this will facilitate overall development of the Adivasis.

Development interventions play a crucial role in enhancing the livelihood security of the Adivasis and must be in accordance with the people's choice and their involvement in the process of development. Despite many programmes and schemes, mention may be made with regard to the spread of watershed activities in the locality. Watershed activities created resource nets in the area, because of which, Adivasis in the locality benefited to a large extent. Watershed activities have mushroomed in the locality because of which these groups have got wage works and these further maintain their livelihood base in toto. There are other actors who also playing active role in helping the Adivasis to develop and improve their condition, but these are minimal in scope. But despite the involvement of several actors in enhancing the lives and livelihoods, the desired result of making Advisees self reliant and sustainable is still a distant dream. Thus, overall development of Adivasis must be addressed through the interventions by the State and donor agencies.



**Table 1**  
**Cropping Pattern during 2003-04 and 2004-05 (in Acres)**

Crops	Adadakulapalle		NC Thanda	
	2003-04	2004-05	2003-04	2004-05
Paddy	15	30	28	39
Ground-nut	200	350	225	300
Ragi	40	60	40	55
Maize	10	20	9	15
Jowar	25	30	7	12
Vegetables	5	8	6	10
Mulberry	20	32	8	10
Horticulture	10	15	0	0

*Source:* Mandal Revenue Office, Penukonda and Somandepalle

**Table 2 (a)**  
**Available Livelihoods in the Settlements**

Sl.No	Type of Livelihoods	ADP Thanda	N.C. Thanda
1	Wage Labourers/Landless People	124	35
2	Agriculture	80	55
3	Govt. Employees	8	65
4	Petty Business/ Liquor shops	14 (9)	15 (2)
5	Migration	35	05
6	Others (Dependents)	10	15

**Table 2 (b)**  
**Available Livelihoods in the ADP Thanda**

Sl.No	Type of Livelihoods	Total HHs in ADP
1	Wage Labourers/Land less People	237
2	Agriculture	225
3	Govt. Employees	35
4	Petty Business/ Liquor shops	25 (9)
5	Migration	35
6	Others (Dependents)	25

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of Land in the Settlements by Households**

Land size classes		Nuclear Family		Joint Family	
		Adadakulapalle	NC Thanda	Adadakulapalle	NC Thanda
< 1	Wet	95	38	66	21
	Dry	25	6	13	Nil
1-2.5	Wet	16	18	18	4
	Dry	15	4	7	1
2.5-3.5	Wet	6	1	9	2
	Dry	5	4	6	2
3.5 - 5	Wet	Nil	1	1	2
	Dry	56	30	47	16
5-8	Wet	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Dry	11	14	19	9
8-12	Wet	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Dry	1	1	4	4
> 12	Wet	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
	Dry	Nil	2	3	1
Total	Wet	117	58	94	29
	Dry	113	61	99	33

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of Agricultural labour in the settlements**

Name of the Settlement	Caste	Agriculture labour		Total
		Yes	No	
Adadakulapalle	<i>Sugali</i>	85	25	110
	<i>Madiga</i>	33	2	35
	<i>Kuruba</i>	15	3	18
	<i>Kummari</i>	1	2	3
	<i>Chakali</i>	15	1	16
	<i>Valmiki Boya</i>	5	0	5
	<i>Reddy/Kapu</i>	2	18	20
	Muslims	0	10	10
	Vaisyas	0	1	1
NC Thanda	<i>Sugali</i>	28	65	93

**Table 5**  
**Distribution of Agricultural Labour in the Settlements by Gender**

Name of the Settlement	Caste	Agriculture labour			Total
		Not Applicable	Male	Female	
Adadakulapalle	<i>Sugali</i>	25	1	15	69
	<i>Madiga</i>	2	0	3	35
	<i>Kuruba</i>	3	0	0	15
	<i>Kummari</i>	2	0	0	1
	<i>Chakali</i>	1	0	0	15
	<i>Valmiki Boya</i>	0	0	0	5
	<i>Reddy/Kapu</i>	18	0	0	2
	Muslims	10	0	0	0
NC Thanda	<i>Sugali</i>	65	6	3	19
	Total	127	7	21	156

#### NOTES

1. It is a high breed variety of tamarind introduced in the district by the previous government to supplement some income to the farmers during the drought situation.
2. Adadakulapalle settlement is one of the major watershed villages in the district.

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