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THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN DEVELOPMENT

**A Case Study of Food Security and Vulnerability among Beneficiaries of
India's Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**



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Abstract

This thesis discusses the role for states and centralised government policies in development intervention. The topic is explored through a case study of India's Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), a large-scale government intervention to enhance food security among India's poorest households. The central questions of the study were, firstly, which function TPDS serves in the lives of beneficiary households in terms of food security and vulnerability, and secondly, what the study of TPDS can tell about the potential of government programmes in contributing to community development. Qualitative fieldwork was conducted in two districts in the Indian state Odisha through observations, interviews and conversations with beneficiaries, project implementers and government officials. The findings suggest that TPDS – despite being flawed with corruption and targeting errors – is bringing a certain level of food security and resilience to beneficiary households. It is found that the boundaries between the state and society become blurred in the delivery of TPDS and that embedded relations between implementers and beneficiaries contribute to basic needs being met at the household level. Following from this, the thesis argues in favour of a central role for the state in development, while also emphasising the need for society cooperation and involvement.

Key words: TPDS, Food Security, Vulnerability, State-society Synergy, State Intervention.

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List of Abbreviations

AAY – Antyodaya Anna Yojana (“the poorest of the poor”)

APL – Above Poverty Line

BPL – Below Poverty Line

CSO – Civil Supplies Officer

CO – Community Organisation

DCT – Direct Cash Transfer

FPS – Fair Price Shop

Gol – Government of India

GoO – Government of Odisha

GP – Gram Panchayat

KBK – Kalahandi, Balangir, Koraput (grouping of the poorest districts in Odisha)

PDS – the Public Distribution System

TPDS – the Targeted Public Distribution System

WFP – World Food Programme

WFS – World Food Summit

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1. Introduction

Strategies for eradicating poverty and increasing levels of human development change as lessons are learnt and new paths discovered. Since the 1970s, a participatory approach has gradually gained ground within the field of development, challenging orthodox ideas of capitalism and its emphasis on economic growth and industrial progress. These new ideas entered mainstream thinking in the 1990s with the works of Robert Chambers and others, stressing the need for development to be decentralised, participatory and based on local needs (Tandon 2000:320-323). The rather top-down structure and centralised character of past development policy has thus, to a large extent, been replaced by a more people-centred approach. There is now a larger emphasis on community participation, small-scale development is preferred over large-scale approaches, and the margins of society have become a central focus in many development interventions. In this way, the value of the bottom-up approach has become generally accepted, the role of the non-governmental sector has changed and community organisations (COs) have come to play an increasingly prominent role (*ibid*).

Within this framework, it is appropriate to ask what the role of states and centralised government policies should be; and further, whether large-scale programmes implemented from above can facilitate development that reflects local needs on the ground. This topic will be discussed and exemplified in the present thesis through a case study of India's Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), which is a nationwide policy intervention aimed at enhancing food security among India's poorest households. TPDS is the largest welfare programme within India and has a high degree of government control. As such, it provides an interesting case for the study of the role of the state in development. Accordingly, the purpose of the thesis is to discuss the potential for state intervention in community development by exploring local experiences and perceptions of TPDS. The findings from India will thus feed into the larger development debate and provide a foundation upon which to consider the place and responsibility of states within a field characterised by a multitude of other stakeholders with local knowledge and specialised capacities.

Two months of fieldwork in the Indian state of Odisha make up the empirical foundation of the thesis. Data was collected through a comparative case study in two districts of the state, Rayagada and Khordha, allowing for the discovery of patterns crosscutting the two contexts.

The research questions guiding the thesis read:

- *Which function does TPDS serve in the lives of beneficiary households in Rayagada and Khordha districts, in terms of providing food security and reducing vulnerability?*
- *What can the case study of TPDS tell us about the potential of large-scale, government programmes in contributing to community development?*

The first question is explorative in nature and closely linked to the empirical findings from the field. The concepts of food security and vulnerability frame this part of the analysis and provide a lens through which to understand local realities in the study context. In order to fully gauge the function of TPDS, the thesis also enters the debate on the future of India's food policies by exploring the opinions of beneficiaries on a widely regarded government proposal to replace TPDS with a direct cash transfer (DCT) scheme. Thus, by hypothetically challenging the current status quo, interesting views are uncovered on what such changes could mean to beneficiary households. The second research question places the case study within a wider developmental frame by using the findings from the field analytically and discussing the role of state intervention in development. The notion of state-society synergy, as coined by Peter Evans (1997), guides this part of the analysis.

In the following section, the empirical context of the study is explained and TPDS introduced. The third section outlines the methodology of data collection and analysis. The fourth section elaborates on the analytical framework for the thesis, outlining the key concepts of food security, vulnerability and state-society synergy. The fifth and sixth sections present the two analytical discussions to answer the research questions of the thesis, first addressing the function of TPDS for beneficiary households in terms of food security and vulnerability, secondly exploring the role for the state in development in terms of state-society synergy. Hence, the empirical discussion of the food securing and vulnerability reducing aspects of TPDS provides a necessary foundation for the larger discussion on the potentials of state intervention. Finally, the thesis concludes with reflections upon the study's contribution to a more comprehensive understanding of TPDS and argues in favour of a central role for the state in development.

2. Background

2.1 Food Security and the Public Distribution System in India

The prevalence of malnutrition in India is one of the highest in the world. Despite a national growth rate of 8% per year, real improvement remains to be seen in the welfare of the country's poorest households. In 2010-2012, a staggering 217 million individuals were undernourished in India, equal to 18% of the entire population (FAO 2012). One in three of the world's malnourished children live in India, and the proportion of underweight children below the age of five is at 43% (Naandi Foundation 2011:8). As malnourished children are less likely to reach their full potential, both in terms of their mental and physical capacities, the current food situation in India will likely impact future generations and the human development of the country for years to come. Malnourished children are less likely to do well at school and more likely to become malnourished as adults, prone to diseases and with reduced work capacity and economic productivity. The food security situation is thus closely intertwined with other indicators of development, including education, health and economic growth. The estimated economic losses associated with such malnutrition are currently at 3% of India's annual GDP (ibid.).

The situation is not a recent development in India. Food security has for decades been a concern of the Government of India (GoI) and current food policies, channelled through the so-called Public Distribution System (PDS) reach back to the food rationing mechanisms in major cities during World War II. After India gained its independence, a similar system was reinstated through which food grains were distributed at highly subsidised prices. Since then, the GoI has employed PDS as a policy instrument for overcoming food shortages, stabilising food prices and securing consumption among the country's poorest people (Srinivas & Thaha 2004:1). The system has undergone changes throughout the years and has become an important tool of the Government for managing India's food economy.

As a response to drought and food shortages in the mid-sixties, PDS was made universal in the 1970s and came to be a central component of India's national strategy to reduce poverty. This meant that all households across India were entitled to fixed rations of selected commodities. It gradually became evident, however, that the universal delivery of subsidies largely failed in reaching the population below the poverty line (BPL). Large proportions of the subsidies ended

with the non-poor and problems of leakage due to widespread corruption and storage losses were also common (Srinivas & Thaha 2004:14). In view of these issues, universal PDS was replaced with a targeted policy in 1997. This *Targeted* Public Distribution System (TPDS) differentiates between BPL and above poverty line (APL) households and offers different quantities of commodities and different rates for members of the two categories (Swaminathan 2008:50-51). A network of 477,000 fair price shops (FPSs) and Gram Panchayat (GP)¹ offices serve as distribution points across India, from where subsidised commodities, including rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene, are sold to entitled households by locally appointed shopkeepers. Reaching more than 160 million households, TPDS has become the largest welfare programme within India and is the largest of its kind in the world (IPCIG 2011).

The system is operated as a joint responsibility between the Gol and State Governments. Today, the Gol oversees the entire value chain, from procurement to milling, storage, transportation and allocation of food grains to the State Governments. The State Governments have the responsibility of distributing the commodities to TPDS beneficiaries, including identification of eligible households, issuing of ration cards and supervision of the delivery through FPSs. This means that the system is ultimately managed at the state and district levels and the implementation of TPDS can therefore differ between states in terms of the commodities offered, the size of entitlements and the price set (Swaminathan 2008:51).

Despite structural changes, issues of inefficiency and corruption remain, and the transition from universal PDS to TPDS has entailed substantial exclusion errors, as genuinely deprived households are now being excluded at large scale. The problem lies in the categorisation of households and in the inevitable fact that limiting benefits to one target group will lead to the exclusion of others. If the selected criteria for inclusion do not adequately reflect the reality on the ground, some vulnerable households will be excluded from the system. Beneficiary households have been identified through government censuses conducted in 1997 and 2002^{2,3} according to income levels. Today, the findings from these surveys still provide the foundation for the subsidies given through TPDS (Alkire & Seth 2013:49). This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, household changes cannot be captured if continual reassessments are not

¹ Local political bodies at the village level.

² The 2002 survey was heavily criticised for corruption, poor research design, low data quality and coverage, which resulted in some states not adopting the new BPL list. In effect, some states still rely on data from 1997 (Khera 2011:39-40; Alkire & Seth 2013:49).

³ A new census is currently underway, based on data collected in 2011 (Alkire & Seth 2013).

regularly conducted. Second, incomes are difficult to estimate and household categories are determined at the risk of excluding households that are genuinely poor. Third, APL households can also be vulnerable, especially if their wages rank just above the poverty line (Swaminathan 2002:44). Finally, research shows that current poverty caps would vary significantly if they reflected the multiple dimensions of poverty, rather than relying on income as the sole indicator (Alkire & Seth 2013).

The targeting of PDS has proved to be a complicated matter and the process of separating the poor from the non-poor has not only been costly and inefficient; it has also failed to eradicate the problems of corruption. Leakages to the black market are substantial, fuelled by officials using their positions for their own benefit as well as by FPS owners seeking to maximise their economic output (Nagavarapu & Sekhri 2011:2). Accordingly, take-up rates have been low in many states, and the intended beneficiaries have only received a fraction of the Government's TPDS spending.

Research indicates improvement in TPDS programme performance within recent years. Still, considerable exclusion errors persist and corruption is proving difficult to eliminate (ibid.). Consequently, most research on TPDS has focused exactly on these issues while other questions of equally high importance, such as the nutritional impact of TPDS or its role in providing food security, have remained largely unexplored (Khera 2011:36). TPDS therefore remains the object of heavy criticism from many sides, while its food securing capacities are unknown. This situation creates the backdrop to a debate that has emerged about the future of TPDS where DCTs are discussed as an alternative option.

2.1.1 The Cash Transfer Debate

It is a common belief in policy debates and academic circles that TPDS is irreparably dysfunctional as a tool to increase food security across India. DCTs have been suggested as an alternative, leading to an intense debate that has engaged stakeholders at all levels, including politicians, government officials, academics, COs, international organisations and the media. Two main camps have emerged, the first proposing to replace the current system entirely with a DCT scheme. The second camp wishes to preserve the overall structure of TPDS but introduce reforms to increase transparency and efficiency in its delivery (Navagarapu & Sekhri 2011:3-4). Recently, a government proposal to replace TPDS and other subsidies with DCTs has intensified the debate.

DCTs will initially be rolled out to cover relatively minor transfers such as scholarships and pensions, while the replacement of larger items such as food, fertiliser and fuel subsidies is allegedly still in the pipeline (The Hindu 2013).

Proponents suggest that the introduction of DCTs would bring many advantages to poor households, including that (1) transfers would be considerably larger than the transfers embedded in TPDS, (2) operational costs would be lower, (3) corruption and leakages would decrease, and (4) financial inclusion would be expanded, strengthening the consumer economy (Svedberg 2012:59; Sengupta & Mukherjee 2012:19-20). To support the case, proponents argue that DCTs have proved highly successful in reducing poverty and improving welfare in other countries, including Brazil and Mexico. Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* is often highlighted, as it has been effective in reducing poverty and increasing access to food, health and education by making cash transfers conditional on issues such as school attendance and health check-ups (Sahoo 2013).

Critics argue, however, that the Indian context is not comparable to that of Brazil or Mexico and that the situation is not ripe for replacing food subsidies with cash transfers (Acharya 2011). The overarching concern is that a change to DCTs might lead to an increase in alcohol consumption, increased gender inequality and domestic violence, and increased vulnerability to inflation and fluctuations of market prices. Other concerns include the capacity of local banking infrastructure to deal with DCTs and the lack of access to bank accounts among poor people (Rao 2013:4; Sengupta & Mukherjee 2012:19-23; Svedberg 2012:59-60). India already has a range of DCT programmes and many opponents of replacing TPDS with DCTs recognise the potential value of such schemes. However, in terms of food it is argued that DCTs would not in the same way contribute to food security at the household level (Puri 2012).

Although concerns are voiced about the way a change to DCTs might affect livelihoods and social structures, a limited number of empirical studies have been conducted to support such claims (exceptions are Khera 2011 and Puri 2012). More research attention therefore needs to be paid to beneficiaries and the potential implications that the replacement of TPDS by DCTs might have for their livelihoods. The findings of this thesis contribute to filling this gap.

2.2 TPDS and Food Security in Odisha

With a population of 41.9 million, a low population density and a predominantly rural population (87%), Odisha is one of India's poorest states (DFPB 2011). Annual per capita income is estimated to be 33% less than the national average, and the state has been ranked among the bottom five on the Human Development Index for India's major states since 1981 (ESAF 2007:18). More than 65% of the total workforce and 80% of the workforce in rural areas depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Subsistence farming and smallholdings predominate and extensive

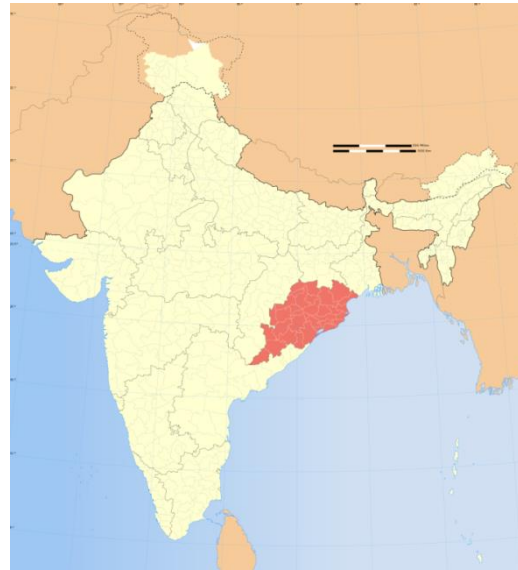


Figure 1: Location of Odisha in India
(Source: Wikimedia Commons 2013)

poverty prevails with an estimated 46% of the population living below the poverty line (ibid; Economic Times 2009). A very high proportion (90%) of the population is engaged in the informal sector and many people earn daily wages as casual or agricultural labourers. The literacy rate is low, particularly among women, while infant and maternal mortality is high, incidences of severe malnutrition are frequent and standards in both health and education are poor (ESAF 2007:27).

A combination of social, economic, institutional and ecological factors has placed Odisha in the category of severely food insecure regions. High levels of poverty, income disparity, limited employment opportunities and occurrences of floods and droughts are all factors that contribute to food insecurity in the state (CES 2011:3)⁴.

Food security and rural development are thus important issues for the Government of Odisha (GoO) and TPDS is central to the work implemented by officials at the block and district levels⁵. Through TPDS, the GoO receives allotments from the GoI, which are subdivided first at the district and later at the block level. Currently, the GoO distributes commodities according to the numbers outlined in Figure 2:

⁴ See Appendix 1 for a map of food insecurity in Odisha.

⁵ See Appendix 2 for a chart of administrative units in India.

ENTITLEMENT OF COMMODITIES PER MONTH			
Household	Commodity	Quantity	Price/unit
BPL	Rice	25 kg	Rs. 2/kg
	Sugar	2 kg	Rs. 13.50/kg
	Kerosene	4 L	Rs. 14.50/L
AAY (poorest of the poor) ⁶	Rice	35 kg	Rs. 2/kg
	Sugar	2 kg	Rs. 13.50/kg
	Kerosene	4 L	Rs. 14.50/L
APL	Rice (only KBK) ⁷	25 kg	Rs. 2/kg
	Wheat	10 kg	Rs. 7/kg
	Kerosene	4 L	Rs. 14.50/L

Figure 2: Entitlement of commodities per month (Source: GoO 2013:12).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research has been informed by an interpretative-constructivist standpoint and the choice of methods for data collection and analysis has been guided by an inductive approach. This bodes well with the focus on local realities and the importance ascribed to individual experiences in the study. Hence, the thesis does not seek to generalise its findings to other contexts.

In order to add depth to the findings, a comparative case study design was chosen. Comparative case studies examine differing cases within a common framework, detecting both what is shared and what is particular, and analyses behavioural patterns and relationships (Yin 2009:68). Fieldwork was conducted in Rayagada and Khordha districts of Odisha, which make up two interesting cases for investigating TPDS. The former is a poor tribal area, home to a pilot project to curb inefficiency and corruption in TPDS⁸, while the latter is home to the state capital and a good example of how food is delivered through TPDS in most districts in the

⁶ In 2001, a sub-category to BPL was introduced in order to specifically target the most vulnerable households. It was termed “Antyodaya Anna Yojana” (AAY), “the poorest of the poor” (Nagavarapu & Sekhri 2011:6).

⁷ KBK refers to Kalahandi, Balangir and Koraput and groups the poorest districts in Odisha, all experiencing extreme to severe food insecurity. APL households in KBK districts receive rice in addition to wheat and kerosene (GoO 2013:12).

⁸ The thesis does not explicitly consider this pilot project, as no differences were found relevant to the research questions.

state. Rayagada and Khordha districts therefore constitute meaningful contrasts that enable the crosscutting discovery of patterns in experiences and perceptions of TPDS. The chosen design allows for the identification of common issues transcending the two contexts and for drawing “a single set of “cross-case” conclusions” (ibid.:20). Accordingly, in the analysis, the two cases will not be separated and viewed in isolation from each other. Instead, findings that are reoccurring across the two contexts will be highlighted and explored.

3.2 Data Collection

Empirical data was collected between October and December 2012 from FPSs and GP offices in Rayagada and Khordha districts. Research access was gained through the World Food Programme (WFP). Due to the nature of the study and its focus on perceptions and experiences, data was exclusively collected through qualitative methods. Focus was specifically on local realities, and interviews with TPDS beneficiaries make up the main sources of data. In addition, project implementers, FPS owners and government officials were also consulted. Due to the nature of their jobs and their close interaction with beneficiaries they offered interesting insights to the study.

3.2.1 Sampling

In order to select participants for the study, purposive sampling methods were employed, allowing for strategic selection of individuals from households⁹ relevant to the research questions. The strategy of maximum variation was used to ensure diversity in the sample and increase its representativity (Creswell 2007:125-26). This was done to obtain an adequate understanding of the different experiences and perceptions of TPDS across different localities and characteristics. In meeting this goal, the sample consists of data from two different districts, from rural and urban settings, from Oryia, Telugu and tribal people¹⁰, from BPL and APL households, from men and women, from young and old. As such, the respondents should make up a representative sample of the beneficiary community. Caste was not considered, which, in retrospect, might have strengthened the sample and potentially have opened up for other interesting perspectives. The decision was taken, firstly because caste is not commonly considered in relation to TPDS, and secondly because some respondents directly explained that questions of caste were irrelevant to the study.

⁹ The thesis takes the household, viewed as an entity made up by its individual members, as the main unit of analysis. Inter-household differences between individual members are sought addressed through the diversity of the sample (in terms of gender, age and other characteristics).

¹⁰ The dominant ethnic group in Odisha is the Oriya people. Minorities include Bengali and Telugu people as well as a substantial number of tribes (DFPB 2011).

Government officials were selected through snowball sampling. In both districts, I first gained contact through my gatekeeper at the WFP to the district Civil Supplies Officer (CSO) who would subsequently introduce me to other officials relevant to the study.

3.2.2 Interviews and Observations

Semi-structured and conversational interviews constituted the main method of data collection. A total of 25 individual interviews and five focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiaries, roughly the same number from both districts. Each interview and focus group followed the same interview guide, which was gradually adjusted as analytical inferences were made¹¹. In addition, five interviews were conducted with FPS owners and project implementers¹², while informal conversational interviews were held with eight government officials from Rayagada and Khordha districts, ranging from CSOs and their assistants to Inspectors of Supplies and Block Development Officers^{13,14}.

Alongside qualitative interviews, observations were also carried out at different field sites, which helped enhance the data by uncovering meanings that were not expressed in interviews or conversations (Ragin 1994:92). Through observations of the distribution of rice in both Rayagada and Khordha districts, events and behaviours that could only be fully understood through direct observation were documented. This contributed to a more thorough understanding of the context of TPDS and the problems that can arise in its delivery. Observations also included following a supplies inspector at work, which allowed for rich observations and conversational interviews that added depth to the existing data.

In order to ensure the anonymity of respondents and enhance the narrative flow of the thesis, all names have been changed and fictitious names assigned to the beneficiaries mentioned. For clarity, FPS owners and government officials are referred to by their titles.

3.3 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Conducting interviews posed several ethical challenges. As I relied heavily on government officials for access to the field as well as for translation of interviews, it was important for me to detach myself from the Government when interacting with beneficiaries. I therefore made sure to stress the independence of the research and give a detailed explanation of the study's

¹¹ See Appendix 3.

¹² See Appendix 4.

¹³ See Appendix 5 for a complete record of interviews.

¹⁴ See Appendix 2 for a chart of administrative units in India and their respective government officials.

purpose at the beginning of each interview. I gained informed consent and asked for permission to record all interviews. Further, I made sure that the respondents understood that they were free to ask questions or stop the interview at any time. Still, I cannot be sure that the translators fully captured and conveyed my intentions and independence to all respondents, and there is also a risk that the respondents may have felt obliged to participate or that they may have adjusted their answers, given the official rank of the translators and the inevitable power relationship between them. Similarly, I cannot know whether certain points were left out from the translation or whether the translators included their own opinions too. The situation of relying on government officials as translators thus carried a double risk of bias, which I sought to mitigate by taking different precautionary measures: (1) I conducted interviews across Rayagada and Khordha districts within different villages in each district with translators varying accordingly. The number of settings and different translators should constitute a control against the biased opinions of individual translators. (2) Whenever possible, a colleague from the WFP who spoke Oriya would be present and could control that nothing was left out by the translator. (3) I conducted three interviews in English without the need of a translator, two of which were in private. These interviews helped me verify what I had heard through translated interviews. By thus seeking multiple perspectives on the topic, discussing my findings with people around me and producing thick description through field notes and records, I sought to achieve quality data and trustworthiness in the study (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Finally, time was also a cause for ethical consideration, as I would interact with beneficiaries when they came to collect rice at their local FPS or GP office. This would happen in the middle of the day, when many were on a break from work, or in the evenings, when many were in a rush to get home to their families. I knew that I was taking their precious time and I therefore made sure to make my interview guide solid but flexible, covering certain topics and allowing the respondents to talk as much as they liked and had time for. In this way, some interviews were shorter than others, but the main issues for the study would be discussed. The respondents with more time would then be able to elaborate more, while shorter interviews often gave information to support what was said in the longer interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis

I started analysing the data by reading through all transcripts and field notes, assigning initial codes and locating themes. I then divided the codes into sub-categories, making sure that the

richness of the findings was reflected, and considered it in terms of patterns and concepts. In order to thus organise and analyse the data, Dedoose, an online tool for qualitative data analysis, was employed. The process helped me analyse the findings and add meaning to the data (Mikkelsen 2005:181-82).

4. Theoretical Framework

This section outlines the theoretical framework, which will be applied as an explorative point of reference for the analysis. The key concepts for answering the research questions of the thesis are discussed, starting with a definition of food security and a discussion of how the concept can be understood in terms of availability, access, utilisation and risk. Next, the link between food insecurity and vulnerability is considered and the “Asset Vulnerability Framework” is introduced as a way of understanding and measuring vulnerability. Finally, the larger debate on the role of the state in development is outlined, building on development governance literature and in particular the writings of Peter Evans on “state-society synergy” (1997).

4.1 Food Security

Food security as a concept originated in the 1970s and was initially concerned with global food supply problems, focusing on food production and population growth. As such, food security was understood in terms of the *availability* of food with focus on the volume and stability of food supplies (FAO 2003:26-28). Today, however, it is a well-established fact that the global food production is more than sufficient to feed the world’s population and a shift in the way food security is perceived has consequently taken place. Food security is now understood in terms of *access* to food and focus has shifted from the global level to that of households and individuals. In light of this, the concept has become an important component in development as the interlinkages between food security and poverty have been acknowledged. Today, it is commonly agreed that the causes of hunger lie in inequality and poverty, not in scarcity. Thus, adequate nutrition and food security have become key outcomes of development, while at the same time being crucial contributors to the development process (ODI 1997:1).

At the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996, a new definition was adopted to reflect this new thinking. It read:

“Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels, [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (ibid.).

The definition ascribes key importance to food access and is built on the belief that poverty is a main cause of food insecurity. Focus has thereby shifted towards households and their capability of accessing food, away from the supply orientation of the past¹⁵. Five years later, in 2001, the definition was refined to include social as well as physical and economic access, building on the thoughts of Amartya Sen (1981) and the belief that poverty is a multidimensional issue (FAO 2003:28). Thus, food security has emerged as a multifaceted and cross-sectoral concept. It is a complex matter with economic, political, legal, demographic, cultural, social, biological and technical dimensions. Working towards ensuring food security therefore also implies considering a number of factors, not all directly related to food (EC 2009:7).

4.1.1 Dimensions of Food Security

The WFS definition of food security is founded on three fundamental elements. These include availability and access, as briefly touched above, as well as appropriate food *utilisation*. In order for food security to be realised, the simultaneous fulfilment of all three dimensions is necessary. Availability, as we have seen, is determined by food supplies and trade. It relies on national agricultural production, distribution and imports as well as on adequate government policies (FAO 2008). Access, on the other hand, relates to the physical, economic and social access of individuals and households to the resources required in order to meet dietary needs. Adequate food supplies at the national level do not guarantee food security at the household level and access therefore makes up a developmentally challenging dimension of food security. Utilisation refers to the state of physiological well-being and should be understood in terms of energy and nutrient intake as well as in terms of access to clean water, sanitation and health. It thus underlines the link between food security and other indicators of poverty. The relationship between the three dimensions is of a hierarchical nature, as “*food availability is necessary but not sufficient for access, and access is necessary but not sufficient for utilization*” (Webb et al. 2006:1405). They are interconnected and it is at the intersection of the three, when food is available, accessible and utilised appropriately, that food security is realised.

¹⁵ Whereas a parallel can be drawn from the availability view to Malthusian ideas of population growth and its impact on food supplies, the access view stands closer to the thoughts of Ester Boserup. She claimed that people increase their access to food through agricultural intensification when faced with the pressures of population growth (Djurfeldt 2001).

More recently, a fourth dimension has increasingly gained ground, namely that of *risk*. Risk refers to the risks of sudden shocks that can potentially disrupt any of the first three dimensions. These can include economic fluctuations, disease, environmental hazards, conflicts and job losses. Risks are the combination of the probability of shocks occurring and the extent of their consequences. Often, such shocks cannot be prevented and can have devastating impacts on communities, households and individuals if they materialise (USAID 2007:6). Hence, risk makes up a cross-cutting issue that transcends all aspects of the food security framework. It is an important factor, as it is intrinsically connected to household vulnerability and resilience to outside shocks. It helps us gain a holistic understanding of the food security challenges faced at the household level. Figure 3 visualises the relationship between the four dimensions of food security.



Figure 3: Dimensions of food security and the relationship between them (author's construct)

4.1.2 Vulnerability to Food Insecurity

Vulnerability refers to the exposure and sensitivity of households to livelihood shocks and is closely linked to the notion of risk. It refers to the wide range of factors that can place people at risk of having their livelihoods disrupted and becoming food insecure¹⁶. The level of vulnerability is determined by the nature of the risks faced as well as by the resilience of households, meaning their capability to anticipate risks, limit their impacts and regain an acceptable level of functioning after exposure to shocks (ibid.; FAO 2003:9).

Since Sen first published his ground-breaking work on entitlements and famine in 1981, emphasis in food security research has increasingly been focused on vulnerability, livelihood assets, and coping strategies. Sen argued that the ability of a household to cope depended on its capability to access and leverage resources in times of need. His work made up a framework for the definition and assessment of vulnerability which has been expanded and refined ever since. One scholar, Caroline Moser, has contributed the “Asset Vulnerability Framework”

¹⁶ While vulnerability refers to a range of livelihood disruptions, food insecurity often happens as a first consequence of exposure to shocks. In this thesis, vulnerability is understood primarily in terms of food insecurity.

(1998) to the literature as a way of measuring vulnerability through asset access at the household level. There are five principle categories of livelihood assets, covering human, social, natural, physical and economic capital. The categories are interconnected and it is only through their combination that freedom from vulnerability can be achieved. The more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are, and the greater the loss of people's assets, the greater their vulnerability (Moser 1998:3). Thus, the framework considers the quantity of assets in a household and looks at the diversity and value of those assets in order to determine the level of vulnerability.

In order to be resilient and free from vulnerability, households must have access to a combination of assets. Income alone will not suffice since not all assets of importance to sustaining a livelihood and maintaining food security are economic. Research shows that poor people themselves define poverty not only in terms of income, but also in terms of deprivation and insecurity. Hence, feeling lonely or powerless, or having a physical weakness are also dimensions of poverty (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones 2002:5). On the other hand, those who are deprived economically might have access to other assets which can be transformed into a higher degree of security, such as good health, relationships, a strong network, education or other skills (ibid:10). Analyses of vulnerability should therefore also, in addition to identifying threats, include the identification of household resilience, or responsiveness, in utilising opportunities and resisting the negative effects of shocks. The means of such resistance are the assets that a household can mobilise and manage when facing hardship (Moser 1998:3). Thus, the ability to limit household vulnerability does not only depend on available assets, it depends on the capacity to leverage those assets into items such as food, income and basic necessities. In the context of TPDS in Odisha, where wages are low, jobs difficult to get and food scarce, two analytical distinctions related to such livelihood strategies are relevant for the analysis. First is the distinction between *income-raising strategies*, which are aimed at accessing food and reducing overall livelihood risks, and *consumption-modifying strategies*, by which people seek to make the most of what they have got (Devereux 2001:511-512). Second, and following from this, is the distinction between *adapting*, which is a permanent change in the ways of acquiring food, and *coping*, meaning a response to an immediate and sudden decline in access to food (Davies in Moser 1998:5). Both distinctions will be employed to illustrate the level of vulnerability among households in the study context.

Figure 4 illustrates vulnerability and resilience as different ends of a continuum with assets, strategies and levels of adapting and coping as influencing factors. The continuum illustrates a dynamic relationship where the position of the factors will vary according to the risk context.

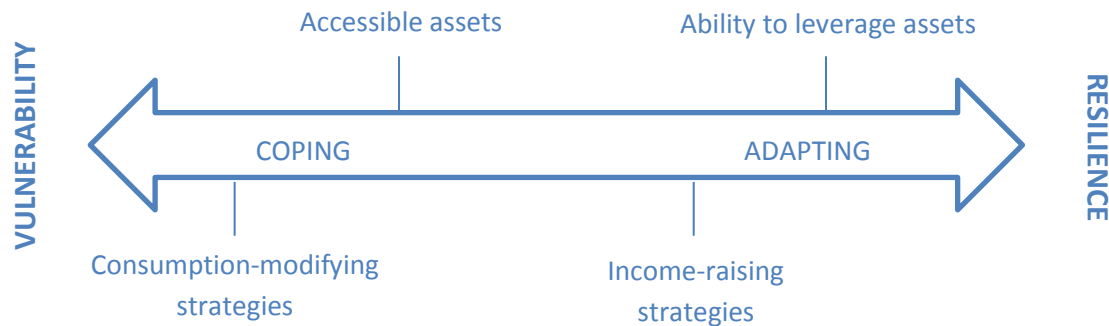


Figure 4: The relationship between vulnerability and resilience (author’s construct)

4.2 Development and the State

Turning to the debate on the state in development, converging opinions exist on how to best trigger local development and what the role of the state should be in this process. Some assert that emphasis should be on the internal structure of the state and the character of state-society relations; others believe that the main potential lies with society alone. The following section outlines the debate.

4.2.1 From rolling back the State to bringing the State back in

In the 1980s, the dominant paradigm in economics claimed that state intervention was strangling the economy and hindering the development of productive forces. It was based on the idea that the state should be “rolled back” through decentralisation and privatisation in order for economic growth and development to thrive. This was particularly pronounced in what John Williamson termed the *Washington Consensus*, which referred to the economic policies promoted for developing countries by Washington-based institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It stipulated a minimalist state approach for developing countries under the prescription to stabilise, privatise and liberalise (Williamson 1990). There was no role for the state in development and trust was put in the regulatory mechanisms of the market.

Some scholars, though, resisted this discourse and argued in favour of what Theda Skocpol (1985) first referred to as “bringing the state back in”. Among them was Peter Evans, who went as far as to argue that the state is in fact a key variable in reaching developmental ends

(Evans 1997). Evans went against the neoliberal views of the time by asserting that development is best achieved through collaboration between the state and society – an idea he coined *state-society synergy*. With it he claimed that the potential for developmental success as well as the barriers against it rest within the state (ibid.).

In academia, the debate has since evolved. Disagreement remains as to whether there is a need to strengthen the state or whether emphasis should be on decentralisation and reliance on non-state mechanisms. Today, these mechanisms refer to community-based organisations and social funds, rather than to markets, and state proponents caution against such alternatives removing the responsibility of the state in delivering basic services (Srivastava 2010:4). Yet, the focus on civil society and locally grounded, bottom-up approaches has gained momentum in the field of development and COs play a central role in the delivery of services today. The state is commonly viewed as “...*flabby, bureaucratic and corrupt*” and as a key obstacle to development, whereas the value of civil society is highlighted and the main problem is seen as “... *how to induce the state to get out of the way*” (Ferguson 2007:387). This thesis seeks to go beyond this now dominant discourse by revisiting Evans and considering what the contribution of states can be in development intervention and whether centralised policies have the potential to facilitate locally grounded development. The following section outlines the main elements of Evans’ thinking.

4.2.2 State-Society Synergy

State-society synergy is the notion that the state can act as a strong facilitator for development when working together with civil society (Varda 2011:898). It implies that community engagement serves to strengthen state institutions, and that solid and competent state institutions create an enabling environment for engaging communities. Through state-society synergy, strong governments and active communities can thus enhance each other’s developmental efforts (Evans 1996:1034). The synergy fosters mutually supportive relations across sectors and can be a catalyst for development.

When defining state-society synergy, Evans distinguishes between complementarity and embeddedness. The first refers to the mutually supportive relations between the state and society, where governments deliver certain collective goods, complementing inputs that are more efficiently delivered by private or community actors. This results in greater overall outputs than would have been achieved by either sector on its own (Evans 1997:179-80). Public institutions are not directly linked to community members and the contribution of the

state is rather general and distanced. Hence, *“Effective states deliver rule-governed environments which strengthen and increase the efficiency of local organizations and institutions”* (ibid.). Embeddedness, on the other hand, refers to the relations that connect government officials with community members across the public-private divide. It is when the state and local communities become interlinked, and when knowledge and objectives are shared. It is when networks of collaboration and trust are created, binding the state and society together. Synergy based on embeddedness thus transcends the boundaries between the public and the private spheres, and, according to Evans, this is pivotal to developmental success (ibid:183-85). Complementarity and embeddedness are mutually supportive and the most solid cases of synergy involve a combination of the two (ibid:189).

Evans views the state as key to developmental success and suggests that the limits to synergy lie within governments rather than society. Barriers include the inflexible nature of government institutions, bureaucracy and conflicting political interests (ibid:196-97). In order for state-society synergy to take place, a set of competent and engaged institutions must therefore be in place:

“Robust, sophisticated public institutions are an advantage both in the formation of local social capital and in the pursuit of developmental ends, not because they are instruments of centralisation but because they are capable of formulating more nuanced ways of distributing power and therefore of supporting decentralisation and openness to self-organisation” (ibid:195).

The quote illustrates that there is a need for an effective state which, at the same time, is open to inputs from society. In this way, the two otherwise contrasting approaches of top-down and bottom-up are reconciled, and from their combination emerges the prospects of greater overall achievements. This view is reflected in the 1997 World Development Report where the state is seen as central to development, not as a direct provider of growth but as a facilitator, partner and catalyst. Focus is on the effectiveness of development in meeting local needs, coupled with efforts to involve civil society and the private sector in the delivery of collective goods (WB 1997). The influence of Evans and the importance of complementarity and embeddedness are reflected in the report’s objective of *“...bringing government closer to the people through broader participation and decentralization”* (ibid:3).

Despite these developments, most literature has denied a positive role for the state (Varda 2011:899), which is often seen as the culprit, leaving communities worse off through its intervention (Evans 1996:1034). Evans does not deny the potentially negative aspects of state

intervention and acknowledges that it can both destroy social networks and undermine valuable social norms. Instead, he challenges the idea that such issues necessarily constitute the norm and suggests that a large potential to achieve positive results lies within states as well (Evans 1996:1034). Other scholars (including Huntoon 2001; Tendler 1997; Warner 2001; Varda 2011) support this argument and it is upon this line of thought the second part of the analysis will be built.

5. Analysis Part I: The Function of TPDS

5.1 Dimensions of Food Security in Rayagada and Khordha Districts

In the following, empirical data from Odisha is analysed to answer the first research question of the thesis, examining the function played by TPDS in the lives of beneficiaries in terms of food security and vulnerability.

5.1.1 Food Availability and Access

In both Rayagada and Khordha districts, food is available. In terms of natural resources, Odisha is by no means a deprived state, and food availability can easily be characterised as “comfortable” (CES 2011:5). Market stalls abound with vegetables, rice, dal, fish, mutton and poultry and for those who have money to spend, food is plentiful and varied. However, restrictions of an economic, physical and social nature limit the ability of the poorest to access the food. A main obstacle is the lack of purchasing power to buy food in the market place, as the majority of the poor find work as daily labourers, living from day to day on earnings ranging from as little as 50 to 200 Rs. a day¹⁷. With job availability being low, daily labourers also constantly face the challenge of finding work and many only work between 10 and 15 days every month. Further, as many households only have one income earner, typically the male household head, income levels are generally low and money is stretched to feed everyone. Hence, work availability impacts heavily on food access, and in times when work is scarce, some households do not have sufficient food to meet their needs. This is the reality for many of the households who participated in the study. Rice¹⁸ from TPDS therefore makes up a vital supply of food, which is easily accessible, affordable and reliable. From day to day it

¹⁷ 50 Rs. equals approximately 0.9 USD (XE 2013)

¹⁸ Although rice is not the only TPDS commodity, it constitutes the bulk of the food distributed to BPL households. Wheat is only distributed to APL households and sugar is seen as a supplementary food item.

provides people with a minimum of food and creates a sense of security in knowing that there will always be something to eat:

“Yes, we have ups and downs in our life, but in that situation this contribution from PDS¹⁹ is a lot and we are facing challenges positively. Because we feel that we won’t have nothing to eat. We have something to eat. At least rice” (Sabita, 62).

Some respondents explained that they would rely on TPDS for the days of the month when work would not be available: *“Between 10 and 12 days I am getting the work. After that, the rest of the days we are depending on PDS rice”* (Vaikunth, 50). The statement tells about the economic habits of the household and indicates that money is spent from day to day. As money is scarce, it is spent immediately and no planning or savings take place. 50 year-old Gotum faced a similar situation: *“As I am getting daily [wages], I am spending the whole amount. There is no balance for the future”*. He went on to explain that, although he, contrary to many other BPL households, had a bank account, he had no money to put into it. This emerged as a common pattern among the respondents.

In regards to physical restrictions to food access, most respondents did not have access to land. Some were sharecroppers, renting land in return for a share of the crops produced, and would produce food to supplement what was bought at the market or through TPDS. However, the majority of respondents did not have land and did not produce food for their own consumption. This made them vulnerable to price fluctuations and food availability in the market, making the contribution from TPDS crucial to daily livelihoods.

For those who are old, alone or sick, there can also be social obstacles in accessing food, especially if economic and physical restrictions are also present. A significant share of the respondents was thus socially deprived; many were ill or physically disabled. However, common for all was that they received support from their families or social networks. Elders relied on their children and grandchildren for food, people who were ill were generally supported by their immediate families, and those who were alone relied on neighbours for help. For households with members who are deprived in this way, TPDS constitutes a significant contribution and helps feed the mouths of those who are themselves not able to contribute in obtaining or producing food.

¹⁹ In daily interaction, TPDS is still commonly referred to as PDS.

5.1.2 Food Utilisation

Turning to the way food is utilised, the findings show that available food is utilised with the view to extract the maximum amount of energy and nutrition from it. The following quote illustrates a strategy that emerged across many interviews: *“We are taking vegetables, curry – different types. Our food habit is very good because we are taking low quantity, but quality food”* (Nabha, 60). Most people explained that they would eat two meals a day, lunch and dinner, as well as a light breakfast of biscuits and tea, or rice water. Lunch and dinner would make up the main meals and would usually consist of rice and curry, or dal. Some families would eat non-veg once a week such as eggs, dried fish or chicken. Others would be so poor that the rice from TPDS made up their only source of food, and they would only rarely eat vegetables. Hence, different households sought to maintain their energy and nutrient intake by managing the food available to them. Nabha was aware of the need to stretch the food, while acknowledging the importance of a varied diet. Her household would therefore eat three meals a day, and although the meals would be small in size they would be of nutritional value.

When asked what would happen if subsidised entitlements from TPDS were no longer available, all respondents conveyed deep concerns about the nutritional impact it would have on their livelihoods. A common response was that they would have to eat less every day, and that food would not be sufficient to keep everyone alive. People would have to labour harder, which is difficult when work is already scarce and when one is hungry. One respondent said that they would become beggars in the streets, another that they would have to revert to eating roots from the forest. As Aakash, a 40-year-old sharecropper, put it: *“I am not only partially, but 80% dependent on the PDS. So if it is stopped, it would send a cyclone into society”*. Similarly, Shivani, an elderly woman in Rayagada explained: *“Starvation deaths would occur in the village /.../. How many days can [people] tolerate without food? If taking the food, the lady can breastfeed the baby. Without food, how can she feed the child?”*. These quotes illustrate a strong dependence on the commodities received through TPDS and they show that significant value is ascribed to the system. Some people found it difficult to explain what would happen to them if TPDS was discontinued, but used words such as *hurting, horrible, distress, disaster, hazardous, difficult, suffering* and *scarcity*, all indicating the important function played by TPDS for them to face and manage risks in their daily lives. As TPDS has been implemented for decades, it has become an ingrained part of life, constituting a reliable and nutritious source of food. This finding supports the very limited research conducted on the topic to date,

which has established TPDS as an important source of food security for beneficiary households (Khera 2011).

5.1.3 Risk

In terms of the risks faced by beneficiary households, most have already been touched upon above, which highlights the interlinkages between the different dimensions of food security. An array of potential hazards, including the risks of job scarcity, agricultural shocks, rising market prices and health problems, all impact on household food security in terms of availability, access, or utilisation. One example illustrates how the dimensions can impact each other and how sudden shocks can affect food security: at the time fieldwork was conducted, Cyclone Nilam hit the South-Eastern coast of India and brought torrential rains, flash floods and agricultural devastation, affecting the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands. Crops were destroyed across Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, which not only impacted individual farmers but also affected the overall food availability in India, with the expected agricultural output for 2012/2013 now estimated 20% below the previous five-year average (FAO 2013:20). The situation is likely to lead to an increase in food prices, further complicating access to food for the poorest, which in turn can influence nutritional intake and food utilisation. The cyclone has left many beneficiary households more vulnerable and exposed to risk. To them TPDS provides a crucial safety net.

It is evident that beneficiary households are exposed to a range of risks that can potentially threaten their livelihoods. The most commonly occurring shocks identified in the study are related to job scarcity and health problems. As the majority of respondents rely on wages from daily labour, and as job availability is low, all face income scarcity and the uncertainty of when work will be available. As we have seen, this impacts household food security and can also increase vulnerability to other risks, such as disease. Health issues emerged as a common issue as many respondents were themselves ill or had family members who were. This heavily impacted on the existing asset portfolios of households, as income had to be diverted to medical bills, while fewer hands could contribute their labour to the household. As noted by Ananya, a 48-year old woman: *"... because I am ill, my children won't let me work. The doctors can't tell my condition, but we have spent 40,000 [Rs.] on medical bills so far. So I completely depend on my children"*.

Other shocks and stresses encountered through the study included crop failure and irrigation problems for those who depended on agriculture, heavy debts, and alcoholism, which was

described as a source of conflict within households, leading to diversion of money for alcohol while leaving people idle and unproductive. Hence, beneficiaries of TPDS face many risks and are confronted with a range of shocks in their daily lives.

5.2 Vulnerability among Beneficiary Households

As the exposure to risks is high, it is necessary to consider the level of resilience within households to determine how vulnerable they are and how well they will cope if shocks occur. We therefore now turn to consider the nature of beneficiary households' asset portfolios as well as their ability to leverage these assets into basic livelihood necessities.

Common among respondents was the lack of economic capital, with low and irregular wages and limited access to credit. Some received disability and old-age pensions of 300 Rs. a month, but the contribution of such benefits to the livelihood of households was negligible. Others took small loans from their neighbours in times of need, thereby drawing on their social capital and the relationships with people around them. Across the respondent base, social capital emerged as an important asset, drawn on by many and founded on cultural values of helping others in need. As explained by Shivani: *"The neighbours they have no food. I can give some one day, two days, three days /.../ this is just to the point, everybody of the village is my relatives. Not that I am blood relation. Society relation!"* Shivani, who is an old blind woman living by herself, relies on her sons for food and has enough to help her neighbours too. For her, it is given that she must share her food. Social capital and the custom of helping others and sharing one's resources is a strong asset which is found throughout the study. Being part of a community, or a family, and relying on social relationships creates a security for people who are experiencing stress in their lives.

In terms of human capital, on the other hand, many households are severely deprived. As we have seen, health problems are faced by many and leave households vulnerable to other shocks. Further, close to half of the respondents are illiterate and have no education. This impacts on their opportunities of getting work, as noted by 30-year old Maneesh: *"For illiterate [people] there is no job"*. Those unable to read or write have no other options but to work as daily labourers in jobs that are often physically hard and poorly paid. In terms of physical capital, most respondents live in simple shacks, almost half lack access to proper sanitation and approximately one third do not have electricity in their homes. Similarly, although most people do have access to water, they lack natural capital, since most do not have access to the land, soil or minerals needed to grow food and sustain their livelihoods.

Summing up, beneficiary households are generally deprived both in terms of the quantity and the diversity of their assets. Only social capital is generally shared among households and constitutes the single most important means in resisting challenges and sustaining livelihoods. As such, it is the one asset that can help people in coping with shocks as well as adapting to the circumstances they face in their daily lives. Money is scarce, health and education levels are low, infrastructure is lacking and access to land is limited, yet, social relationships and family ties are strong, and this is what helps people move on and resist the hardships in their lives.

5.2.1 Income-raising and consumption-modifying Strategies

TPDS plays an important role in strengthening asset portfolios and in helping people leverage their assets into livelihood necessities. The commodities received through TPDS are employed to reduce overall livelihood risks and increase income and food intake through income-raising strategies. Hence, most respondents explained that the money released through TPDS was spent on additional food in the market and helped them obtain a more varied diet. Others found it helpful in paying for necessities such as medicine and rent. Many also spent money on their children's education and showed great awareness of the importance of having an education. Prioritising education for one's children or for oneself, in the case of younger people, was generally seen as a way of working towards a different and better future. This awareness was encountered throughout the interviews and is illustrated in the case of Deepak, a 21-year-old man who was living away from his family, working 10 hours every day as a waiter and still found the time to go to school for four hours every morning. He knew that without an education, he would not be able to get a good job and rise from his current position of poverty.

Other income-raising strategies included small-scale agriculture to supplement incomes, collection of firewood or providing services such as grinding wheat for others at one's home. Generally, people found ways to use their skills and make the most of their assets and in doing so, TPDS made a significant contribution by releasing money for other household necessities and providing a safety net for people to rely on. Knowing that they would have a minimum of food enabled people to focus on other risks and increase their resilience to shocks. In this way, TPDS helped households in adapting to scarcity.

When shocks occur, TPDS is also used to stretch the available food through consumption-modifying strategies. One such strategy involves cutting back on total household spending and only purchasing essential goods. Many also reported that in times of need they would change

their dietary habits by cutting down on the number of meals and solely relying on rice from TPDS: *“In our distressed situation this PDS rice is helpful. /.../ if an accident happens to us, we have rice to eat. With salt, with the chilli. So it is really good for us.”* (Devaki, 35). Across the two districts, people explained that in times of scarcity they would mainly rely on TPDS rice, eaten with water, onions, chilli or salt. TPDS commodities thus become the main food source and provide people with a means for coping with shocks.

Both when employing income-raising and consumption-modifying strategies, when permanently adapting to one’s environment and when coping with sudden shocks, TPDS serves an important function for beneficiary households. It provides people with greater capacity to leverage their assets into livelihood necessities while at the same time increasing their level of resilience. As a result, TPDS has, in itself, become a main livelihood strategy and is of such importance that even the thought of it being discontinued is incomprehensible to many, as described in 5.1.2.

5.3 Local Perceptions of TPDS

We have now established that TPDS brings a certain level of food security and resilience to beneficiary households by increasing availability and access to food while providing for better food utilisation and ensuring against risks. Let us now go further and uncover other aspects of TPDS in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the programme. This is done by exploring local perceptions – first among beneficiaries and then government officials.

5.3.1 The View of Beneficiaries

Without exception, when asked about their perceptions of TPDS, all respondents praised the programme and said that they were satisfied with it. They expressed gratitude towards the Government and emphasised the importance of TPDS in their lives. However, in response to other questions, it became clear that they also experienced problems and had some complaints.

Three main criticisms emerged, including that (1) some poor households are entirely left out from TPDS; (2) several households depend on one single entitlement; and (3) large households receive the same quantities as smaller ones, making the benefits smaller for households with many members. It is thus evident that not everyone is benefitting from TPDS and that targeting errors and the reliance on outdated data are negatively impacting households across the two districts. More than one third of respondents reported that they knew of excluded households in their local communities, and on a number of occasions they urged the

Government to solve this problem. This was most pronounced in a private interview with a young woman who exclaimed: *“Why [do] rich people have the [BPL] card when poor families, big families don’t? /.../ The Government is not working!”* (Ipsita, 20). She expressed a common opinion – that exclusion and inclusion errors in TPDS need to be addressed – but added the criticism of the Government. In no other interviews were any criticisms voiced against the Government and the privacy of this interview and the fact that no translator was needed makes this an important finding, indicating that possibly, respondents are more critical of the Government than they admit in the presence of government officials. The issues of exclusion and inclusion errors mentioned by Ipsita are linked to the problem of several households depending on a single entitlement, as both are due to the lack of continual reassessments of household eligibility. Sabita explained the impact of the situation on her household:

“... families have grown and families are large but card is one. /.../ I have three sons depending on the [BPL card] and every month I am getting 25 kg of rice, segregated by my sons. First one, then second, then third” (Sabita, 62).

The similar problem of small and large households receiving the same quantities was also pronounced throughout both districts and was described as a cause of inequality.

Turning to the proposal of replacing TPDS with DCTs, the study found very strong and consistent opposition among respondents and thereby supports the findings of the limited research conducted on the topic thus far (Khera 2011; Puri 2012). In focus groups, the topic would lead to people raising their voices and it was clear that this was something they felt strongly about. Two concerns were repeated across the study: that cash would be diverted to other items than food, and that DCTs could disturb gender structures and lead to household conflicts. The general view was that money would be administered by male household heads and spent on alcohol and tobacco, or on other items such as medicine or clothes. All were of the opinion that money would be managed poorly and spent on non-food items. One woman expressed these concerns and the importance ascribed to reliable food access when she exclaimed: *“If rice will be converted into cash, will man eat cash?”* (Pallavi, 34). This rhetorical question underlined what emerged to be the general opinion among respondents, namely that a minimum level of food security would continue to be secured through TPDS, while it might be jeopardised through the introduction of DCTs. Shivani elaborated on this point:

“If the money is supplied ... that money will be misutilised by the household person. /.../ The male leading member will use that money [for] liquor /.../ He will come with the empty stomach. He will beat the mother: Feed me, feed me! Wherefrom she can give the help to

him? He spent the money on drinking. She has no rice, he will beat her, but wherefrom she will get the rice to feed him?" (Shivani, 80).

The quote illustrates how money and food are gendered issues and that the introduction of DCTs could have a negative effect on family structures and even increase domestic violence. As food is typically a private, female matter, women can go to the distribution points and collect their entitlements through TPDS. They can ensure that their families have a minimum of food to eat and thereby fulfil their responsibilities within the household. Money, on the other hand, is typically handled by men, and in the event that DCTs should be introduced women would no longer be able to administer the process of obtaining food, as noted in a focus group with both men and women present: "...women will not be able to [go to] the panchayat to collect money" (FGD_5). Money would instead be in the hands of male household heads and would likely be spent on non-food items, particularly on alcohol, which was mentioned repeatedly, including by one man in Khordha who rhetorically asked: "Does the Government want to give money for alcohol?" (Jahnu, 45). This view was supported by male and female respondents in both districts and all were of the opinion that ultimately, DCTs would increase vulnerability among households and leave them more food insecure, as DCTs would not in the same way as TPDS carry the promise of food and stability every month.

Price fluctuations in the market place were also an argument against DCTs and respondents expressed concerns that relying on DCTs would increase their vulnerability to rising food prices. The convenience of TPDS with distribution points commonly located in villages close to people's homes and the reliability and security associated with TPDS vis-à-vis DCTs was also heavily emphasised.

It should be noted, however, that beneficiaries generally expressed great awareness of the value of money. There was a consistent emphasis on money and it was generally agreed that money is needed in order to lead a good life. Requests for grants and scholarships, which emerged from the interviews, testify to this fact. The heavy opposition against replacing TPDS with DCTs should be seen against this backdrop and illustrates the respective importance ascribed to TPDS.

The findings are consistent with the view of Sen who, despite usually arguing in favour of increased freedom for individuals, cautions against the replacement of food subsidies with DCTs. He argues that such a change is likely to lead to a decrease in nutritional intake and

carries the risk of payment delays, which could lead to extreme hardship for the poorest (The Hindu 2013).

5.3.2 The View of Government Officials

Turning to the views of government officials, opinions on TPDS varied between those ranking highest and those having direct contact with beneficiaries. Supplies inspectors and project implementers argued that the contribution from TPDS makes a large difference for beneficiaries, based on arguments similar to those given by the beneficiaries themselves. They expressed the opinion that TPDS is a good system with many positive aspects but with need for certain improvements. They agreed on the urgent need to update the database from 1997 in order to eliminate targeting errors and make the system more inclusive of the genuinely poor, while effectively excluding those less vulnerable. In this respect, the views of government field staff reflected the reality among beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, their superiors highlighted the problems of the programme and argued in favour of its replacement by DCTs. A main argument was that TPDS did not give incentives for people to work:

“PDS is not helpful for the Indian people. /.../ it has been on-going for too many years. People have come to expect the food and it creates no incentives for them to work. In this way, manpower is wasted. They do not plan for the future, and this is encouraged by PDS, as they know that there will always be more food in a few weeks’ time”.

Thus, higher-ranking government officials were concerned with the dependency created through TPDS and worried that it did not encourage beneficiaries to take responsibility for their own lives or plan for the future. The problem was elaborated by a supplies inspector who estimated that 70% of beneficiary households heavily relied on TPDS while the rest merely saw it as an opportunity to work less. This is a reflection of inclusion error and might be mitigated if eligibility for TPDS was reassessed, thereby excluding those not needing the subsidies. Dependency, on the other hand, is certainly a problem of TPDS. However, one can argue that the fundamental need of food must first be addressed before other development issues can be achieved (WFP 2013).

In terms of DCTs, the views of beneficiaries were to a large extent reflected by supplies inspectors and project implementers, who, through their close interaction with beneficiaries, had a thorough understanding of local realities. As noted by one such official: *“The money would not be spent wisely. Food reaches the poor people’s bellies and helps the children too. Money would not do that”*. Conversely, those higher up in the hierarchy and further removed

from beneficiaries were of the opinion that TPDS should be phased out and replaced by DCTs. They saw TPDS as a complicated and expensive operation, creating dependency among beneficiaries while not triggering any form of economic development. They saw the value of DCTs in economic terms but did not consider the nutritional impact such a change could have for beneficiaries.

5.4 Summing Up: The Function of TPDS

Summing up, findings show that TPDS is fulfilling an important function across Rayagada and Khordha districts by bringing a certain level of food security to beneficiary households. It increases availability and access to food, enhances food utilisation and ensures against risk. It increases resilience against outside shocks and establishes a feeling of security by strengthening the asset portfolios of beneficiary households. Due to TPDS, people know that they will always have the minimum of food they need to survive, while money is released for a more varied diet, children's education and other necessities, such as medicine or rent. It constitutes a safety net on which people can rely, both when times are good and when sudden shocks occur, disrupting money and food flows. TPDS has thus, in itself, become a main livelihood strategy: people manage their TPDS commodities in order to reduce overall risks and increase incomes and food intake, while in times of need they might solely rely on rice from TPDS. We thus see how both income-raising and consumption-modifying strategies are employed; people are both adapting and coping, based on TPDS commodities. However, significant issues remain as many households feel the consequences of government targeting errors: despite being poor, many households are excluded entirely from the system, and in other cases several households rely on one single entitlement. Not everyone benefits from TPDS and those who are excluded become even more vulnerable as they are disadvantaged in relation to other poor households.

In terms of the proposal to replace TPDS with DCTs, the study found strong and consistent opposition among beneficiaries and government field staff, while higher-ranking officials were more supportive of the idea. Concerns were primarily based on the belief that cash would be diverted to non-food commodities, leaving households more food insecure, and that the change to DCTs would disturb gender structures and ultimately increase household vulnerability. Hence, by hypothetically challenging the status quo that TPDS constitutes, the study revealed other layers of importance of TPDS.

In sum, the study found that TPDS is meeting local food security needs and fulfilling an important function in the study context. Let us now take the discussion further and on the basis of these findings consider the appropriate role for states in development.

6. Analysis Part II: The Role of the State in Development

The discussion of TPDS provides an interesting case for the discussion of the role for states in development. By illustrating that this huge government-led programme is markedly successful in meeting local needs, the case – to some extent – supports Evans’ argument for state involvement. In the following, the case will be further discussed in terms of the potential for state-society synergy and it is considered how increased community involvement could serve to strengthen and improve the current implementation.

6.1 Complementarity and Embeddedness in TPDS

TPDS is a classic example of a centralised programme, implemented through a top-down approach. It is large-scale, government-driven and based on decisions made far from the communities in which it is implemented. Meanwhile frequent instances of corruption, grain diversion and targeting errors paint a picture of TPDS as inefficient and removed from the reality of its beneficiaries. And yet, as we have seen, TPDS is in fact contributing to increased food security and creates a certain level of resilience at the household level. TPDS is certainly not a concrete example of state-society synergy, but it does contain certain elements of complementarity and embeddedness which might be contributing to these encouraging outcomes. It is to these that we now turn.

In terms of complementarity, through TPDS, the state provides a service that would not otherwise be available to poor communities. It facilitates access to food, which becomes a collective good in the relationship between the state and society. On the other hand, community members possess the capacity to leverage the goods received through TPDS into other livelihood assets, whereby resilience is created and communities are strengthened. The programme is based on a clear division between the public and the societal spheres and relies on mutually supporting relations between them. This was clearly observed in the study through the strong segregation between implementing government bodies and beneficiaries of TPDS. High-ranking government officials only occasionally visited distribution points, and when they did, interaction would be with FPS owners – not directly with beneficiaries. Thus, FPS owners become the link between local communities and the Government and it is through

them that feedback is provided. FPS owners are locally appointed by their communities and although the financial benefits are limited, the position is a respectable one based on the trust of the people. This is illustrated in the following quote:

“... the villagers selected me for the distribution of PDS because people have faith in me. They know that because of this person we will get our commodities in the right quantity, right time and right manner.” (FPS_4)

Another FPS owner explained: *“We are the only channels; we are taking the commodities... and delivering to the people”* (FPS_1). Thus, FPS owners constitute the link between the state and society and they view themselves as representatives of their communities. Here, Evans’ notion of embeddedness becomes relevant, as FPS owners through engagement in networks of collaboration and trust with state as well as community actors transcend the divide between the two spheres. Through interviews with FPS owners it was evident that they had a deep understanding of local realities and perceived themselves as part of the communities they were serving. Their statements reflected those of beneficiaries well and their body language and tone of voice indicated that the issue was close to their hearts. As put by one FPS owner who was also a farmer: *“I can make my livelihood through my agriculture. Why I am preferring this PDS is because I want to contribute my work, my dedication to the people /.../. It is because of the people I am here.”* (FPS_4). FPS owners commonly supplement incomes from their businesses with agricultural production as the profit margin on TPDS distribution is limited. Their lives are not very different from the lives of their beneficiaries and they share many of the same hardships. As a result, FPS owners are good ambassadors for their communities and are able to convey important feedback to government officials. A parallel can be drawn here to the findings of Judith Tandler (1997) who through empirical studies of good government in Brazil has illustrated the importance of worker dedication in performance improvement. She found that when government workers were committed to their jobs, and particularly when they engaged in relationships of trust with the communities they served, the overall outcome would be significantly improved. Certainly, such worker dedication and trust was present among the FPS owners interviewed in this study and can be seen as one of the strengths of TPDS.

Another aspect of embeddedness lies in the relationships between government supplies inspectors and beneficiaries. The job of inspectors is to oversee the entire supply chain in their blocks, including visits to procurement sites, inspections at milling points and regular check-ups at FPSs to ensure that delivery to beneficiaries is timely and correct. Although inspectors

primarily interact with FPS owners during such check-ups, they also meet the beneficiaries. It happened a number of times during field observations that beneficiaries directly addressed the inspectors with their feedback. Some expressed dissatisfaction with a particular FPS owner, others explained the problems experienced by households excluded from TPDS, some argued against the introduction of DCTs and others again emphasised the need to reassess eligibility through a new household survey. The study found that the nature of the relationship between inspectors and communities to a large extent depended on the personal attitude of the inspectors. While some saw it as a matter of personal pride to do the job “with the heart” and showed a great level of commitment as well as an understanding of the hardships endured by beneficiaries, others were less engaged with the local communities. Such inspectors appeared to only interact with FPS owners and other officials and when asked to define their job, they highlighted the importance of working for the Government. The objective of providing food security to beneficiaries was not mentioned.

The personal attitudes of inspectors towards beneficiaries are likely to be an important and defining factor for the way beneficiaries experience the Government. Beneficiaries in blocks with engaged inspectors might experience a more supportive state-society relationship and have a bigger chance of strengthening their own communities in terms of engagement and participation. The chance of beneficiaries voicing their feedback would also be greater under such enabling circumstances as they would know that they have a chance of being heard. According to Evans, such responsive state-society contact constitutes an important foundation for development (Evans 1997:185).

The elements of complementarity and embeddedness in TPDS can shed light on the encouraging results found through the field study and explain how the programme meets local needs, increases food security and strengthens resilience at the household level. As FPS owners are close to their communities and act as their representatives, they bring the state closer to the everyday life of beneficiaries. Visits from supplies inspectors further serve to put a face to the Government and, as we have seen, can be a forum for community feedback to the Government about TPDS. Such embedded relations between state and community actors ensure a smoother delivery of TPDS commodities and creates satisfaction with the Government at the community level. Possibly even more important than these embedded relations is the simple complementarity of the Government providing basic food items to vulnerable people with access to limited livelihood assets. The subsidised rice, wheat, sugar

and kerosene constitute main livelihood necessities for beneficiaries that they would not otherwise have access to. In return, communities become stronger, more resilient and positive towards the Government, which in turn benefits the state. It is a case of synergy on a limited scale, an example of what Evans terms a ‘small scale success’, which can be achieved even within broader adverse contexts (1997).

These elements constitute a good foundation for synergy and are already leading to positive results. The set-up with distribution points in villages and FPS owners and supplies inspectors commonly engaging with beneficiaries is an important first step for crossing the divide between the state and society. However, certain barriers limit the developmental potential of this otherwise promising set-up. These will be discussed in the following.

6.2 Barriers to Synergy

Despite clear elements of complementarity and embeddedness in the state-society relations surrounding TPDS, the programme also has significant flaws that prevent it from being successful. A main issue is corruption. The fact that money and grain is diverted at large scale reflects the inefficiency and lack of transparency of the implementing institutions. It is an indication that the state institutions are not as solid and engaged as those proposed by Evans. Through conversations with various government officials it became clear that corruption is an almost natural part of daily life. One official explained that corruption “trickles down” and that – in TPDS – it happens at all levels, from the Civil Supplies Office to the supplies inspectors and FPS owners. All manoeuvre around the rules and ensure extra benefits for themselves. He explained:

“You can say that there is a need for corruption in India. Everybody in power relies on it and are themselves not interested in creating a more transparent system, or empowering the poor, if it means that more questions will be asked.”

This takes us to another issue inherent in TPDS – namely that of conflicting interests between those in power and the beneficiaries. Evans talks of the need for shared objectives across the state-society divide, but in the study context objectives appeared only to be shared among beneficiaries and FPS owners and some supplies inspectors. It appears that politicians and high-ranking government officials consider their own interests and are above all interested in holding on to their power. Greater levels of transparency would expose corruption and restrain such state actors from continuing their endeavours. As noted by the same official: *“If you see a spark, you will try to prevent a fire from arising. But the Government is not interested*

in stopping the fire". The analogy refers to hunger and poverty in India and illustrates how the interests of state actors can be conflicting to those of society. According to Evans, "... *the degree to which interests are shared across the public-private divide /.../ plays a central role in determining the potential for synergy*" (1997:196). As corruption seems to be so ingrained in the internal structure of the state, and as it is accompanied by conflicting state-society interests, it seems that the potential for state-society synergy in TPDS is limited.

The non-participatory structure of TPDS and the fact that little attention is paid by policy makers to its outcome and impact at the household level constitutes another barrier to synergy. The programme is run at a distance from everyday life at the community level and beneficiaries and their experiences are in no way included in the design or implementation of the programme. The extensive problems of exclusion error and its impact on households in every village visited in the study can be ascribed to this top-down structure. There are no mechanisms for feedback between beneficiaries and policy makers or regular systems for programme improvement. The system is implemented from above and there is an extensive gap between the community and policy levels, where the links of FPS owners and supplies inspectors become negligible as they are themselves not engaged in programme design. Performance evaluations are irregular and focus on delivery mechanisms, consumer take-off rates, targeting errors, leakages and diversions (PEO 2005). They build on quantitative surveys and do not consider the role or impact of TPDS in ensuring food security among beneficiaries. This is another aspect of TPDS that is rather problematic when seen from the view of Evans, as it obstructs any opportunity of involving local communities and opening up for local inputs in TPDS. Consequently, as long as beneficiaries are not seen as stakeholders and potential partners by the state, synergy will not occur.

Corruption, conflicting interests and non-participation thus constitute three main barriers to synergy in TPDS. When considered against the issues of grain diversion, leakages and targeting error – commonly discussed as the central problems of TPDS – a connection emerges. While corrupt practices among government officials and FPS owners lead to diversion and leakages of grain, conflicting interests between state and community actors hinder the problem from being solved, as those engaged in corruption have no incentive to stop their undertakings. Further, non-participation and the failure of the state in involving beneficiaries in programme design has led to continuous issues of targeting error, excluding genuinely poor households while including others less vulnerable. Had more responsive state-society mechanisms been in

place, the Government's attention might have been brought to the need for regular reassessments of eligibility and the need to update the 1997 survey earlier.

6.3 Potentials for Synergy

Let us now turn to a discussion of the potential for overcoming barriers and achieving a higher degree of synergy in the implementation of TPDS. As it is clear that the main limitations lie within the institutions of the state, it is necessary to consider how these institutions can be strengthened and their competencies increased. A natural first step would be to target corruption, as it is a main obstacle for the successful delivery of TPDS. This might seem an impossible – even naïve – quest for a master's thesis, and indeed this is not an exhaustive account of the complexities of corruption in the Indian public sector. Instead, let it merely be acknowledged that corruption is an inherent problem in TPDS that – if left unaddressed – will never cease to exist. It is encouraging that the GoI has initiated pilot projects to address corrupt practices within TPDS, showing commitment and acknowledgement of the issue at a central level. However, ever more bureaucratic measures or changes to the system – including digitalisation of the TPDS process, which is tested in Rayagada – are unlikely to prevent those in power from maximising their personal benefits. This was supported by responses given by government officials – in Rayagada specifically – and one official explained that there would always be new ways around such measures. What is proposed here is therefore the need for a complete change of outlook and for the state to look to Evans and acknowledge the value of inputs from society. By opening up to a greater level of community involvement and partnerships with non-state actors, the GoI would have much to gain. The problems of corruption, conflicting interests and non-participation would be addressed while local knowledge and specialised capacities endowed in COs could be utilised for a common developmental goal. COs are not ideal as service providers of food but can contribute complementary inputs to the activities of the state. Thereby the overall output could be far greater than it is today.

Such changes would require a complete restructuring of the current organisation of the Indian public sector, reaching beyond the institutions of TPDS. This involves, in the words of Sen, *“making institutions and decisional practices such that they do not encourage – or tolerate – corruption”* (The Hindu 2013). It would demand a step away from current bureaucracy and centralised power structures towards partnerships with civil society and cross-sectoral engagement. This would create a more responsive and service-oriented state and might in turn

demand greater levels of transparency and accountability by providing internal checks against corruption (Kotwal et al. 2012:117). It is also proposed that incentives are made for individual government staff at all levels to seek society involvement and refrain from corruption. Tendler (1997) has shown that measures to increase worker dedication, including greater worker autonomy and greater trust between workers, managers and local communities lead to increases in productivity and performance improvement. In combination with increased community involvement, such an emphasis on incentives for individuals might produce stronger state institutions and more successful results than is currently the case.

The current set-up of TPDS with its proximity to beneficiaries and its characteristics of complementarity and embeddedness provide an important foundation upon which such a change could be built. Hence, TPDS could become a catalyst for locally grounded community development reaching further than the provision of subsidised food. It could be complemented by schemes for health, job creation²⁰ and education – all designed and implemented in cooperation with local COs. There is significant potential for the state in thus accepting civil society as a valid partner and embracing Evans' ideas. Let this therefore be a call for the GoI to reassess its current practice and consider if not a complete revamp of its institutions might in the long run be of benefit to the state as well as to society. As a minimum, the impact of TPDS at the household level should be included in government assessments. This would paint a more adequate picture of the programme and help adjust it to the reality on the ground.

Certainly, radical institutional changes are not around the corner and might even seem utopian at present as there seems to be little political will to distribute power and resources in India. Still, rather than giving in to the seemingly unsolvable issues of corruption, considering creative alternatives – such as the one proposed here – might lead to positive results. After all, it is widely agreed that civil society has much to contribute, as seen in today's strong emphasis on bottom-up development. The National Advisory Council of India, the advisory body to the Prime Minister's office, proves that such developments are achievable even in the Indian context. It has become open and responsive to inputs from social activists and followed recommendations of COs, thereby involving community members in the drafting of legislative

²⁰ The existing scheme for job creation, the Mahatma Ghandi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, is government-led – like TPDS – and has been heavily criticised for corruption, poor implementation and for "keeping the poor down" rather than empowering them (Wright & Gupta 2011).

policies (Kotwal et al. 2012:110). This is an encouraging development that illustrates that there is potential within the Indian state for a larger degree of society involvement.

7. Concluding Discussion: What the Study of TPDS can bring to the Debate on State Intervention

This thesis has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of TPDS and established that TPDS in Rayagada and Khordha districts of Odisha is bringing a certain level of food security and resilience to beneficiary households. Despite issues of corruption and targeting errors, this large-scale government programme is successful in meeting basic needs at the household level. Critics might say that TPDS creates dependency and that it does not lead to empowerment of local communities. The findings do not deny this. However, they illustrate a more complex reality, where other pressing issues must be solved before local capacities can be developed. The most basic needs, in this case related to food, must be met before the beneficiaries can pursue higher-order needs like the security of employment, health and education (Maslow 1943; WFP 2013). Although critical of the issues of corruption and inefficiency, the thesis thus supports the overall implementation of TPDS and recognises it as an important foundation for other development projects. Following from this, the thesis is critical towards the proposal to replace food subsidies with DCTs as this is found to jeopardise the food security offered by TPDS.

The findings of the study cannot be generalised to the rest of Odisha, even less to the rest of India, but they might be an indication of the potentials that lie within TPDS. More research of a similar nature is therefore needed to inform policy makers of the reality and impact of TPDS on the ground across India before it is dismantled and DCTs introduced.

Contrary to the general push for bottom-up development, the thesis aligns with the literature that supports a central role for the state in development (including Evans 1997; Tendler 1997; Varda 2011). Although TPDS is not a concrete example of state-society synergy, the findings support Evans' thinking by illustrating the developmental potential that lies within the Indian state. Overall, the study serves to demonstrate the key position of the state in reaching developmental ends. It does not deny a positive role for society but supports a reconciliation of top-down and bottom-up approaches. It asserts the need for a strong state as well as the value of inputs from society and demonstrates that large-scale development programmes can

in fact facilitate development that reflects local needs. It is, in short, a case for bringing the state back in.

The argument is not that state intervention is the answer to all challenges in development. On the contrary, it is recognised that significant limitations can lie within the state and become a hindrance to development. The intention is rather to illustrate that under certain circumstances – such as in the case of TPDS – states have an important role to play. They can fulfil an important function and bring about positive outcomes at the community level, especially if they recognise the value of cross-sectoral partnerships and cooperation with society. COs, on the other hand, have scattered and localised impact, but if these ‘pocket efforts’ were to be linked to the national policy level and adapted on scale, there would be potential for achieving real change.

More than a decade after Evans first made the case for state-society synergy, the role of the state in development continues to be debated. The debate is rather one-sided, however, as the bulk of literature and common opinion is in favour of bottom-up development and often displays scepticism towards state involvement. In 1997, Evans made a call for more research on cases of synergy and this was repeated in 2011 by Danielle Varda, who urged for more research to consider the community-level impact of government intervention. Some studies have since been produced and this thesis contributes to this moderate body of literature. Let this therefore be an encouragement for practitioners and development scholars to re-consider the value of the state and of collaborative efforts. As put by Evans: *“Synergy is too potent a developmental tool to be ignored by development theories”* (1997:205).

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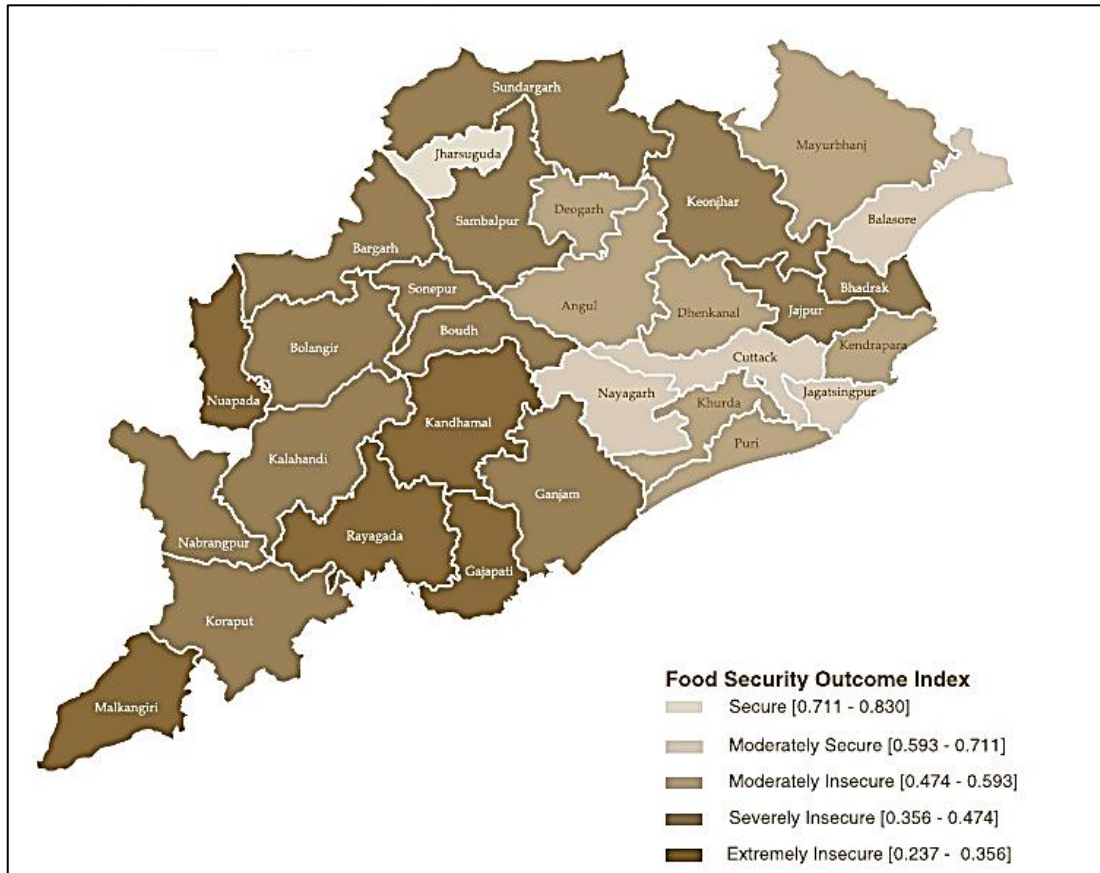
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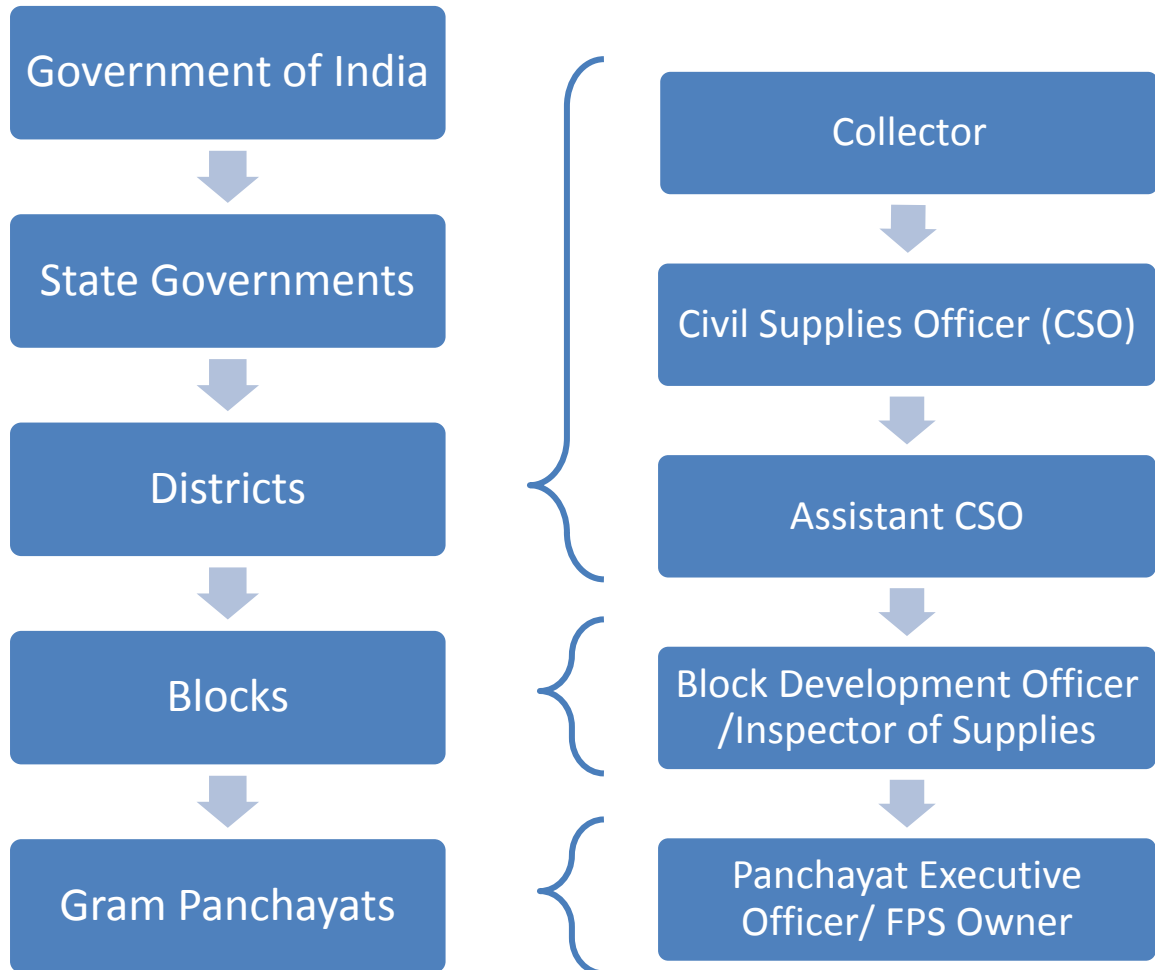
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Appendix 1: Food Insecurity in Odisha



Food security has been mapped according to under-five mortality and child malnutrition rates (WFP & IHD 2008:32).

Appendix 2: Administrative Units in India



Author's construct. Sourced from field observations and conversational interviews with government officials

Appendix 3: Interview Guide – Beneficiaries

<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce myself and my research project - Stress that my work is independent and that I do not work for the WFP or the Government - Ask for consent to record the interview, stress that anonymity will be protected and that the respondent can ask questions or stop the interview anytime - Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in hearing about experiences and opinions; what life is like here and what problems the respondents are facing. 	
Questions	Responses
<p><i>Demographic Information</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender 2. Age 3. Size of household 4. Level of education (can you read/write?) 5. Main source of income 6. BPL/AAY/APL 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
<p><i>Local realities</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it mean to be a daily labourer/farmer/etc.? 2. Which difficulties do you face in your daily life? How do you cope with them? 3. Would you say you are satisfied with what you do? 4. Is there any way that you can improve your situation (by getting another job, opening a business etc.)? 5. Do you have access to clean water? Sanitation? Electricity? Credit? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<p><i>The food situation</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell me about how your family accesses food? 2. How many meals do you eat a day? 3. What type of food do you eat? 4. Does your family have sufficient food on a daily basis throughout the year? 5. Are there any conflicts over food in your village/within your household? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<p><i>TPDS - general information</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which items do you get through TPDS? 2. How far do you have to travel? 3. How do you carry your food home? 4. Do you always collect all the grains that you are entitled to? If not, why? 5. How many days does it take for your household to consume the monthly entitlement of rice? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

<p><i>Perceptions of TPDS</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your personal opinion on TPDS? 2. Are you satisfied with the way TPDS works? Why/why not? (Probe on quality, quantity, price) 3. If applicable: Has computerisation improved your experience? Why/why not? 4. Have you personally had any problems with TPDS? 5. In what way is TPDS improving your livelihood? 6. Has TPDS equipped your family to cope with new challenges? Do you feel that it prepares you to act if something bad happens? 7. How do you spend the money that is saved by purchasing through TPDS? 8. How would your food situation look without TPDS? 9. What are your thoughts on replacing TPDS with cash transfers? 10. Are there any families in your community who are not receiving food through TPDS? If so, why? 11. What is your view of the Government for implementing TPDS? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.
<p><i>Looking forward</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How could TPDS be improved? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.
<p>Is there anything you would like to add, which we haven't covered?</p>	

Appendix 4: Interview Guide – Fair Price Shop Owners

Questions	Responses
1. Can you please tell me about the TPDS system? How does it work?	
2. What is your role? Can you describe what it means to be a FPS owner?	
3. Can you tell me how food typically is distributed?	
4. Is TPDS a sustainable business for you? Does it provide you with a sustainable livelihood? Do you have any side occupations?	
5. Which business incentives does TPDS give you?	
6. If applicable: Has computerisation improved your business? Which challenges and opportunities do you see in computerisation?	
7. What is your personal opinion on TPDS? Would you say that you are satisfied with the way it works?	
8. Do you believe TPDS enables people to pull themselves out of poverty?	
9. What do you think the general opinion in the local community is about TPDS?	
10. What is your view of the Government for implementing TPDS?	
11. How could TPDS be improved?	
Is there anything you would like to add, which we haven't covered?	

Appendix 5: Interview Record

Interview #	District	Village	HH	M/F	Date	Comments
Beneficiary_1	Rayagada	Pitamahal		M	061112	Rural
Beneficiary_2	Rayagada	Rayagada		M	061112	Urban
Beneficiary_3	Rayagada	Hill village	BPL	M	071112	Rural
Beneficiary_4	Rayagada	Outskirt village	BPL	M	081112	Semi-urban
Beneficiary_5	Khordha	Chandaka	BPL	F	201112	Rural
Beneficiary_6	Khordha	Kantabad	BPL	M	201112	Rural
Beneficiary_7	Khordha	Daruthenga	AAY	F	201112	Rural
Beneficiary_8	Khordha	Dhauri	BPL	F	221112	Rural
Beneficiary_9	Rayagada	Rayagada	APL	M	051212	Urban
Beneficiary_10	Rayagada	Rayagada	AAY	M	051212	Urban
Beneficiary_11	Rayagada	Rayagada	AAY	M	061212	Urban
Beneficiary_12	Rayagada	Rayagada	BPL	M	061212	Urban
Beneficiary_13	Rayagada	N/A	BPL	F	061212	No translator
Beneficiary_14	Rayagada	Rayagada	BPL	F	071212	Urban
Beneficiary_15	Rayagada	Rayagada	BPL	F	071212	Urban
Beneficiary_16	Rayagada	Rayagada	AAY	F	071212	Urban
Beneficiary_17	Rayagada	M village	BPL	M	081212	No translator Rural
Beneficiary_18	Rayagada	Suri, Kolnara Block	APL	F	101212	Rural
Beneficiary_19	Rayagada	Suri, Kolnara Block	APL	F	101212	No translator Rural
Beneficiary_20	Khordha	Patrapada	AAY	M	121212	Semi-urban
Beneficiary_21	Khordha	Patrapada	AAY	F	121212	Semi-urban
Beneficiary_22	Khordha	Patrapada	BPL	F	121212	Semi-urban
Beneficiary_23	Khordha	Nanput	AAY	F	121212	Rural
Beneficiary_24	Khordha	Nanput	AAY	F	121212	Rural
Beneficiary_25	Khordha	Tanando	AAY	M	121212	Semi-urban

FGD #	District	Village	HH	M/F	# of participants	Date
FGD_1	Rayagada	Outskirt village	BPL + AAY	M + F	3 F, 4 M	081112
FGD_2	Khordha	Daruthenga	BPL	F	3	201112
FGD_3	Khordha	Sisupalgarh	BPL + AAY	M	7	221112
FGD_4	Khordha	Itipur	BPL + AAY	F	5	221112
FGD_5	Rayagada	Suri	BPL + AAY	M + F	30+	101212

FPS/implementer interview #	District	Village	M/F	Date
FPS_1	Khordha	Daruthenga	M	201112
FPS_2	Khordha	Mendhasala	M	201112
FPS_3	Khordha	Mendhasala	M	201112

FPS_4	Khordha	Itipur	M	221112
Implementer_1	Rayagada	Rayagada	M	081112

Conversations	District	M/F
Official_1	Rayagada	M
Official_2	Rayagada	F
Official_3	Khordha	F
Official_4	Khordha	M
Official_5	Khordha	M
Official_6	Cuttack	M
Official_7	Rayagada	F
Official_8	Rayagada	M