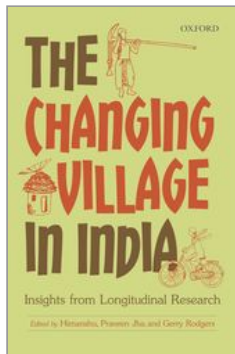


# Public Services, Social Relations, Politics, and Gender

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## The Changing Village in India: Insights from Longitudinal Research

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## Public Services, Social Relations, Politics, and Gender

Tales from a North Indian Village\*

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### Abstract and Keywords

The Palanpur village survey shows that despite tremendous economic changes, the improvements in the human development outcomes are not commensurate. Lack of effective public services is one of the reasons for the slow progress in human development indicators in Palanpur. In this chapter we try to analyse the reasons for the absence of any public pressure in the village towards improving public services such as education and health in spite of the failure of existing services to meet people's needs. It is argued that high level of social inequality in the village is one of the factors contributing to a failure of collective action. Based on analysis

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**Gender** of caste-wise and gender-wise data on education, health, and access to services it is shown how deep inequalities persist leading to social fragmentation in the village.

*Keywords:* human development, collective action, public action, social inequality, public services

Palanpur village in the Moradabad district of western Uttar Pradesh (UP) has been studied through a series of surveys beginning from the 1950s onwards. While we cannot claim that Palanpur is in any way 'representative' of rural UP or even Moradabad district, it is not an outlier either. The sixth round of survey in Palanpur was conducted in 2008–10. The primary focus of the previous rounds of the survey was to understand how the economy of the village functioned and how it was (p.402) changing, especially in relation to the agrarian economy, farming practices, rural markets, outside opportunities, and population growth.<sup>1</sup>

In each round of the survey, the areas of investigation were expanded to include newer topics, including various social and economic aspects of life in Palanpur. In this chapter, we focus on poor human development indicators and their relationship with the failure of public services and the absence of collective action (and effective demand) in the village for the same. Earlier rounds of surveys, especially the one conducted in 1983–4, documented valuable qualitative information on various aspects of village life, including women's lives, caste relations, and health and education practices, based on informal discussions, a few interviews, and observations. In addition, this time systematic data in greater detail were collected in relation to women's status, public services, child labour, and health expenditure.

Human development indicators, as well as the performance of public services in UP, are among the poorest in the country (Drèze and Gazdar 1997; Drèze and Sen 2013; IAMR 2011; Parker and Kozel 2003; Sinha 2013). There are multiple factors that contribute to human development outcomes, as well as failure of public services, including poverty, poor status of women, inadequate provision of services, income inequality, political priorities, and so on. Many of these are not village-level factors and are influenced by larger political, social, and

During our stay in the village, we were puzzled by the absence of any public pressure towards improving public services, such as education and health, in spite of the failure of existing services to meet people's needs. Although in individual conversations, people expressed dissatisfaction over the way things were, this was not a topic of discussion in any collective forum in the village, nor was there any instance where people took up the issue of poor functioning of public services at higher levels, such as the block or district administration. This observation on the poor state of public services in the village and also the absence of collective action in the village has also been discussed in detail by Drèze and Sharma (1998) (p.403) based on the previous round of surveys. They argue that the limited reach of collective action in Palanpur is responsible for some of the failures of its development experience. They further reason that it is the highly fragmented nature of the village society that offers few rallying points for collective action. In this article, we revisit the issue of failure of public services, lack of collective action, and its relation to social fragmentation (based on gender and caste) and conclude that the high level of social inequality in the village continues to be a reality contributing to a failure of collective action as found by earlier researchers.

## Economic Changes and Human Development in Palanpur<sup>2</sup>

There has been substantial improvement in the economic conditions in the village during the survey period (1957 to 2009), especially since 1983-4. Real incomes have risen substantially across all castes. The data from various rounds of surveys show that the per capita income in the village has more than doubled since the first survey in 1957-8, with most of this increase being seen in the second half of the period, between 1983-4 and 2008-9. The real wages of casual labourers, which were almost stagnant from 1958 to the late 1980s, have begun to rise, especially in the last decade. The real wages (of casual labourers) increased almost two times between 1983 and 2008 (Himanshu and Stern 2011).

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It is evident from the longitudinal data that while agriculture continues to be a major source of income and employment for most of the households in the village, there is an increasing share of non-farm income and employment. There has also been a tremendous rise in the assets that people own, with the number of productive assets, such as tractors, tube wells, pumpsets, etc., going up. While there were two motorcycles and three televisions (per 1,000 population) in 1993, this increased to respectively 14 and 64 in 2008. There are now two cars in the village. The number of small shops in the village has grown. These (p.404) shops now sell a wide range of products, including basic groceries, candies, and cosmetics. There are no kachcha houses in the village anymore and all the houses now have pakka walls and roofs. These are all clear signs of change in the village and data show that a large part of this change occurred after 1983-4.

While there has been such significant change in the village, some fundamental problems are still to be overcome. The village streets are still narrow and dirty, drainage systems non-existent, the school is functioning poorly, many children look unhealthy, and there are severe restrictions on women's mobility. The only public transport reaching the village continues to be the train service twice a day. This situation has recently seen some improvement with the approach road to the village and some of the internal roads being re-laid.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of human development indicators, it is seen that while there is tremendous improvement, particularly after the 1983 survey, Palanpur still lags behind the rest of the country and state quite significantly. The literacy rate<sup>4</sup> (of persons aged 7 and above) in Palanpur increased from 25 per cent in 1984 to 50 per cent in 2009; however, this is still much lower than the literacy rate for UP as a whole (69.7 per cent, according to Census 2011) or even Moradabad district (58.7 per cent). Age-wise literacy rates for the 15-19 age group, which presents a picture of the recent trends in literacy, show considerable gains with 85 per cent of the boys and 44 per cent of girls in this age group in Palanpur being literate.<sup>5</sup>

It is more difficult to comment on health outcomes in Palanpur because of sample size issues to estimate mortality indicators. Further, we do not have morbidity indicators from the earlier rounds of the survey to make comparisons. However, using data on birth histories some estimates have been made of the

infant mortality rate (IMR) in the village. The estimated IMR in 1993 was 160 deaths per 1,000 live births (Drèze and Sharma 1998) and for 2009 the estimated IMR is (p.405) 93 deaths per 1,000 live births.<sup>6</sup> In both years, this estimated IMR is considerably higher than the IMR for rural UP (139 in 1991 and 66 in 2009).<sup>7</sup> While the ratio of IMR for Palanpur to that for UP was 1.15 in 1993, it increased to 1.4 in 2009. What it does show once again is that Palanpur is making significant progress but is still far behind the rest of the state and does not seem to be catching up.

The story of Palanpur, like the story of UP in general and that of rural India to some extent, is therefore one of impressive economic growth with improvements in human development not commensurate with the economic possibilities (Drèze and Sen 2013). While we leave the analysis of different factors explaining slow changes in human development for later, in this chapter we delve into the poor state of public services and the high levels of social inequality in the village as an explanation for lack of collective action towards improving them.

## Poor State of Public Services

### Government School

Palanpur has had a government primary school right from the beginning of the survey period.<sup>8</sup> This school has been upgraded to the elementary (p.406) level in 2012 (up to class 8). For high school, the nearest government school is in Akrauli village about 3 km away. For university education, the nearest institutions are located in Chandausi (13 km away, the nearest town and former block headquarter) and Moradabad (31 km away, the district headquarters).

Until 1974–5, Palanpur’s government primary school was functioning well. At one point, it had five teachers and one headmaster but after 1974–5, the number of teachers reduced, apparently due to the adoption of a policy of spreading teaching posts more evenly between villages. By late 1992, the school had only one teacher. In 1993, a new directive from the UP government required that local teachers cannot teach in primary schools resulting in the transfer of the local teacher and recruitment of two teachers from outside the village. The survey team then felt that this led to an improvement in the attendance of students; but still the performance of the school

**Gender** remained poor. The government school in Akrauli had better infrastructure and staff, and some parents sent their children there (girls were not going to Akrauli) (Drèze, Lanjouw, and Sharma 1998).

The expansion of basic education in Palanpur has been considerably slowed down by the poor functioning of the village school. In fact, around the end of the survey period, the village school remained virtually non-functional for more than ten years, due to systematic absenteeism and shirking on the part of the local teacher. The most extraordinary aspect of this situation is that there has been no concerted effort to do anything about it. Admittedly, the scope for putting pressure on the village teacher has been somewhat reduced by the fact that, for much of the relevant period, he was the son of the village headman. (Drèze and Sharma 1998: 73)

Children in Palanpur also access a few private schools, but none of them are currently within the village. Education in the government schools is almost free, while on an average the fee in private schools was Rs 650 per child per year as per data collected in 2009 (Bersier 2009). Up to 2005, there was a small private school running in Palanpur village itself. The reports of earlier survey teams and villagers suggest that this school used to function fairly regularly. However, this school closed down because the two teachers running it got jobs in government primary schools.

Almost 30 per cent of school-aged children from the village attend private schools in nearby villages, while the rest are enrolled in (p.407) government schools. Therefore, the government school is still the main source of education in the village. However, the state of the government school is very poor. Although there is a considerable increase in the number of children attending school in the village (234 children are enrolled there), the quality of education is a cause for concern.<sup>9</sup>

When we began the survey in 2008, there were four teachers in the school. Two of them were regular teachers and lived outside the village, while the other two were *Shiksha Mitras* from the same village. The two permanent teachers were very irregular and used to come once in a while. They have now been transferred elsewhere. One of the *Shiksha Mitras* also

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left once she got married. By the end of the survey (2010) there was only one teacher, although five teachers' posts have been sanctioned by the government for the school. This teacher was also a Shiksha Mitra<sup>10</sup> (para teacher) and not a fully qualified permanent teacher. Data for 2009-10 show that 38.4 per cent of all government teachers in UP are para teachers and of them only 33.4 per cent in UP have received professional training (DISE 2011).

In terms of infrastructure, the school has seen major improvements since the previous survey in 1993. There are separate toilets for boys and girls (often non-functional), a kitchen for midday meals and four rooms for classes. Many of the rooms are kept locked and different classes are merged together with only two rooms being opened.

There was no supervision visit by any senior official from the education department during our stay, nor was there any attempt by the community to demand accountability from the school, although parents were dissatisfied that the teachers did not come regularly. The only time any government officer came to the school was to distribute scholarships and that was also a time when many parents visited to collect the money. But during these visits, there was no discussion on the quality or regularity of the teaching in the school. When the teachers were present in the school, they complained that there were not enough teachers and so it was not possible for them to teach the different classes. (p.408)

A year after we began this round of the survey in the village, the midday meal in the school was restored. This was one of the changes brought in by the new panchayat pradhan.<sup>11</sup> Although the children started attending the school more regularly, they would often be found playing outside waiting for meal time.

Therefore, although in theory, most children are enrolled in the school, the teaching itself is inadequate in the government school in Palanpur. As most of the children going to the government school are first generation literates, they are unable to get much help at home either (more details on which children go to private schools in the later sections). While there is a latent desire amongst parents in all the castes to send their children to school, there is however no proactive

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**Gender** action being taken by them to seek and secure improvements in the functioning of the school.

## Health Services

There is no government sub-centre or Primary Health Centre (PHC) in the village, but it has a designated Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), who is supposed to visit the village regularly to provide immunization, ante- and post-natal care, child health services, and some primary healthcare. The ANM is supposed to come to the village at least twice a month. The ANM in Palanpur usually came once a month as part of the Pulse Polio campaign held monthly in the entire state. The general complaint in the village was that she did not provide any services except for the polio vaccine; at other times, even if she came to the village, people were not informed, and she would just spend her time sitting in one place, talking to some influential people and leave. This is also reflected in the data on immunization, which shows that while 99 per cent of all children under six in 2009 had received at least one dose of polio drops, only 38 per cent had received at least one dose of DPT vaccine (they are supposed to get three). Less than 40 per cent of the children had immunization cards. Over 90 per cent of the women delivered at home. While we do not have exact data for the previous years, based on the survey in 1984, Drèze and Sharma (1998) (p.409) write, '[f]amily planning practices are quite limited in Palanpur leading to high fertility rates and short birth spacing ... A delivery almost invariably takes place at home with the help of a local dāī (midwife) with no formal training ... No publicly-provided maternal health services are conveniently available' (pp. 53-4).

In 2009, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), or voluntary health worker, was appointed in the village to play the role of a link worker with the health services. Her main tasks are to motivate people to access immunization services and to encourage women to go for institutional deliveries. The ASHA worker was from a Thakur family, chosen mainly because her husband knew some people in the health department. She had been appointed towards the end of the survey period, and we did not get much of an opportunity to observe her. In the initial months, she was still not sure of her role and was trying to understand what she was supposed to do in the absence of any guidance from the ANM.

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There is an anganwadi centre (AWC)<sup>12</sup> in the village, to provide for the health, nutrition, and education needs of children less than six years of age. The anganwadi worker and helper are both from the same family and have been working here for over twenty years. The AWC functioned even more poorly than the school. It did not have a building of its own and was technically supposed to be functioning out of the home of the anganwadi worker (AWW). However, since there was not enough space there, she operated out of the school. The anganwadi worker sometimes was seen taking classes for the older children who were enrolled in the school.

Of all the women with children under six years of age in the village, only about 9 per cent said that their children were given any supplementary nutrition from the anganwadi centre ever and less than 5 per cent reported their children having ever been weighed at the AWC. The ICDS is supposed to provide six services for children under six including supplementary nutrition and growth monitoring. In 1993, the anganwadi centre was functioning out of the worker's home. 'None of (p.410) the six services mentioned above are actually supplied at the anganwadi except sporadic doses of nutritional support. In 1993, many Palanpur residents were not even aware of the fact that an anganwadi has been set up in one of the Kayastha homes' (Drèze and Sharma 1998: 189).

The AWW complained of irregular supply, poor quality, and the system of 'cuts' to higher authorities. The take-home rations that were supposed to come to the AWC were always less than what was recorded because it was siphoned off at different levels. She claimed, verified by the AWW in the neighbouring village as well, that they also had to give a fixed proportion of their salary every month to their superiors. Since they are 'honorary' workers and have no job security, they felt very vulnerable and did not question this practice openly.

For primary healthcare, residents of Palanpur mostly go to (unqualified) medical practitioners in the village. Both of them (one lives in Palanpur and the other comes from the neighbouring village of Pipli) have not been formally trained but prescribe a range of medicines from painkillers to antibiotics. There are also others in the village who do not have a 'clinic' but are called doctors and prescribe medicines for common illnesses. For further care, people go to private practitioners in nearby towns, such as Bilari and Chandausi.<sup>13</sup>

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**Gender** A lot of money is spent on healthcare, but the quality of healthcare received is poor and there is no faith in the public health system.

A survey on health expenditures in 2009 showed that the share of out-of-pocket expenditure<sup>14</sup> to total consumption expenditure in Palanpur is 5.9 per cent, which is slightly higher than the share for all India (5.1 per cent according to NSSO 2004-5). Twenty-one per cent of the people reported suffering from any ailment in the 15 days before the survey.<sup>15</sup> Of these, 90 per cent sought treatment; among those who sought treatment, 92 per cent went to a private source. Similarly 5 per cent (p.411) of persons reported hospitalization in the last 365 days of whom 86 per cent were in a private hospital. The expenditure on treatment was much higher in private institutions (average Rs 6,259 per hospitalization case) compared to the public (Rs 839), in spite of which people preferred private care. When asked why they did not prefer public hospitals, 72 per cent of the respondents said that they were not satisfied with the quality of care in a government hospital. The other reasons given were that the health centre was too far and that there was a long waiting period before getting any care (Pierre 2011). These data are not very different from the earlier rounds of surveys, where it was found that: ‘... public facilities, however, are rarely used by Palanpur residents. The main reasons for this seem to be that they have little faith in the quality of the services provided. They resent the brusque behaviour of the health staff and expect to be asked to pay for services that are supposed to be free.’ (Drèze and Sharma 1998: 189-90)

Very soon after the survey was completed a PHC was opened in a nearby village (Akrauli, 3 km away).<sup>16</sup> While this PHC had excellent infrastructure in terms of the building and the space it occupied, a recent visit (in 2013) showed that it was understaffed (only one homeopathic doctor, one lab technician, and one pharmacist), had limited supplies, and the operation theatre and labour room had neither any staff nor furniture in them. It is therefore seen that the health services available in the neighbourhood of Palanpur remain very poor.

The state of other public services in Palanpur is also similarly poor. MGNREGA<sup>17</sup> was started in 2008, but as of 2009, only 22 out of 233 households in the village had job cards. The opening of works was irregular and there were reports of wrong entries in the muster rolls by (p.412) the pradhan and *rozgar-sevak*.<sup>18</sup> However, after the initial hitches, there seems to have been improvements in its implementation.

The ration shop under the Public Distribution System (PDS)<sup>19</sup> that used to operate in 1984 was closed down in 1991. The villagers were assigned to a neighbouring PDS store in Pipli for some time. Before 2008, the Palanpur PDS shop was shifted from one village to another many times. After the 2009 panchayat elections, the dealership for the fair price shop (FPS) was given to a resident of Palanpur. In a subsequent visit after the survey, villagers complained of corruption, alleging that PDS items were sold in the open market and that the ration dealer had connections with the food supply inspector. On the other hand, the ration shop owner complained of a loss as the villagers were not buying from him due to the bad quality of grains and that he had to spend his own money to go to the godown in Bilari and get the grains.

As for the coverage of this scheme, there are only 16 households in the village (out of 233 households) that come under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) or Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) schemes. Two hundred households have Above Poverty Line (APL) cards, on which (for most of the survey period) they could only buy kerosene. Data on consumption (p.413) expenditure was collected from the village, enabling us to identify households below the poverty line, using the same methodology as the Planning Commission, based on the state poverty line for UP.<sup>20</sup> Among the 88 households that were found to be below the poverty line (that is, a poverty ratio of 38 per cent) on the basis of their consumption expenditure, 5 households had BPL cards and 2 had AAY cards, while 77 had APL cards, and 4 had no cards. Further, among those who had BPL or AAY cards, 8 were above the poverty line. While the problem of inclusion and exclusion errors in identification is widespread across the country, Palanpur is no different. Moreover, the PDS in Palanpur is not a very effective scheme, particularly because of the low number of BPL cards. In general, the supply of kerosene was regular, although there was always confusion on whether the quota was 3 litres per

**Gender** household per month or 2 litres per household per month. The supply of grains, especially for the APL beneficiaries, was very irregular and unpredictable.

In other schemes too, coverage was low. In the period of 12 months prior to the latest round of surveys, one out of 14 eligible households got the benefit under the Indira Awaas Yojana<sup>21</sup> (IAY), 2 out of 4 the incentive for institutional delivery; 1 out of 37 elderly, 1 out of 22 widows, and 2 out of 17 disabled persons got the pensions they were eligible for.

## Inequality and Collective Action

As seen above, the state of public services in Palanpur, as in the rest of UP, is very poor. What is perplexing is the almost complete absence of any collective action by the people of the village towards demanding better services. Drèze and Sharma (1998) based on the previous round of the survey, had stated a few opportunities for obvious collective action that could have helped to improve the quality of life for all, such as improving the drainage system and coordinating the sowing time. During this round of the survey, we observed further failures of public services, such as the stopping of the midday meal in the school, the irregularity of the nurse coming to the village, and the other failures of public services listed above, as situations evidently waiting for active (p.414) engagement by the people. With strong collective action, the village could see improvements in their public service provisions. Another example of lack of collective action related to the 'monkey menace'.<sup>22</sup> While residing in the village for our field work, we observed major disruptions being faced by people in the village due to the hundreds of monkeys running wild in the village, causing destruction of crops in the fields and stealing and spoiling food in the homes, etc. As residents of the village undertaking field work, we were also affected by this menace and wondered why the community was not getting together to do something to find a solution.

Drèze and Sharma (1998) as well as Drèze and Gazdar (1997) postulate that one of the reasons for the lack of collective action in Palanpur is because of the social stratification in the village, which does not allow people to come together. Some quotes from previous writings by Drèze and Sharma (1998) are

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Gender presented below to give an idea of the arguments made earlier.

... Class (however defined) is only loosely related to other important bases of social division, such as caste and gender. This does not necessarily affect the notional division of society into classes, but it can blur this division for concerned parties, obscure any consciousness of class interests, and reduce the scope for collective action along class lines. (p. 38).

By now, it should be clear that the society of Palanpur is a highly divided one ... it is not just that economic and social inequalities are quite large ... there are many different bases of social division (caste, class, gender, kinship, ownership, occupation, education etc.), leading to multiple solidarities and oppositions ... the village society in short is highly fragmented with few solid rallying points for collective action, whether of a 'cooperative' or 'adversarial' type. (p. 67)

The failure of collective action in Palanpur has far-reaching implications. Indeed, the effectiveness of a whole range of local public services can be greatly enhanced through skilful use of local channels of information and accountability. (p. 75)

In the following sections we present the situation of caste and gender inequality in the village and make some observations on the possible pathways through which inequality hinders collective action in Palanpur. (p.415)

## Social Inequality—Caste

In Palanpur, as in the rest of the country, the role of caste in determining social and economic opportunities has become less perceptible in the course of the survey period, particularly since 1984. However, it still operates in subtle ways, resulting in large inequalities in human development outcomes. There are principally eight castes represented within the village: Thakur, Muraos, Dhimar, Gadariya, Dhobi, Teli, Passi, and Jatab. Since 1957, in terms of population the three largest castes in Palanpur have always been Thakurs, Muraos, and Jatabs (Table 15.1). Thakur, a warrior caste, is the top-most in hierarchy among the castes present in the village. Just below the Thakurs is a cultivating caste, the Muraos, who are the

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largest group within the population of the village. Muraos are traditional cultivators who have continued to specialize in agriculture. They are known to be very hard-working and have seen a rapid rise in their wealth and socio-economic status in the village. Today, Muraos even tend to be more prosperous than the Thakurs and challenge the previously unquestioned political and economic dominance of the Thakurs. At the bottom of the caste hierarchy are the Valmikis and Jatabs, both Scheduled Castes (SCs). While there only a few Valmiki households, the Jatabs accounted for around 17 per cent of the population in 2009. Traditionally 'untouchable' leather workers, Jatabs are now primarily engaged in agricultural wage labour. They own little or no land, have low education levels, and have little access to non-farm employment outside the village. They live at the edge of the village and have visibly smaller houses and poorer living conditions. Muslims (Dhobis and Telis by caste) accounted for nearly 13 per cent of the Palanpur population in 2009. The differences in culture and lifestyle between the two communities (Hindu and Muslim) are slight. In terms of the social hierarchy in the village, the Muslims are considered inferior to the Thakurs and Muraos but above the Jatabs.<sup>23</sup>

Strict untouchability, which was practiced earlier, is no longer practiced. For example, the Jatabs, who were considered untouchables and were not permitted to have food in the houses of any other caste, are now allowed to take food from Muraos. However, Thakurs still openly support untouchability. None of the castes still accept food cooked by Jatabs. (p.416)

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**Table 15.1 Proportion of Caste Groups in Palanpur: 1958-2009<sup>24</sup>**

% of Households	1958	1964	1974	1983	1993	2009
Thakur	17	17.9	22.3	20.9	24.9	24.5
Murao	21	23.6	25	18.2	22.8	23.6
Dhimar	10	8.5	7.1	10.1	7.2	8.1
Gadariya	9	8.6	8.9	8.1	7.2	6.4
Dhobi	2	0.9	2.7	2.7	2.6	3.4
Teli	8	8.6	10.7	11.5	10.4	9.0
Passi	12	15.1	7.1	10.1	7.8	2.6
Jatab	16	12.3	12.5	12.8	12.4	16.7
Others	5	4.7	3.6	5.4	4.7	5.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Source:** Calculated using field survey data.

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On social occasions like a wedding in a Jatab family, people from upper castes do attend and eat as long as the cooking has not been done by a Jatab. While these are the broad features, there are also sub-groups within each caste the details of which we do not get into presently.

Interestingly the data show that the inter-caste inequality in income has decreased with many Jatabs doing well. However, at the same time, the inter-household inequality in the village has risen in this period. Although there has been a decline in inequality amongst the different castes in terms of per capita incomes, there is still a wide gap in the absolute income level of the Thakurs and Muraos on the one hand and the Jatabs, Dhobis, and Telis on the other (see Chapter 11 in this book for details).

### Inequality in Literacy—Caste and Gender

With regard to literacy rates, it is seen there has been a tremendous increase in literacy rates among all castes, especially after 1983-4. The literacy rate has increased for all castes in Palanpur (Figure 15.1); however, the level of literacy is much lower for the lower castes and more so for women. Although women of the upper castes, especially the Thakurs, show a considerable increase in literacy rates, the women

(p.417)

from other castes are far behind. The literacy rate is lowest for Jatab women, which shows a visible improvement from 1993 to 2009 but is still much lower when compared to all other categories—even lower than the literacy rate for Thakur men in 1958.

By looking at a simple percentage change in literacy rates, the biggest improvements are among Jatabs in comparison with all other castes. But this is because the Jatabs have improved

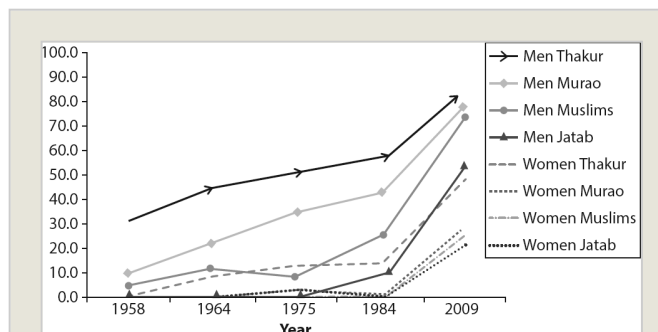


Figure 15.1 Change in Literacy Rates for Major Castes in Palanpur: 1958-2009

Source: Graph created by authors using field survey data of Palanpur (1958-2009).

## Gender

from a very low base. It is well known that the scope for improving human development indicators is narrower and becomes more and more difficult at higher levels of human development, and therefore percentage change is not a good measure. Other indices, such as the Sen 'improvement index', have therefore been proposed to take account of the initial level of the outcome indicator and measure the change in relation to that (Chakraborty 2011; Sen 1981). This improvement index is based on the formula

$$(X_2 - X_1)/(X_{\max} - X_1),$$

where  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  are the indicator values in the initial year and the final year, respectively, and  $X_{\max}$  is the chosen upper bound (100 per cent in the case of literacy rate). This is based on Sen (1981) where he takes the absolute shortfall of literacy from some chosen upper bound and then (p.418) examines the percentage decline of this shortfall. The improvement index of the literacy rate for each caste between 1984 and 2009 is shown in Table 15.2. It shows that, among the major castes, the improvement is fastest for the Thakurs, followed by the Muraos with the Jatabs being way behind—much lower than the average improvement level of the village. What this shows is that although the literacy rates are improving for all the castes, the rate at which the literacy rates for Jatabs is increasing has to be much higher if they are to catch up with the higher castes.

Looking at the access to private and public schools by caste and gender (Table 15.3) it is seen that a much higher percentage of boys and girls from the Thakur and Muraos caste attend private schools compared to Jatabs. The gender bias also becomes clear when the attendance of children is classified between private and public school attendance. There is a clear pattern that shows that within each caste, parents send their male child to a private fee-paying school while girl children are sent to free government education institutions. Thirty per cent and 20 per cent of all girls among Thakurs and Muraos respectively are going to private schools but none among Jatabs. Among boys 39 per cent Thakur children, 32 per cent among the Muraos, and 25 per cent among the Jatabs are sent to private schools. This reflects the

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**Table 15.2 Improvement in Literacy Rates, 1984-2009**

Caste	Literacy Rate (Men)		Literacy Rate (Women)		Sen's Improvement Index 1984-2009	
	1984	2009	1984	2009	Men	Women
Thakur	56.7	82.6	15.1	48.3	81.34	48.10
Murao	43.2	78.9	1.3	28.3	78.10	28.32
Dhimar	26.5	74.0	0.0	35.7	73.64	35.71
Gadariya	36.7	70.3	13.2	31.7	69.69	31.56
Dhobi	12.5	60.0	0.0	0.0	59.86	0.00
Teli	27.9	78.6	0.0	32.2	78.18	32.20
Passi	47.2	75.0	9.1	36.4	74.11	36.26
Jatab	7.5	51.3	0.0	21.7	51.17	21.74
Other	38.9	82.4	47.4	33.3	81.72	32.43
Total	37.6	73.6	8.7	33.1	73.03	32.97

**Source:** Calculated using field survey data.

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**Table 15.3 Percentage of Children Going to Public and Private Institutions by Sex, 2009**

Caste	Boys		Girls	
	Private	Public	Private	Public
Thakur	39.0	61.0	30.8	69.2
Murao	32.4	67.6	20.0	80.0
Dhimar	21.4	78.6	0.0	100.0
Gadariya	53.8	46.2	20.0	80.0
Dhobi	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Teli	50.0	50.0	9.1	90.9
Passi	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Jatab	25.0	75.0	0.0	100.0
Other	16.7	83.3	50.0	50.0
Total	32.7	67.3	18.4	81.6

**Source:** Calculated using field survey data.

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**Gender** caste and the gender differentials in relation to education—it shows that parents give greater priority to boys' education and therefore a higher number of boys are sent to private schools, which are perceived to be of better quality.

Further, it also shows that with the poor functioning of the government school, the better-off are shifting towards private schools. The people who can afford it are exercising their choice of what is perceived as better quality education even if they have to pay for it. This is one of the ways by which families are dealing independently with the lack of good quality government education service in the village.

The Sopher's index in literacy rate throws further light on the gender and caste inequality in education. The higher the value of the Sopher's index, the greater the inequality (in case of perfect equality the value is zero). Table 15.4 on the modified Sopher's Inequality index<sup>25</sup> shows the trends in gender inequality between male and female literacy from 1958 to 2009 for all ages and also for the 7-15 age group. The inequality in the 7-15 age group reflects the status of (p.420)

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**Table 15.4 Values of Sopher's Index for Literacy Rates between Men and Women: 1958-2009**

Caste	Age group	1958	1964	1974	1984	1993	2009
Thakurs	7-15		0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	(-0.2)
	all ages		0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.3
Muraos	7-15			1.0	1.1	2.3	0.5
	all ages			1.1	1.6	2.8	1.4
Jatabs	7-15						0.2
	all ages			0.47	1.35		0.5
All Castes	7-15		0.5	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.1
	all ages	1.3	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.4	0.5

**Source:** Created by authors using field survey data of Palanpur (1958-2009).

*Note:* The blank cells are years where women's literacy was nil and hence inequality was 100 per cent.

**Gender** gender discrimination in education in Palanpur village more clearly, since this age group does not have any women from other villages who are married into the village.

For all castes, the gender gap has gone down from 1.3 in 1958 to 0.5 in 2009. For the 7-15 age group, the gap is fairly low being just 0.1. Thakurs and Muraos have done considerably well from no women (p.421) literate in 1958 to a smaller gender gap of 0.3 and 1.4 currently.<sup>26</sup> Jatabs too show some improvement in the gender gap in literacy between 1984 and 2009. Overall, it is seen that while the gender inequality in education is going down within each caste, across castes the inequality is higher as we go down the caste hierarchy among the 7-15 years old. It must also be noted that among Jatabs, 7-15 years old girls have started reporting education only in the latest round. This divergence between castes in social indicators is one of the factors that could explain the lack of collective action by the villagers.

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Gender Different Aspects of Gender Inequality<sup>27</sup>

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After the initial visits to Palanpur, the impression was that there was nothing likely to be particularly surprising about women's lives in the village. The writings based on earlier surveys also suggested that women's status in the village was very slow to improve. In the context of discussing change in gender relations over the survey period, Drèze, Lanjouw and Sharma (1998) write: 'These perceived changes in gender relations, however, are small in relation to the persistent inequalities. And the basic framework has remained remarkably stable over the survey period ... boy preference continues unabated.... Similarly there has been no change in women's roles in the family and society, or in their freedom of movement and action' (p. 222).

There are still few women seen out on the streets, there is an obvious boy preference, *purdah* is still practiced, and very few worked outside the home for a wage, and so on. However, there were subtle changes that we slowly observed. For instance, there was a woman who had completed her postgraduate studies and was working as a teacher in the government school. There was another woman in Palanpur who was widowed and living with her parents and fighting a legal battle (p.422) with her husband's family<sup>28</sup> for her share in the property. There was another woman whose husband was working in the army and posted in Kashmir, who was handling all the affairs of agriculture and the land they owned herself. Many older women talked about how (in the old days) they could not even sit down or speak if their fathers-in-law were anywhere around. But now younger women, in spite of continuing to practice *purdah*, could sometimes give their opinion on household issues.

Apart from education, a very important aspect of social life is the nature of occupation and the division of labour between men and women. In this chapter we present the broad findings on women's work, while further work on this is planned. Based on data collected at the household level it is seen that there are very few women (above 15 years of age) reported as participating in the labour force. The primary occupation of most of the women is domestic work. While the primary occupation of more than 95 per cent women in 1984 and 1993 was reported as being domestic work, this decreased to 88 per cent in 2009. However, rather than due to an increase in

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**Gender** labour force participation, this was because of the increase in the number of women for whom no occupation was reported in 2009. These were either women who were unmarried or older than 60.

In 2009, the primary occupations for a slightly higher number of women were reported as being cultivation. However, in 1984 cultivation was the secondary occupation for 21 women (7 in 1993 and 18 in 2009). There are two women in government service in 1993 and three in 2009. These are the anganwadi worker, anganwadi helper (both existed in 1993 as well), and shiksha mitra. After the survey in 2009, one woman was appointed as the ASHA worker.

While information on the main and subsidiary occupations of all members of the family was collected along with the general information for the household, which was usually provided by an adult male, during the 'women's round', all women in the reproductive age were also asked about whether they did any work outside the home. These (p.423)

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**Table 15.5 Women's Occupation in Palanpur: 1984 to 2009**

Women's Occupation (all women aged 15 and above)	Primary Occupation			Secondary Occupation			
	1984	1993	2009	1984	1993	2009	
Domestic Work		245	301	327	2	5	11
Cultivation		1	0	7	21	7	18
Agriculture labour		1	2	2	0	0	3
Non-agriculture labour		1	0	2	0	0	0
Non-agriculture Self-employed (Tailor/ Shopkeeper)		0	1	0	5	1	4
Government Service		0	2	3	0	0	0
Jajmani/village sweeper		1	1	0	0	1	0
None		9	6	32	230	299	337
Total women		258	313	373	258	313	373

**Source:** Calculated from field survey data.

**Gender** interviews were conducted by women where the respondents were also women themselves. In these interviews, more time was spent on the different work women do. The findings based on this data show more number of women working, although the labour force participation is still very low.

Of the 224 women in the reproductive age who were interviewed, only 42 said that they were engaged in any kind of paid work in the last one year. Of these 25 did work for which they were paid in kind and the remaining 16 were paid in cash. Therefore, about 19 per cent of the women were engaged in paid work.<sup>29</sup>

Among women who did any paid work, the highest were among Jatabs (15), followed by Muraos (10). Only two Thakur women reported ever having done any paid work. Of which, one was the village health worker (ASHA) appointed under the government's National Rural Health Mission and the other was working as a teacher (shiksha-mitra) in the school. Two Kayastha women were employed as the anganwadi worker and the anganwadi helper. The Jatab and Muraos women were mainly involved in agriculture labour, while some Jatab women also went along with their families for a few months in a year to work in the brick kilns. (p.424)

### Age at Marriage

The age at marriage, especially for women, is still quite low in India and in UP. According to the NFHS-3 data, 53 per cent of all women aged 18-29 in rural India (59 per cent in UP) were married by the age of 18 (IIPS 2007). Age at marriage has an impact on fertility and also women's autonomy. Standard marriage practices, such as caste endogamy, village exogamy, hypergamy, and patrilocality<sup>30</sup> remain in Palanpur as in most parts of rural North India. While the parents still made the decision on who their daughter should marry, in some cases women did mention that their parents would ask them for their consent before finalizing the match. However, this does not yet mean that the girl and boy get to meet and talk before the marriage. One change that people did mention was that now there was a greater 'demand' for 'educated' girls, especially among Thakurs, and this was one of the reasons why parents felt it was important to send their daughters to school.

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Many factors influence age at marriage (dowry, number of siblings and rank, network, schooling, etc.). Although the average age of marriage is still low, it is slowly increasing in Palanpur. Even though the age at marriage was not directly asked in the 1984 and 1993 surveys, the marital status of all village inhabitants was reported. Figure 15.2 indicates that there is a change in the age of marriage between 1984 and 2009. In 1984, 44 per cent of the girls aged 15-17 in the village were married; this came down to 18 per cent in 1993, whereas none of the girls in this age group was married in 2009. Such a difference is also seen in the 18-20 and 21-23 age groups. Ninety-one per cent of girls aged 18-20 were married in 1984 compared to 73 per cent in 1993 (p.425)

and 45 per cent in 2009. There were no unmarried girls in the village in the age group of 21-23 in 1984; in 1993, 81 per cent of girls aged 21-23 were married, compared to 59 per cent in 2009. In the higher age groups, up to 29 years, there are still a few unmarried

women in 2009 whereas all women of this age group were married women in 1984 and 1993. All women above 30 years of age were either married or widowed in all three survey years reported here. The fertility rate in Palanpur has also decreased over time from 0.87 in 1984 to 0.72 in 2009 (Watine 2008).

### Women's Autonomy

Defining and measuring 'autonomy' or 'empowerment' is a complicated issue. It is however important to keep in mind that talking about the status of women is not always appropriate as it is a multidimensional concept spanning the social, economic, political, and psychological sectors

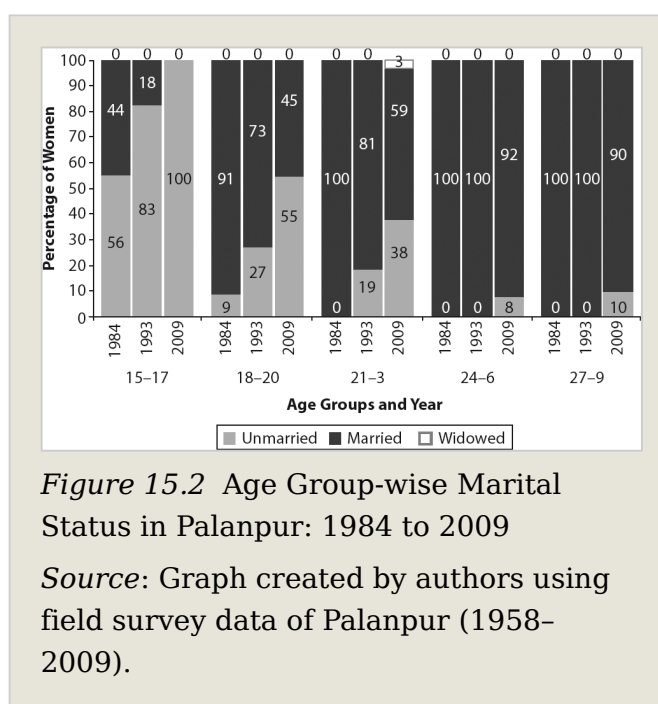


Figure 15.2 Age Group-wise Marital Status in Palanpur: 1984 to 2009

Source: Graph created by authors using field survey data of Palanpur (1958-2009).

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**Gender** (Jejeebhoy 2000; Kabeer 2001; Mason 1986, 2005). We present the different indicators on which data were collected, separately without trying to construct one indicator of women's autonomy. (p.426)

**Table 15.6 Indicators of Autonomy among Women in Palanpur: 2008**

Indicator	Per cent of Women (of 217)
<b>Economic Decision-Making:</b>	
Have a say in spending	74
Have cash in hand for expenses	88
Have land in own name	8
Have a bank/post office account in own name	18
<b>Mobility (can go the following places alone)</b>	
Local market	31
Village doctor	62
Fields outside the village	53
Relative's house	61
Village temple	70
Nearby shrine	21
Parents' house	49
Health centre	33
<b>Exposure to Media (Ever)</b>	
Read newspapers	6
Listens to radio	26
Watches TV	34
Ever gone to cinema	11
<b>Participation to civic life</b>	
Been to government office (outside or in Palanpur)	14
Voted in last elections	78

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**Source: Calculated using field survey data.**

An important aspect of women's autonomy is whether they have control over how the household resources are spent. As seen in Table 15.6, whereas 3 out of 4 women say they have a say in household expenditures and 88 per cent get cash in hand, only 8 per cent have any land in their name, and only 18 per cent have a bank account. We asked women whether they could go alone to a list of commonly visited places. The place where women can most often go alone is the village temple (70 per cent), followed by the village doctor (62 per cent), relatives or friends in the village (61 per cent) and the fields outside the (p.427) village (53 per cent).<sup>31</sup> One woman out of two can go alone to visit her parents (49 per cent). The places where fewer women can go alone are the health centre outside the village (33 per cent), the local market in the village (31 per cent), and the shrine or market outside the village (21 per cent).

Mobility varies a lot depending on what caste women belong to. Jatab women are most free to go where they want to in almost every category and Thakurs are at the bottom of the list in terms of mobility. The practice of purdah is also most stringent amongst the Thakurs and least among Jatabs.

Women were asked whether they read a newspaper or magazine, listen to the radio, or watch television and if they did, how frequently they did so. Fourteen women (6 per cent) said that they read the newspaper, of which one does it every day and three at least once a week. 57 women (26 per cent) listen to the radio, most of them (40 women) almost every day. 74 women (34 per cent) watch television, half of them almost every day, 16 of them at least once a week, and 21 less than once a week. We also asked women whether they had ever gone to a cinema hall or theatre to see a movie and only 24 women (11 per cent) said they did. On TV, women mostly watched daily serials ('soaps') or Hindi films, and on radio listened to songs from Hindi films. Although they did not watch 'news' or other informational programmes, watching TV gave them an exposure to the 'outside world'. Some women also told us that they got to know about immunization, child care, and so on from the advertisements on the radio.

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Seventy-eight per cent of Palanpur women voted in the last elections (panchayat elections), which is quite a high participation rate. When asked if they have ever been to a government/panchayat office in their village, or in a government office outside the village, 86 per cent of them said no. The women were also asked whether they had ever attended a gram sabha or any such meeting in the village or ever gone for a public meeting/political meeting/rally outside the village, but there were no positive answers for the first question and only two for the second one. (p.428) There was a whole section about women's participation in any kind of associational activities, including self-help groups, mahila mandals, and so on. But none of the women reported being part of any association.

Based on whatever little data are available from the previous Palanpur surveys, it is seen that while there has been a positive change in women's status, it is probably not as much as is seen in other aspects of village life. Two aspects in which the change can be seen statistically is the age of marriage, which has increased, and schooling among girls, which has also increased significantly. On the other hand, while there are no comparable data, it is clear that on aspects such as mobility, decision-making, etc., women's lives are still very restricted. The same can be said also with regard to participation in the workforce and property rights.

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## Politics in the Village

As seen in the previous sections, the village society in Palanpur continues to have several inequalities in social and economic fronts. As a result of this, there are very few people in the village who are able to influence the village's collective agenda and are generally seen as 'spokespersons' with the outside world. It is this group of about 10-12 men who usually visit the government offices at the block or higher levels if there is something that the village needs; who influence the way different groups of people vote at the panchayat elections, and so on. It is also generally seen that anyone who has the support of these people can get away with a lot of wrongdoing as well (for example, the school teacher). This is of course a simplistic presentation; even within this group of persons, there are differences and power struggles, often determined by caste affiliations. The equation differs from time to time, depending on the issue and the personal interests of these individuals. When the issues in question are beneficial to all the castes, it is more likely that there is some collective action by villagers.

No political party has any significant presence in the village. There is some political consciousness among the Jatabs that they belong to the same caste as the then Chief Minister Mayawati. Many in the village (including Jatabs themselves) observed that the Jatabs had become more vocal and were generally more confident in voicing their opinions after the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) won with a big majority in 2007. However, there is no organized group or branch of the BSP in (p.429) the village. Some villagers have access to some political leaders and, in case of any problems, approach them for help. For instance, some of the Muslims have access to a minister from the same caste and they approach him sometimes, even taking along villagers from other castes when they need help. The general feeling in the village is that, because it is a small village with not many votes, political parties are not interested in investing any time there.

During our period of stay in the village, there were two incidents, which can be seen as positive examples of collective action by the villagers. Both these incidents helped us understand how the power dynamics in the village work. These cases showed us some insights on what provokes people

**Gender** in the village to get together and take action. It also showed that such action can be effective.

## Case Study 1: Removal and Re-election of the Pradhan

The first was the case where the existing pradhan was impeached by the village community. In the 2007 panchayat elections, the post of the pradhan of the gram panchayat in Palanpur was reserved for candidates from the SC community. While Jatavs are the majority SC group in Palanpur, the election was won by Mahesh<sup>32</sup> from the Valmiki community. It was widely understood that he won because of the support he had from the powerful people in the village, including those from the upper castes and Muslims.

However, in about two years this pradhan became very unpopular with the same people who were supporting him, leading a mobilization to get him removed. The charges against him were that he did not do anything for the village; he was very corrupt and usurped a large share of the funds that came to the village. The antagonism however was not purely because Mahesh did no development work, as the previous headmen did not do much either. Nor was it that he showed favouritism in allocating government benefits. This was also the practice earlier. For instance, many villagers reported that under the previous pradhan, one of the richest persons in the village owning a tractor, thresher, mentha plant, etc. got a grant under the IAY because of his proximity with the pradhan. (p.430)

Therefore, while it is not the case that the previous pradhans were not corrupt, what worked against this one was twofold. First, he did not include any of the powerful people in the village in what he was doing, not even those who propped him up as the pradhan in the first place. For instance, it was during his tenure that the school midday meal was completely stopped while most people knew that the foodgrains continued to be supplied for this purpose. It was rumoured that this was one of the main reasons for the fallout between the pradhan and the local school teacher, an influential member of the village. While corruption was the explicit reason given for the anger against the pradhan, it could also be argued that there was such a mobilization also because he was from the SC and yet defied the local power structures.

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Second, he also indulged in petty corruption with almost no patronage to anyone in the village. He asked for money or liquor even for petty jobs, such as signing a document or certificate. He was drunk most of the time and would pass lewd comments on women passing by. As a result, the level of anger among the entire village community was very high and when a campaign began that he should be impeached, there was widespread support. This became the topic of discussion in the village for a few weeks, with almost everyone except four or five households, being against the pradhan. Even the women were quite vocal about how he needed to be removed and there was an effective campaign amongst the women as well.

While a large number of people in the village wanted him removed, the process of impeachment was long-drawn-out and the result of a lot of effort by some of the villagers over more than four months. The villagers collected details of funds that came to the village using the Right to Information Act (RTI) and filed complaints against the pradhan at the BDO office with detailed charges of irregularities. An enquiry was ordered and the enquiry team found that even on the date of enquiry, no midday meal was served. Following this, an application for a no-confidence motion against Mahesh was submitted to the district magistrate in Moradabad, signed by 530 people from the village, including all the gram panchayat members. Simultaneously a similar process was undertaken towards the removal of the PDS dealer. The pradhan was finally impeached by an overwhelming majority of 416 to 27.

Elections were held for a new pradhan after three weeks, which Mahesh also contested again. While there were a few other candidates (p.431) in the fray, once again the 'elders' decided who would have their support. Ranjit, the candidate who came a close second in the previous election, was the chosen candidate. He was the son of Lakshman, who is a good friend of Ganesh Maurya, who allegedly ensured that nobody else filed a nomination. There was intense campaigning by Mahesh, where he not only apologized for his previous misdeeds and promised to reform himself, but also distributed a lot of liquor and allegedly cash as well. Out of 491 votes cast, Mahesh got 90 while Ranjit got 401 votes.

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At the end of Ranjit's term the pradhan's post was once again reserved, this time for a woman candidate. Other than formally filling the papers in a woman's name, the entire contest and campaign was for and by the husbands. While one of the active persons in the village (Naseem, a Muslim) with a reputation of being honest and hardworking, filed a nomination in his wife's name, the post was ultimately won by a Thakur woman who lives outside the village. Naseem claimed that although he was promised support by many of the powerful people in the village, who also worked with him closely for the removal of Mahesh, they ultimately ended up putting their weight behind an ex-army officer from the village who lives in Moradabad. In our discussions with some of the key people in the village, they said that they favoured the army officer because he lived outside, had worked in the army, and was already rich and therefore did not need to make money from the panchayat. In conversation with some of them, when we visited the village recently, they even let it slip out that Naseem was not supported because he was a Muslim. The Thakur's wife who lives outside won the election and the panchayat is now managed by her nephew. The impression some villagers have is that he also is corrupt and siphons off funds but at the same time is active and has helped make some improvements, such as the construction of pucca roads, concrete around wells, and a drainage system in the village.

#### Case Study 2: Dealing with the Monkey Menace

One of the problems that have been plaguing the village was that of monkeys. This was not a problem at the time of the previous survey held in 1993. Since then, over time a number of monkeys came into the village. The reasons given were that monkeys were attracted to Palanpur because of the presence of the station, resulting in people from trains passing (p.432) by feeding them. It was also surmised that people from nearby villages stealthily diverted and brought monkeys from their villages and left them in Palanpur to get rid of them. While this appears to be a trivial issue, in fact, it was causing severe disruption to daily lives. The monkey menace changed the cropping pattern in Palanpur—people could no more grow vegetables or groundnuts, which used to be grown before. People needed to guard the farms all the time before the harvest. Someone had to stand guard all the time when women were cooking; this was the duty of children (with sticks). Eighty-four cases of monkey bites were reported in the one-

**Gender** year period before the survey. The monkeys were a constant source of menace for even those of us visiting the village for the survey and we had to always be careful if we were carrying any food with us.

In spite of such inconvenience, it was surprising to find that there was never any attempt to arrive at a collective solution to the problem. People did not even try to stop those from other villages coming and leaving monkeys in Palanpur. Some temporary solutions were worked out by those who could afford it. For instance, in some better-off upper-caste homes, they built barricades around the cooking area and in some farms, people bought big guard dogs.

After about a year of staying in the village, the research team suggested to the villagers that there was a possibility of contacting the forest department to come and round up the monkeys, take them away from the village, and release them in a natural habitat conducive for their survival. This motivated the village community to get together to solve the difficulties they were facing due to the monkey menace. Under the leadership of a few influential people, the village got together and collected funds from every household. A detailed formula was worked out where each family had to contribute according to their means. Many of the people from the village volunteered time and joined the professional monkey-trapping team that came to the village. Trapping was done under the supervision of forest department officials and a doctor. The whole operation went on for a few days and, according to the forest department's count, over 900 monkeys were caught by them and left in the forest.

Both these examples show that collective action is possible when the issue affects most of the village population and gets support from the (p.433) influential people as well. In the case of the monkey menace, there was also the limited role played by the researchers in giving information and suggesting action.

This chapter makes two preliminary propositions. First, that a reason for the slow human development improvements in Palanpur is the failure of public services. Secondly, that the lack of collective action in the village towards improving public services is a result of high social fragmentation

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**Gender** especially based on caste and gender. Overall, both these propositions are evident across the state of UP.

Much like the rest of UP, Palanpur has experienced some improvements in human development outcomes during the same period. There is improvement in literacy rates (although lower than in rest of the state and country) in the recent two decades, with health outcomes showing slower progress. There have been greater investments in education and health by central and state governments through various programmes, which are reflected in better buildings and infrastructure. However, there are large gaps in the functioning of public services. Both, the school and health centre are understaffed; absenteeism is a huge problem; and the quality of services are largely poor. In Palanpur, as in UP, it is found that there is hardly any public uproar against such poor services although people individually express dissatisfaction over the state of affairs. It is worth mentioning here that this is not the situation uniformly across the country. Particularly in states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, researchers have documented how there is pressure from below, where it is unacceptable for public services to be in such a poor condition. Further, in these states as well as others, the public services are of much better quality and see greater participation by people (for example, see Sinha 2013; Srinivasan 2014).

The high level of social fragmentation, especially based on caste and gender, makes it difficult for any issue to become a common concern for the majority of the people. Further, it has been seen that only when those who are powerful or have some voice within the village take up an issue that people are able to get mobilized around it. Such people in Palanpur are usually male and upper caste. In many ways these people drive the agenda of the village. They are the ones who are able to access officials and politicians outside the village and also influence opinion in the village. (p.434)

The inadequate services of education and health in the village have until now failed to become important concerns. People who are able to afford it, use private services to overcome the lack of public facilities. Therefore, they have lower value toward improvement of public services in the village. Those who depend on public services are poorer socio-economic

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**Gender** groups and unable to mobilize efforts to seek improvements. They also aspire to move away to the private sector as soon as they are able to afford it.

In some instances, the villagers have shown that they can mobilize themselves and get things done. They were able to fight a corrupt pradhan and ensure that he was removed. Similarly, they were able to come together to get rid of the monkeys in the village through the participation of almost everyone in the village. In both of these cases, the 'leaders' were the same and it is when they were convinced to act that some mobilization for change happened. While the identity of the 'leaders' has until now been largely determined by caste, gender, wealth, and education this is also dynamic. There are new entrants who are beginning to become influential in the village. With increasing literacy (amongst men and women), and more people going outside the village for work, we can expect that there will be some change in the village dynamics. At the same time, political developments in the state, such as the rising influence of the BSP, it has been seen, can make it possible for those from the most vulnerable groups (Jatabs) to feel encouraged and raise their voices.

It will be interesting to see in future rounds of surveys, how changes that are occurring in Palanpur in gender and caste relations, brought about by improvements in literacy and external political influences, might provide avenues for collective action in the village, if at all. As mentioned earlier, this chapter is only exploring these issues; further work is required to arrive at any firm conclusions. It is also reiterated that this story of social fragmentation, lack of collective action, and failure of public services are only some of the dimensions that explain the problem of slow human development improvements in Palanpur.

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### Notes:

(\*) This work is based on a programme of work in Palanpur, a village in the Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh. There are now six surveys of the village, one for every decade since Independence, the most recent being 2008-10. We are very grateful to Nicholas Stern, Himanshu, Peter Lanjouw, Jean Drèze, and the entire team of research assistants and interns at Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH), Delhi for their guidance, advice, and support. The work is supported by a grant from The Department for International Development (DFID), to whom we are very grateful.

<sup>(1)</sup> For details on earlier surveys and findings, see Lanjouw and Stern (1998). Chapters 5 and 11 in this book also related to the Palanpur village survey.

<sup>(2)</sup> For more details on economic changes in the village, see Chapters 5 and 11 that are related to the Palanpur village study, in this book.

Gender <sup>(3)</sup> These developments were noticed during recent visits to the village (in 2014).

<sup>(4)</sup> The Census of India treats a person aged 7 and above who can both read and write with understanding, in any language, as literate. The same definition has been used here.

<sup>(5)</sup> See Kattumuri and Tiwari (2011) for more data on literacy in Palanpur.

<sup>(6)</sup> The earlier IMR estimates were computed using the 'children ever born, children surviving' method (Drèze and Sharma 1998). The latest estimates of IMR are calculated using World Bank's Child Survival Rate (Pierre 2011). The formula is:

$$S_j = \prod_{k=1}^j \frac{n_k - d_k}{n_k - \frac{c_k}{2}}$$

Using the children born in the last 10 years, the data is aggregated into semester intervals  $j$  (1, 2 ...  $j$ ) where  $n_k$  is number of children at risk during a particular interval,  $d_k$  is number of children dead in that interval, and those who were born within the semester interval, that is,  $c_k$  and therefore, are not fully exposed to risk are censored children. Still births or miscarriages are not taken into account while calculating IMR. Survival Rate is first calculated from the life table using the formula. Then (1-Survival Rate) gives the mortality rate.

<sup>(7)</sup> The IMR of rural UP and Palanpur for 1991 are from Lanjouw and Stern (1998). IMR data for 2009 is from GoI (2011).

<sup>(8)</sup> The village survey of Palanpur started in 1957 with the latest being 2008-10. The term 'survey period' here refers to the entire '1957-2010' interval with six rounds of surveys at an average ten years interval.

<sup>(9)</sup> Since the private schools are outside Palanpur, we did not get an opportunity to observe them as intensively.

<sup>(10)</sup> The Shiksha Mitra scheme was started in UP to provide para teachers for primary schools as a part of the Basic Education Project in 1993 to compensate for the lack of adequate teachers.

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**Gender** <sup>(11)</sup> The head of the panchayat (elected local body) is called the pradhan. In 2009, a new pradhan was elected in the village following the impeachment of the previous pradhan.

<sup>(12)</sup> An anganwadi (courtyard) centre is a government-sponsored child and mother-care centre in India for children in the 0-6 age group. It started in 1975 as a part of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) of the central government.

<sup>(13)</sup> Bilari and Chandausi are nearby towns approximately 3 km and 13 km south of Palanpur respectively.

<sup>(14)</sup> Out of pocket expenditure includes medicines, fees for doctors, and other extra charges of treatment for non-institutionalized medical care. It doesn't include hospitalization and related costs.

<sup>(15)</sup> This is very high compared to rural UP (10 per cent in 2004-5 based on NSSO data). However, this is possibly because of the familiarity of the respondents with the investigators resulting in better reporting.

<sup>(16)</sup> During the survey in 1983-4 there was a government health centre in Akrauli but it was not very functional even then (this was probably a sub-centre). When we did the survey in 2008-10, nobody mentioned a health centre in Akrauli. It was only after we completed the survey that a new building was constructed and a PHC inaugurated here.

<sup>(17)</sup> MGNREGA or the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act started in 2005 in a limited number of districts and expanded later. It is a job guarantee scheme for the rural population providing 100 days of work per household at not less than minimum wages based on demand from the beneficiaries; failing which they are eligible for monetary compensation. Every rural household is eligible to get a 'job card' under this scheme, which registers demand for work, work provided, and wages given, and so on.

<sup>(18)</sup> The rozgar-sevak is the frontline worker for the administration of the MGNREGA. For implementation of the act (MGNREGA), the State Government recruits rozgar-sevaks on contract through Block Development Officers (BDOs) in agreement with the pradhan. They help the technical person

**Gender** to strengthen the MGNREGA works and also other official works related to MGNREGA.

(<sup>19</sup>) Under the PDS, foodgrains and kerosene are provided at subsidized prices to targeted consumers. The number of eligible beneficiaries is identified using a cut-off of the poverty line. Those below poverty line (BPL) receive grains at very low prices (procurement, handling, and distribution are paid by the government) and those above poverty line (APL) at about double the BPL prices. There is another special category of households marked as the poorest of the poor who are provided foodgrains at subsidized cost by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).

(<sup>20</sup>) See Himanshu, Bakshi, and Dufour (2011) for details

(<sup>21</sup>) A housing scheme for the rural poor.

(<sup>22</sup>) As will be seen below, this later became an example for the success of collective action.

(<sup>23</sup>) See Drèze and Sharma (1998) for more details.

(<sup>24</sup>) The proportion of the number of households to total households.

(<sup>25</sup>) Modified David Sopher's Index (Kundu and Rao 1983) of inequality shows the inequality between men's and women's literacy rates. The formula used is

$$D_s = \log \frac{X_2}{X_1} + \log \left[ \frac{200 - X_1}{200 - X_2} \right]$$

where  $X_1$  is the literacy rate of the usually deprived group—in this case women's literacy—and  $X_2$  is the literacy rate of dominant group—in this case men. The index is 0 when the literacy rate is the same for both groups and increases as inequality increases. It is appropriate to observe changes in inequality levels over time as the index satisfies both the additive monotonicity axiom (addition of any constant to the series should reduce inequality) and more importantly the multiplicative monotonicity axiom - which means if the indicators in question increase with their ratio intact, the inequality should not go down. For example, if time 1 has 10 per cent women and 20 per cent men literates and time 2 has 30 per cent and 60 per cent women and men literates the inequality should not be lower in time 2. Sopher's Index satisfies this axiom and is therefore suitable for a trend

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**Gender** analysis. In this paper Sopher's Index is calculated between men and women's literacy rates separately for each caste for all ages and the 7-15 age group.

(<sup>26</sup>) The negative sign in 7-15 group of Thakurs is due to a small sample; although in absolute numbers, boys are more literate than girls, percentage terms show greater female literacy in that age group for Thakurs.

(<sup>27</sup>) This section is based on the analysis presented in Sinha and Coppoletta (2011).

(<sup>28</sup>) This woman's natal village is Palanpur, whereas her marital village is a slight distance away in the same district. While she went to live with her husband's family post-marriage, after his death she moved back to Palanpur.

(<sup>29</sup>) Further information on the exact nature of work that women were engaged can be got from the detailed diaries that were maintained for a sample of the households. These data are yet to be analysed.

(<sup>30</sup>) A young woman is married to a boy of the same caste (caste endogamy), in another village (village exogamy), preferably to a family of somewhat higher status (hypergamy) and after marriage, she leaves her parental village and is incorporated in her husband's family (patrilocality). In Palanpur, these practices apply to all castes (with some exceptional cases) (Drèze and Sharma 1998).

(<sup>31</sup>) Women would go to fields outside the village to take meals to workers, to do farm work, to gather/cut grass for the cattle. Since there are very few households in Palanpur which have toilets, so women also have to go to the fields to relieve themselves.

(<sup>32</sup>) All names have been changed.