Nomads:
The Marginalized Citizens

A Participatory Research on Meanings and Expressions of Rights and Citizenship amongst Nomadic Communities in Rajasthan

Nomads:
The Marginalized Citizens

A Participatory Research on Meanings and Expressions of Rights and Citizenship amongst Nomadic Communities in Rajasthan

Mandakini Pant

Foreword

Development Research Centre (DRC) on Citizenship, Participation and
Accountability is a research partnership based at the Institute of
Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, U.K, which brings together research
institutions and practice based civil society groups from India, Brazil, South
Africa, Mexico and Nigeria from the South and the U.K from the North.
DRC project explores the issues of poverty, exclusion and marginalisation
within the framework of rights and citizenship. 'Making rights real for poor
people' is what DRC project aims at and it seeks to contribute to this goal
through research, dissemination, policy influence and capacity building.

PRIA entered into this partnership in 2001. As part of DRC, PRIA continues
to conduct research studies relating to various aspects of citizenship,
participation and accountability.

We are happy to bring out this publication as part of DRC study report series
and we do hope that the readers will find this exercise beneficial.

March, 2004   **Rajesh Tandon**
President, PRIA
New Delhi

Preface

The present report is an outcome of PRIA's research study on **Meanings and Expressions of Rights and Citizenship amongst Nomadic Communities in Rajasthan.** In this the current citizenship status of nomads in the Alwar district of Rajasthan in Western India, has been studied viz. Gadiya Lohar, Banjara, Bhopa, and Bawariya, and their mobilization for articulating their claims for civil rights. This is in keeping with PRIA's belief that the generation of study and knowledge about the marginalized and poor citizens must happen from source. It should be based on, and should reflect, their felt needs and priorities, their perceptions about their own condition, their own experiences regarding citizenship status, their concerns about the inclusion of their rights in the development agenda, and their expectations of the changes that ought to take place.

This report is organized in three sections. **Section I - Context** provides the introduction, context, objectives, research questions, conceptual framework and research methodology. **Section II - Key Findings** focuses on the nomads' vocalization of (a) their problems and priorities in the interrelated contexts of land, shelter, livelihood, rights and entitlements, and inter-community relationships, and (b) their interactions with institutions, both state and civil society institutions, in accessing the resources and opportunities. **Section III - Emerging Issues** interprets the findings and draws lessons from it.

We have been helped by a large number of people during the research and writing of the study report. We take this opportunity to acknowledge this debt. Muktidhara Sansthan helped and supported us in this study. Muktidhara Sansthan, is a NGO based in Viratnagar, Jaipur and works for nomads primarily in Alwar, and also to some extent in the Jaipur, Bharatpur and Dausa districts. It has been involved in the rehabilitation and resettlement of nomads for the past two decades. We are grateful to Muktidhara for their help and association.

This participatory research could not have been possible without the active support and involvement of the nomads, mainly of Alwar district. We dedicate this study report to them.

We also benefited from the ideas of our DRC partners through e-mail, correspondence and interaction with them during meetings, workshops and international conferences periodically organized by IDS.

Mandakini Pant

Section 1
Introduction

Renewed concerns on citizenship, question the centrality of citizens' rights in the legal, constitutional, and political framework. Is 'citizen' an abstract or passive subject, upon whom 'the state' bestows rights of accessing resources and opportunities? Whether the specific social positioning of citizens is crucial to the determination of their citizenship identities? Citizenship in the statutory sense confers on citizens a juridical status and a kind of political identity, as members of a nationstate and generally subsumes the equality of all citizens. All citizens formally possess civil, political and social rights and entitlements, which enable them to be a member of a nationstate, to be able to participate in matters that govern their lives and to appreciate community life.

Constitutional equality, however, glosses over the prevailing inequalities amongst and within, various sections of citizenry based on their socio-economic and community positioning. These subjective and contradictory experiences emerging out of such positioning have a crucial influence on the nature of their citizenship status. When any of the citizenship rights and entitlements is inhibited, withheld or violated, people become marginalized. They are unable to participate and enjoy the substantive benefits of citizenship. They become powerless to effectively articulate the demand for rights and entitlements. The lack of citizenship rights and entitlements and the inability to articulate the demand for it produces exclusionary forms of citizenship. The vast populace of marginalized people - poor, low caste, tribal, women have not been able to benefit from the general and special provisions in their nations' Constitutions with regard to their citizenship rights and entitlements.

How do such people see themselves as citizens? How is the citizenship identity related to the issues of rights and citizen participation? A study of the meanings and expressions of rights and citizenship must go beyond policy analyses to citizens themselves, understand their perceptions of citizenship rights and identities; and then evaluate the impact of such perceptions on their lives and on the form of their participation.

The present study on Meanings and Expressions of Rights and Citizenship amongst Nomadic Communities in Rajasthan explores the issue of citizenship identities from the vantage point of nomads. It generally examines the nomads' quest for an inclusive citizenship in the context of their social exclusion. In particular, it deliberates on their expressions of demands to bring to the fore their interests, concerns and priorities in the implementation and formulation of affirmative government policies.

Context

Nomads form un-rooted communities, moving from one place to another to seek their livelihood. They have met the demands for traditional specialized goods and services of the settled communities for ages. There are about 200 nomadic communities in India and about two dozen in Rajasthan alone. Each nomadic group is characterized by distinct livelihood practices and folk traditions. There are, for instance, pastoral nomads who herd sheep and goats across their trail, and who have highly developed institutions of property, held in herds, pasture and on the routes between pastures. *Gadiya Luhar, Banjara, Nat, Bhopa,* and *Bawariya* of Rajasthan are 'service and technology' nomads. The *Banjaras,* for instance, are trading nomads dealing in salt, *multani mitti* (Fuller's earth) and cattle. The *Gadiya luhars* are blacksmiths. They make and repair iron tools and utensils, moving shop from village to village. They get their names from their *Gadiya* (bullock driven carriages) and *luhars* (blacksmiths). The *Bawariya* hunt wild animals. The *Nat* are itinerant entertainers. They are acrobats, who perform at village fairs. *Bhopa* are specialists in sacred rites who worship *Pabuji,* a war hero and *Bhairav,* a demi god. They sing ballads and recite poetry, often extempore.

Even though nomadism is about a peripatetic way of life, the movement of the nomads has generally been along a broadly known course in a seasonal or otherwise determined cycle. For our study, we drew out the map of the route traditionally followed by the *Banjaras*, one of the target groups of nomads, after discussions with them. They moved from Rajasthan to other provinces of India, viz. Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat on a predetermined course. Today some of these routes have become national highways. These highways provide a faster and more economical movement of goods and services.

The nomads' lifestyles have progressively come under strain. Due to the changing socio-economic face of society, goods and services traded by them have become antiquated. Many of them have therefore been forced to give up their peripatetic lifestyle and settle down to earn their livelihood. There has been much social resistance to this. Nomads have found it increasingly difficult to meet their basic requirements of shelter, security and livelihood and most of all; they have found it extremely difficult to gain the acceptance of the societies they have chosen to settle down with. There is an urgent need to ensure their inclusive participation in social processes, at par with that of the sedentary citizenry.

Fundamental rights, fundamental duties and the directive principles of state policy stated in the Indian Constitution underscore the principle of equality of citizens. The constitution also classifies certain castes and tribes as scheduled castes (SCs) scheduled tribes (STs), and other backward classes (OBCs), and provides them social, educational, cultural and employment related safeguards, to protect them from social injustice and exploitation. The Ministries of Social and Tribal Welfare of the central and the state governments have the nodal responsibility of establishing and strengthening programmes for the social and educational development of the SCs, STs, and OBCs. Development planning for the marginalized has met with limited success because of 'top down' approaches, and a lack of the participative element. As a result, it has not really been possible to sustain such development.

Nomads variously find inclusion as one of the underprivileged groups such as SCs, STs and OBCs; and are therefore also entitled to benefit from cited affirmative action and safeguards. But, nomads have only *de jure* citizenship status. Their spatial heterogeneity has inhibited their access to even basic citizenship rights, not to mention their constitutional privileges as the socially underprivileged. They have little say, as citizens, in the making of social policies and provisioning for them. Their difficulties in finding shelter, security and livelihood have been compounded by their maladjustment with sedentary society.

Research Objectives

The study *broadly* aims to understand (a) the arenas and elements of the social exclusion of these nomadic groups; and (b) and their mobilization for articulating their claims for civil rights. The *specific* objectives were to analyze:

- The citizenship status of nomads;

- Their problems and concerns for the inclusion of their interests and priorities in state policies;

- The processes and institutions, which structure their exclusion from the mainstream; and,

- The processes that strengthen their collective action for articulating the claim for rights and citizenship.

Research Questions

The following exploratory research questions guided the analysis:

- What factors led to difficulties in the non-realization of citizenship rights?

- What are the issues, which provide the context for their interaction with the state and civil society institutions?

- What are their experiences in dealing with both the institutions?

- Are there new rights, which they think they should be granted, to enhance their citizenship?

- Under what contexts are these new rights articulated?

Conceptual Framework

- The study looks at citizenship as a multidimensional experience of people. A citizen is not merely an abstract subject dependent on the state to receive rights and access to social resources. His specific social positioning rooted in a particular physical space, in a certain kind of community and in a certain kind of social arrangement, also determines his citizenship status. The recognition of his social identity by the agencies of state and society positions his inclusion in or exclusion from the mainstream.

- Access to resources to improve the life chances and the ability to define and articulate needs and priorities and to act upon them, together constitutes capabilities or potentials. Capabilities help people to achieve their valued goals. Exclusionary citizenship is a reflection of the citizens' underlying capability deprivations.

- People's articulations of rights in specific contexts such as land, shelter, livelihood etc., which are not written in the Constitution indicate the manner in which their citizenship is eroded. The articulations, on one hand, express protest against marginalization at the hands of the government, while on the other hand, they assert the demand for inclusion in governance.

- Citizenship as active participation does not just look at citizen action. It also looks at the responsibility of the state to facilitate citizen participation. The state and its various agencies need to recognize and appreciate citizens' aspirations of inclusive and active citizenship, through appropriate policy initiatives of empowerment and partnership.

- Citizenship as active citizen participation suggests that the marginalized

and excluded citizens, by articulating their needs and priorities clearly, can influence the state policies and thereby achieve their most valued rights. Citizens' vocalizations of needs and concerns are indicative of their participation in the making of social policies and provisioning for them.

- Poor citizens access opportunities and resources through the medium of state and civil society institutional mechanisms. State institutions are formal institutions that are state affiliated or state sponsored. They are vested with the power and authority of the state and act in its name to carry out the executive, legislative and judicial functions of the state. Their aim is to protect all citizens and to ensure that even the poorest amongst them have access to basic services such as education, basic health care, safe drinking water etc. Civil society comprises institutions that are not state affiliated such as NGOs, community based organizations, trade unions and professional associations. They derive their authority primarily on the collective will of constituent groups. They connect people in collective efforts and may make states accountable. When states are weak they may step in as the people's primary point of access to social, material and natural resources. Both the state and the civil society institutions have crucial roles in facilitating the citizen's achievement of inclusive and active citizenship. Understanding the relationship between the state and civil society institutions and those they serve is important. It helps in understanding how different social groups and actors secure different capabilities and achieve rights and entitlements

Research Methodology

Nature and Structure of Research

The study primarily focused on the citizenship status of nomads, their needs and concerns, their relation with the state and civil society institutions and their mobilization for articulating their claims of civil rights. Drinking water, housing, livelihood etc. were entry point issues to initiate and facilitate the discussion on citizenship. Muktidhara Sansthan (MDS), a NGO based in Viratnagar, Jaipur, served as our entry point for gaining access to the nomadic community. MDS works for nomads primarily in Alwar, and also to some extent in Jaipur, Bharatpur and Dausa districts. It has been involved in their rehabilitation and resettlement for the past two decades.

The study with an actor-centered and bottom-up approach explored the issues from the vantage point of the nomads. The viewpoint of government officials, the local NGOs and the elite were also analyzed to understand the

realities of the nomads holistically. This approach is reflected in the process of consulting with the constant upward flow of primary information gathered at the initial stage of the research. Information gathered from nomads was shared with articulate citizens such as social activists, women leaders and political leaders, who offered responses or clarifications on the views of the nomads. Finally the information was shared with state officials. Figure 1 presents a simple diagram of how this process was structured.
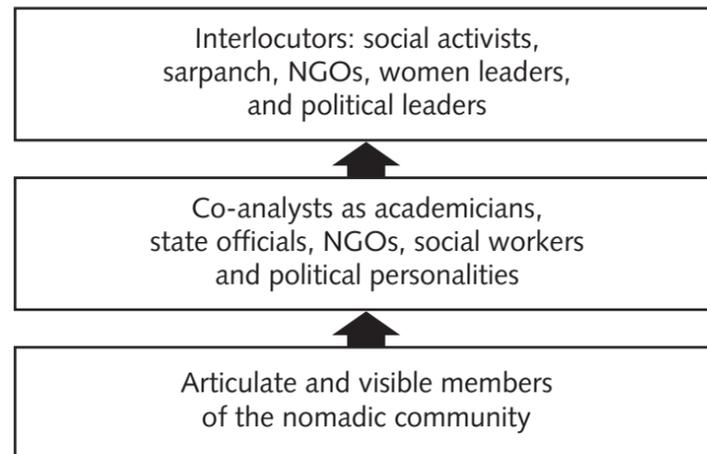
```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Interlocutors: social activists,   │
│   sarpanch, NGOs, women leaders,     │
│       and political leaders          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▲
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Co-analysts as academicians,     │
│  state officials, NGOs, social workers │
│      and political personalities     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▲
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Articulate and visible members   │
│        of the nomadic community      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 1. Pattern of discussions in the research study

In participatory research, the marginalized and poor people in particular, generate knowledge about their own condition and on the changes that ought to take place. In Friere's phrase, 'people are made the agents of their own recuperation.' This study has used participatory research methods such as collective research, critical review of history, oral and visual creation of knowledge. Group discussions, community drawing and mapping were some of the simple, yet innovative knowledge building exercises where both the researcher and the nomads mutually engaged in action and inquiry. Tools were simple and at the same time complex. They were simple because they were not intimidating and they were used with minimal expertise. Such knowledge building exercises as conscientization tools provided unique insights into the complexity and diversity of marginalized citizenship.

Group Discussion, Drawing and Mapping as Participatory Research Tools

Group discussion, drawing and mapping were used as participatory research tools to explore the issues of citizenship intensively from the vantage point of the nomads. These tools focused on their citizenship status and their relations with state institutions and civil society organiza-

tions. Entry point issues such as drinking water, ration cards, education, livelihood, place of stay, etc., were used to initiate and facilitate the discussion.

Meetings with members of the nomadic communities were organized in the *Muktidhara* campus. The objective was to understand the nomads' perceptions of their problems, citizenship rights and their expectations from the state and Muktidhara, (b) analyze the ways to develop awareness both individually and collectively; and (c) develop an understanding of the means for mobilization in order to make claims for citizenship rights. During the group discussion with the nomads, *Muktidhara'*s strategies were also observed and interpreted accordingly.

Representative members of the different communities viz., *Banjara, Gadiya Luhar, Bhopa, and Bawariya* participated in the group discussion. They discussed the identified issues and later on one member from each group gave a presentation on it. Issues for discussion were:

• Problems commonly felt by the members of the community
• Expectations from the state authorities
• Expectations from MDS

Nomads identified poverty as the root cause of their misery. Discrimination at the hands of the community and state officials further deepened their problems. Their key demand was for land with a title deed. They wanted to settle down permanently. Some of the camps were situated in inhospitable areas. Due to the lack of basic amenities such as water they were subjected to daily indignities and harassment from the villagers.

Groups also drew two types of drawings. One depicted the place where they were residing at present and the other was about the type of settlement they would like to live in. The rationale of this exercise was to make communities sensitive to each other's problems. Their sketches revealed that nomads lived in isolated settlements, which lacked key infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity. Portraits of desirable settlements indicated that all of them wanted to live permanently in dignity and peace. A group of *Banjara* men drew out the map of the route traditionally followed by them. They have always moved from Rajasthan to other provinces of India on a predetermined course. Today some of these routes have become national highways.

Group discussions, drawing and mapping as participatory research tools proved very powerful. People did not need any training to express their experiences, problems, and perceptions. They analyzed their own problems and reflected on ways to solve it.

Source: Group discussions with Nomads at MDS campus, Viratnagar, Rajasthan, December 2001.

Nomads participated, analyzed their own problems and reflected on ways to solve it. This led to a critical awareness (conscientization) of the issue. Nomads gained a greater degree of control over the results. They began to reflect on the gaps between their current realities and ideal realities and were prepared to change their situation in ways determined by them and undertake self-initiatives for change. It also served the purpose of reconnection. They were able to speak, listen and consequently developed a group identity. They were involved in mutual action and inquiry.

Participatory Research Leading to Conscientization

In the process of researching the meanings and expressions of rights and citizenship through group discussion, drawing and mapping, the theme of connection stood out through mutual learning, development of a group identity and action for collective-claims.

Mutual Learning

The first characteristic was that of the connection of participants to a mutual learning process. There were different communities, each having a distinct cultural identity. A nomadic lifestyle and the state of Rajasthan were the only common link. Each group was preoccupied with its own problems and had approached MDS individually to do something for them. When they got together discussed, shared and reflected upon the issues they found that each had more or less the same problems. Sharing of personal experiences particularly those relating to the prejudices of the larger society made them sensitive and conscious about their own and each others' oppression and the need to transform the existing dynamics of power relations. For instance, *Suwa Banjara* narrated his experience at the hands of police officials. *Gulabo* from *Gadiya Luhar* community shared her experience with the villagers of *Malutana* at an administration camp. Their battle against the village's prejudices prompted all the nomads in the discussion group to reiterate that living in dignity was their right. They realized that it was this need to live in dignity in a place of their own that brought them to MDS. Thus the knowledge gave them an insight to critically observe themselves and their problems. Discussion and reflection also facilitated the sharing of the community's life trajectories over

the years. They learnt through each other's experiences of the good days when the peripatetic life style did not pose any difficulties and the problems now arising from such a life style. They learnt about each other's struggles, needs and expectations.

For *Muktidhara* too it was a moment of learning. Becoming a platform for nomads to express their demands for rights and citizenship, albeit in the form of a place to live, water, education, ration cards and widow pension etc., meant that they had a crucial role in activating citizenship. The routine question-answer format of interviewing keeps the entire research process under the control of researchers. In this participatory exercise, nomads initiated the whole process of group discussion for studying and analyzing the problems.

Development of a Group Identity

Awareness and knowledge about each other's experiences gave them new insights. From what they experienced, came the understanding of their collective identity. Gradually during the course of the reflection sessions, they began articulating the need to assert their collective identity. They gave suggestions to each other about ways to solve their problems or approached the collector/district collector jointly to press for their demands. They realized that the diverse nomadic groups could together effect a change in state policies. Thus the linking of each other's experiences was expressed in the collectivizing of the images of reality.

Action for Claims for Rights

As soon as they came to know that *Muktidhara* was campaigning for their rights, they came and pressed for their demands. Success stories of the rehabilitation of communities by *Muktidhara* emerged during discussions and raised their hopes of being permanently settled in a place of their own some day. Another form of connection took place when, during the course of group discussions *Muktidhara* called for specific actions such as writing and sending letters of protest and pressing demands for specific rights. The group could see a way in which they could work together in a concrete manner.

Source: Group discussions with Nomads at MDS campus, Viratnagar, Rajasthan, December 2001.

Section 2
Key Findings

A. Problems and Priorities: The Voices and Experiences of Nomads

Poverty

Nomads live in poverty struggling to meet their basic requirements of food, clothes and shelter. Food takes away a large part of their meager income. Nomadic womenfolk bear the double burden of poverty and deprivation, as economic agents and as homemakers. The nomads' dwellings are unauthorized. They lack the basic civic amenities of safe drinking water, sanitation, electricity, etc. The lack of civic amenities adds to the social indignities and harassment heaped upon them. For example, some settlements have no water source of their own; they suffer humiliation whenever they approach villages for water. Some settlements are not even linked to roads. This limits their options for communicating and negotiating for their rights and entitlements.

- Nasiya, *a Banjara* woman in *Bamanwas*: "For nearly a year, the neighboring *Meenas* did not trouble us, thinking we would soon move on. When they found out that we meant to stay, they turned nasty. They stopped us from using village wells for water. They broke our pots when we approached the wells. One man from our *Regar* neighbors was willing to help us, but the *Meenas* and other *Regars* would have none of it. One morning when we went to the well, we found human faeces floating in it.

- Kela, a *Banjara* woman in *Prithvipura*: "We live in an isolated and remote place. There is no road here. No vehicle ever comes here. Whenever any car comes, we get scared, fearing misfortune. You see our people here go to far off places for trade and work. Only the children, the old and a few women stay back. We do not even know where our people are and how they are. Hence the fear".

Sources: Interviews

Land and Shelter

The nomads also have a natural urge to live in dignity. For ages, they have been landless and homeless. Faced with economic and survival compulsions, they have begun to camp on demarcated government land near or within villages. The occupancy of land by nomads has been a contentious issue. The growing pressure of population on land has resulted in both the village society and the state reacting unfavourably, often violently to their occupying government lands. Adverse social stereotype perceptions about nomads and their lifestyles have worsened the situation.

- Nasiya, a *Banjara* woman in *Bamanwas*: "We are occupying *gochara* (common grazing) land. Villagers do not want us to stay here. Five years after we had settled down, villagers gave away this land to the forest department. Since then the forest department is gradually intruding upon the area occupied by us. They keep threatening us about taking away everything that comes within the fenced area. We did report this to the collector's office but so far no action has taken place."

- Mana, a *Bawariya* woman in *Malutana*: "The *Patwari* came yesterday. He asked me to leave the place. I can not leave now. The villagers don't speak in front of me but have registered a complaint against me in the *Tehsil*. I told the *Patwari* let the villagers do what they want to do. Kill me. Throw me in the well or hang me up in the tree. In the latter case, villagers can't complain of my occupying their piece of land. Villagers don't understand that we also need a place to live. Where will we go?"

- Suwa, a *Bawariya* man in *Bairath*: "I am living in *gochara* (common grazing) land. Villagers complained against me in the *Tehsil*. I was asked to pay Rs. 10,000/-as penalty. I told that if I had that much money I could have purchased the land myself. A case was filed against me in the police station. I was jailed for 3 months."

- Tara, a *Bhopa* man in *Akbarpur*: "On 23rd March about 40-50 *Meos* demolished our four huts. They erected a fence surrounding the demolished huts. They said that they want to build a graveyard here. They challenged us saying that since you do not have *patta* (title deed), you do not own the land. Since this incident our children are beaten up now and then and women are threatened. Section 144 has been imposed in that area. Police protection has been given to us. Now that it is a disputed area, we can not even rebuild our huts until the court order comes in our favor."

- Kamlesh, a *Gadiya Luhar* man in *Thanagazi*: "We were asked to shift here. We were given the impression that this was the place where we would ultimately settle down. We borrowed heavily to level this uneven ground. One of us even started constructing a house. Now the SDM issues orders that we cannot construct a house here, since we do not own this land. People even say that we might even have to move to a different place."

Sources: Interviews

Livelihood

The traditional crafts of the nomads are losing out to modern industries. The lack of literacy and modern technical skills leaves them with little occupational options other than those as low paid unskilled wage earners on construction sites, in mines and stone quarries, road building, agricultural work, etc.

- *Banjaras* make a living out of selling salt and *multani mitti* (Fuller's earth). Poor village women are their main clients. Many of them are working as agricultural laborers and construction laborers (road construction, stone crushing). They go to distant places like Alwar or Delhi. Many of them trade in bullocks and buffalo. They can only farm when it rains as due to water scarcity cultivation cannot be their main occupation. A few of them are also engaged in the collection of firewood from the forest and selling it in the market. Both women and children are engaged in labor.

- *Bawariyas* work as agricultural laborers and also migrate to other places to work as construction laborers. They also cultivate land owned by other people on a share basis. They sell half of the grain earned for money. Some trade in buffaloes. Some work as watchmen (caretakers), looking after other people's agricultural fields at night and buffaloes during the daytime. Payment is made both in cash and kind. Some have taken up the rearing of poultry for subsistence.

- Bhopa work as construction laborers. The women also work in agricultural farms as daily wage laborers. Bhopa men have also taken up trading in buffaloes.

- Gadiya Luhars are blacksmiths. Many of them are still following their traditional work. Poor villagers are their clients. This traditional livelihood is, however, losing out before the competitive modern market. Some are working as construction laborers. Some of the men have taken up trading in buffaloes.

Inter-community Relations

Nomads do not follow the norms of sedentary societies. The latter has viewed their social norms and way of life with disdain and suspicion. They have been stigmatized, ostracized, and marginalized, even though they have had a tendency to live beyond the village limits in isolated clusters of huts. The adverse social stereotype perceptions about their lifestyles add to their woes. All these factors have made their task of finding a sedentary home and hearth more difficult.

The social exclusion of nomads manifests itself as a lack of: access to resources, opportunities of alternative livelihood, power and upward mobility. It also increases their economic deprivation. As a group the greatest deprivation appears to be their right to live with dignity.

"The Rajasthan Government had organized administration camps to deliver speedy services in the villages. In one such camp organized at *Malutana*, Alwar District in October, 2001, a band of *Gadiya Luhar* came with a petition that they be allotted a piece of land to settle on permanently. The Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) asked the sarpanch to allot land to them. The sarpanch allotted them a place near the cremation ground, which the *Gadiya Luhars* refused to accept. Later after studying the map of the village, *Siwai chak* (unassessed revenue land) land was found. The SDM suggested that the *Luhars* could be settled there. He also ordered that ration cards be issued to them. A group of villagers suddenly got up protesting and said that they would not let *Gadiya Luhars* stay in their village. They would not even let ration cards be issued to them. They felt that once they had ration cards, they could start claiming other things. The villagers said that they did not mind going to jail, but would not let this happen. They threatened the *Gadiya Luhars*, the SDM and the sarpanch with dire consequences. Seeing the situation getting out of control and becoming violent, the camp was ultimately dismissed. Later it was discovered that some powerful villagers had encroached upon the *Siwai Chak* land and had a vested interest in keeping the land under their control. The villagers ultimately succeeded in evicting the *Luhars* from Malutana. The *Gadiya Luhars*, feeling disempowered and humiliated, are at present camping at Thanagazi. Here too, they are under pressure to leave the place as soon as possible."

B. Relations with Institutions

B.1 State Institutions: Effectiveness and Relevance

India has one of the world's largest programmes of basic services and public assistance for the poor, lower castes and tribal groups. These programmes provide free schooling, health care, housing, subsidized food, water, relief during natural disasters, pensions for widows and assistance to the disabled. The nomads believe that a good government is one, which listens to its people and meets their basic demands. Government programmes of targeted assistance, however, have not contributed much to alleviating their anxieties and stress. While the study has not made an in-depth evaluation of why a particular programme has not worked, it does illustrate the problems and the extent to which these programmes touch the lives of the poor nomads.

'Indira Awas Yojana' provides free housing to the needy. In *Bamanvas*, the *Banjaras* did not occupy the houses because they found the houses alien to their lifestyles and socio-cultural way of living. They prefer to live in the open, near forests. The nomads understand the importance of the public distribution food system (PDS) yet they rate the programme poorly. Food quotas are issued irregularly. They do not even come to know when the food quotas have arrived. The PDS is not serving the intended beneficiary effectively.

Health care services provided by the state are not used, mainly due to the unsympathetic attitude of the health staff. The nomads prefer the services of private doctors because they feel that they would receive proper treatment on payment. Schools are out of bounds for them. There are *Rajiv Gandhi Pathshalas* in the districts, which provide free education to poor children. Their children are enrolled but are discriminated against. '*School bullies beat them and send them away. Teachers do nothing to stop them'*. The judiciary system is also beyond their reach.

Access to state entitlements requires formal state recognition in the form of identity cards such as ration cards, voter identity cards, BPL identity cards, and documents. The absence of these constitutes a barrier. By refusing to see and process people's claims without proper documents, the state formally excludes those who cannot meet its conditions. The lack of land titles subjects nomads to indignities and harassment at every step of their lives. In Rajasthan, citizens below the poverty line (BPL) are entitled to certain types of development benefit schemes. Many nomadic settlements have not been included as BPL identified citizens because they do not have any permanent residence. Consequently they are deprived of the benefits of development schemes meant for the poor and marginalized communities. Their deprivation is largely because of a constitutional paradox. They are citizens of Rajasthan because of their birth yet due to the lack of a permanent residence they are denied their rights. Without proof of residence they are facing difficulties in gaining access to special entitlements provided to them by the state and the benefits from them. Without proof of residence, many also do not have ration cards and voter identity cards. Widows particularly face problems in accessing pensions for themselves.

In one of the administration camps at *Malutana*, Alwar District in October 2001, Kali a young *Gadiya Luhar* widow had applied for a widow's pension. She was instantly provided a ration card, which was a precondition for claiming the pension. She was assured that her work would be done immediately on priority basis. Now her band of nomads has been forcefully evicted out of Malutana. It is at present camping at Thanagazi. The shifting of residence has brought up several administrative difficulties.

She is facing problems in accessing the pension. She has made several rounds to the concerned officials who ask her to wait because until the papers come to them they cannot do anything. Kali is helpless. Administrative complexities are beyond her comprehension.

The lack of information is another disenabling factor. The nomads know nothing about the rules, procedures, programmes and schemes.

"My husband was a permanent employee of the forest department. I do not know anything about the rules and regulations. Now you tell me that I could have got my husband's pension. I could have been employed in his place. No one even told me. At least my children and I could have lived relatively in comfort." (Mana Bawaria)

Source: Interview

Despite problems nomads wanted government schemes and programmes because these can help in alleviating their misery. They feel that the poor implementation of the programmes and schemes is largely because the political leaders, village elite and state officials connive together to siphon the benefits from these to themselves instead of passing them on to the intended beneficiaries.

Government failure is also interwoven with corruption. This has created distrust and contempt among the nomads.

- "Food quotas are issued irregularly. We do not even come to know when the food quotas have arrived. We are entitled to 50 kg of wheat but get only 25 kg. We are helpless but do not want to protest. What if we lose the remaining? Where does all the food go if we are not receiving it?"

- "The selection of families under BPL is manipulated. Usually the sarpanch, the schoolteacher and the rich people of the village decide whose name should be included. Poor people have no say in this matter. For namesake they select a few poor families and the rest goes to the people of their community. We got selected because they had to select poor families from the SC."

- "We attend panchayat meetings. But the panchayat representatives ask us to sit quietly during the meeting and speak to them later with the assurance that the work will be done."

- "My family does not come under the BPL scheme. Actually only wealthy families are identified as BPL families".

Sources: Interviews

State Officials Views on the Citizenship Status of Nomads

We had meetings with the state officials for clarifications on their views of the nomads and also to understand their perception on the citizenship of nomads and on ways to mainstream them. Politicians and state officials insisted that nomads do not want to settle down. Bias against them prevails.

> "The government of Rajasthan had taken steps to settle them. The *Banjaras*, despite allotment, did not settle down. They sold their plots and moved away."
>
> "They cannot settle wherever they want to. The question of choice does not arise. They can come to the market to sell their wares or even work, like any other people in society. After all we are also going to far off places to work. Why can't they do the same? Live wherever they are given place… "
>
> "We cannot let them stay here. We have given them this place temporarily. There is a girl's hostel here. We have to think of their security. We cannot trust them. They are rough and poor. They drink liquor and fight. They don't send their children to school. We suggested a place to them but they refused."
>
> "How can we issue them *patta* (Title deed)? What if they sell it and move on to another place? If they forcibly occupy a place then villagers will definitely oppose it. Nomads should ask the village panchayats for land. They have no right to occupy it just like that."

Sources: Interviews

In developing societies, the state has an important role in establishing the citizenship rights of the deprived citizenry. It also has the moral responsibility to facilitate their inclusion in the social process for their socioeconomic development. We felt that the state agencies and officials needed better sensitization in this regard, in so far as the nomads under study were concerned. The lack of recognition by the state agencies and officials of their rights and entitlements has heightened the feeling of exclusion amongst nomads.

B.2 Civil Society Institutions (NGOs) & Collective Action for Rights and Citizenship: Role of Muktidhara Sansthan (MDS)

Ratan Katyayani, a social activist, has set up MDS. He realized that the lot of nomadic communities was much worse than that of other marginalized groups, viz. the SCs, STs, and the OBCs in the settled community. Those

groups did get some benefits, howsoever small, from government schemes of affirmative action. His involvement with the nomads of the area began as a part of his broader association with human rights issues.

MDS was registered in 1993, under the Societies Registration Act, in Viratnagar, Jaipur district. It started with the broad objective of securing *Mukti* (freedom) from injustice, illiteracy and hunger for the marginalized sectors of society in that area. MDS has been largely involved in the settlement of the nomads on government land and in the establishment of their *"bastis"* (settlements). MDS works for nomads primarily in Alwar district, with some of its efforts spilling over into the Jaipur, Bharatpur and Dausa districts of Rajasthan.

The Context of MDS-Nomad Interface: Key Issues and Objectives

The failure of the state to bring the nomads into its policy network, the inadequate implementation of the policies expected to benefit the nomads and violation of their rights to live in dignity and peace compelled *MDS* to take up the cause of the nomads. Contrary to the prevailing attitudes that nomads do not want to live rooted to the earth; their traditions and trades impelled them to wander, it found that nomads no longer relished their lifestyle and wanted to settle in one place. For the MDS, the denial of land for shelter to the nomads is the violation of their constitutional rights because it is linked to the denial of other basic entitlements and facilities. Hence, *state violation of constitutional rights and government negligence and failure to provide infrastructure facilities to address the basic needs of the nomads* provide the context for the MDS to organize and mobilize the nomads against the state.

MDS articulates their issues in the framework of rights. The issue of human rights as viewed by them extends to situations in which individuals and groups are denied satisfaction of their basic needs. It is in this context that they articulate the issue of rights and entitlements (e.g., right to land, right to livelihood) the nomads must have as citizens and as human beings. They also link rights of access to and benefits from citizenship rights with the issues of human dignity. Their strategy lies not merely in fighting particular infringements of the legal rights of the nomads, but in creating and expanding new spaces for them by converting the survival and development needs of the nomads into struggles for their political and social rights.

The key focus of the MDS intervention is as follows:

- Assisting nomads to obtain the infrastructure essential to their progress like drinking water, land for housing, school etc.

- Raising consciousness about their rights and entitlements.

- Organizing them to express and better assert their rights.

- Promoting locally accountable and micro level people's institutions for self-reliance.

Forms of MDS-Nomad Interface

a. Helping nomads to settle

Recognizing that land is critical to the settlement and survival of nomads, MDS has a radical solution to meet the immediate requirement of land for nomads: the occupation of government land. They have coined the slogan '*Jo zamin sarkari hai, wo zamin hamari hai'* which simply means that *'the government land is our land'*. The MDS maintains, however, that they apply this slogan only to unclaimed and unassessed revenue land. They do not go for private or disputed land; land allotted for projects, or notified forest land. Three groups are formed to search for suitable sites. One group, made exclusively of men from the nomad band, evaluates a site's safety, particularly in terms of the surrounding villages' attitude. A women's group judges the quality of life the different potential sites offer. The MDS itself explores the legal aspect, examining the feasibility of such an allocation. 20 *Banjara* families were first settled in mid 1991 at *Bamanwas Chogan* village, *Thanagazi* district. The MDS has since helped set up 25 other settlements in a similar manner. Each newly settled group is asked to plant trees around their house. The size of the tree then becomes a record of the length of their stay and a safeguard against government eviction.

b. Direct legal services

Legal aid, crucial for marginalized communities seeking their rights, is inaccessible to nomads. The inability to understand the laws and approach the judiciary on their own makes local communities vulnerable to exploitation by the state and other forces. MDS provides direct legal services to communities by helping them with legal problems such as accessing bail funds and protection from false criminal cases, illegal custody cases, harassment and human rights violations, etc., through writ petitions.

c. Campaign support

MDS provides campaign support to the nomads' struggles in the region for their specific rights to land. It works toward influencing public opinion

through campaigns and by highlighting the issue in the media to exert external pressure on the state.

d. Mobilization support

Lobbying is one of the key strategies adopted by the MDS to pressurise the government at all levels. It sends nomads to meet and talk to officials with their petitions. Where necessary, they resort to large-scale mass mobilizations, staging demonstrations and rallies, besides seeking a legal remedy.

e. Service support

The MDS set up non-formal education (NFE) centers in the settlements. In places where the villagers did not allow the nomads' children to enroll in schools, the MDS opened one-teacher, non-formal schools in nomadic settlements, to teach them the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. It has also assisted in setting up bore wells in the community settlements and in providing maintenance equipment. The MDS has also worked for the empowerment of nomadic women, by listening to their problems, escorting them to hospital, opening their bank accounts and encouraging them to save and involving them in mass mobilization movements at the town and district headquarters.

f. Relations with the state

The state has not responded kindly to the confrontationist approach of the MDS. State officials, especially at the grassroots, insist that nomads are basically wanderers and believe that any effort to settle them would be futile. They object to the manner in which the MDS has encouraged nomads to occupy land. *"What Katyayani is doing should hardly be encouraged... Nomads are entitled to priority allotment but they do not approach the land allotment committees, set up in every block of villages…"* (Interviews with state officials, District *Alwar*, April 2002). They oppose those extra-welfare activities of the MDS amongst the nomads, which usurp the role of the state.

The MDS's interventions have proved a mixed bag for the nomads. The nomads associated with the MDS have often had to face the wrath of state officials. Yet at times, the movement initiated by MDS has also moved some state officials and other opinion leaders to a better understanding of the need for the nomads to settle down. Some sporadic steps have been taken to settle them in various areas, to provide them with ration cards, voting rights, etc. The recent settlement of the *Gadiya Luhars* in *Karmseevaspura*, *Tapukada*, in *Alwar* district is a case in point where the state agencies settled nomads in a

prime industrial area, where eking out a living would not be difficult. About 90 households were given plots of land along with title deeds of ownership. There was a school nearby for the children to study in and a hand pump was installed within their settlement colony. Yet, a fair settlement of the *Luhars* has still remained a distant dream. State officials say that the MDS has misled the nomads in believing that it will provide them funds to make houses. The *Luhars* used up their savings in making a boundary wall for their settlement. The MDS denies having made any such promises, and maintains that, as they are a voluntary organization, they do not have the wherewithal to do so. Caught amidst the tension between the government and MDS, the *Gadiya Luhars*' euphoria of receiving their own land has died down, with a large number of them moving away from the settlement in search of work and a place to live.

Process of Interface

a) Leadership

The MDS has indeed provided the required leadership for the articulation of demands of the nomads for (a) right to property (land with title deed), (b) right of ownership and control and (c) right to a settled life and a life of dignity. Some nomads do feel that the MDS has brought them some dignity and self-respect. They depend on it for advice and assistance. They seek the MDS's help in writing to government officials for their requirements. "*Muktidhara issues letters to government officials for problems such as security from the villagers' harassment. Things start working. At least officials then listen to us.*" (Interview with Tara, a *Bhopa* at *Akbarpur*, District *Alwar*, April 2002). Many treat the founder-secretary of MDS, Ratan Katyayani, as a near messiah.

b) Strategies

The MDS simultaneously works at three levels in order to ensure that nomadic communities are given a chance for a settled existence. It works with the nomadic communities; creates awareness about the status of these nomadic communities amongst the sedentary communities in villages where the nomads are camped; and works with the district administration and the state administration to secure civic amenities for the nomadic communities and their civil rights.

The MDS builds leadership capacities by keeping the nomads at the forefront of all the activities while ensuring that it continues to play a facilitating role to foster leadership. It steps up their advocacy efforts

with the district and state administration to ensure the civil rights of the nomadic communities.

It also provides a platform to broaden the outlook of the leadership of nomadic communities, so they can link up with other marginalized groups facing similar problems.

c) Activities

The MDS has taken numerous measures to secure the rights of the nomads and to further their settlement. For instance, till date, it has settled 24 *bastis* of nomads in the districts of *Alwar, Jaipur* and *Dausa*. It issues an identity card to each person, intended as the first step in ensuring his or her civic rights. It has regularly been highlighting the plight of the nomadic communities through demonstrations, the media and various other forums. It has organized a *padyatra* (foot march*)* in 1993 from *Alwar* to *Jaipur* to seek justice from the Governor of the state. It regularly interacts with the district bureaucracy to ensure access to basic amenities such as drinking water in *bastis*. It has successfully filed a writ in the Rajasthan High Court against the district administration to provide civic amenities to the nomads. It has exerted considerable influence in enabling the nomads' access to the public distribution system. It maintains a constant interaction with the Election Commission of India to work towards providing voting rights to nomads. It has also made initiative forays into education by starting six non-formal schools in *bastis* where nomads have been resettled. It aims at the achievement of self-reliance amongst the nomads by collectively working out the issues of their oppression and rights. It has encouraged nomads to form *Ghumantoo Vikas Sanghatan* (GVS), or development committees, where they can discuss ways to overcome their oppression. Two members   a male and a female from each settlement attend meetings at an apex body called the *Ghumantoo Vikas Panchayat* (GVP) at the Muktidhara campus. They meet once a month at GVP meetings, in order to review their experiences and take decisions for action.

Outcome of the Interface

a) Achievement

The government has regularised some of the settlements. Nomads in all 24 settlements now have voting rights and ration cards and some of the settlers have got *pattas*. The movement initiated by MDS has also moved some state officials and other opinion leaders to have a better understanding of the need for nomads to settle down. Some sporadic steps

have been taken to settle them in various areas and to provide them with ration cards, voting rights etc.

b) **Constraints**

Nomads do feel that the MDS has restored their dignity and self-respect, besides providing valuable advocacy support. Yet, dependence on the initial catalysts should cease through the generation and development of internal leadership and cadres and skills. People should be able to carry on with collective activities on their own while the catalysts may continue the association with such processes and seek new roles in their progressive development. The MDS has been unable to build internal leadership and cadres and skills in nomads. Nomads are totally dependent on it for advice and help
.

Conditions of extreme poverty have limited the scope of collective action. Not all nomadic groups have joined hands with the MDS. The intervention programme of the MDS is donor driven. All its early interventions have been primarily with the *Banjara* community.

Success stories of the *Banjara* community have drawn other nomads to the MDS. Since it is committed to the cause of nomads in general, the MDS wants to extend, and has extended, its interaction to other groups through campaigning and building public opinion. Yet, it has been unable to take up the cause of their settlement due to a paucity of funds.

Section 3
Emerging Issues

Some clear issues have emerged out of the nomads' articulations and experiences. An analysis of these issues will broaden our conceptual understanding of the issues of rights and citizenship of marginalized groups of people. It will also help us to look at the practical aspects of making these rights real for them.

Exclusionary Citizenship

Nomads are 'excluded citizens'. Omnibus provisions in the constitution and the laws for STs, SCs, OBCs, do not adequately address the question of needs and rights of nomads as human and social beings. Their lack of financial, social, and political resources has led to their progressively increased marginalization. Their narratives have revealed several dimensions of deprivations such as the lack of material assets: land with title deed, perma-

nent residence, and basic civic entitlements; the lack of information, skill and education and the need of social respect and dignity, the need for freedom from fear and insecurities. The gaps between rules and implementation, which occur in practice in all institutional domains, perpetuate deprivations. The table below categorizes and describes the needs articulated as important in their daily lives. It also describes the mechanisms that perpetuate such deprivations and exclusionary forms of citizenship for nomads.

New Forms of Citizenship Identities

A new defining ground for citizenship is emerging. The nomads are now articulating new kinds of rights such as (a) the right to property (land with a title deed), (b) the right of ownership and control, (c) the right to a settled life, and (d) the right to live with dignity.

Table 1 : **Exclusionary Citizenship of Nomads**

Deprivations	Articulation by Nomads	Mechanisms that perpetuate deprivations
Material assets	Residence	Systemic bias maintained through discrimination, ideology and values that operate for the benefit of certain groups of people.

Poverty and lack of resources

Powerlessness |
	Land with title deed	
	Basic civic entitlements	
	Regular employment	
	Education	
Social belonging	Trust and respect across social groups	
Respect and dignity	Live in dignity	
	Self-confidence	
Information, skills and education	Information, awareness	
	Problem solving capacity	
	Entrepreneurship	
	Ability to influence those in power	

A key demand is for land with a title deed. This demand will fulfill two purposes. It will give them (a) access to entitlements and benefits and (b) recognition and respect from the agencies of state and community. It is also linked to other rights such as the right to ownership and control and the right to live in dignity. This, in turn, would give them visibility, voice and power.

Table 2 : **Linkage between Priority Needs and Inclusive Citizenship**

Need and Priority	Land with title deed
Collective Action	Demand for redistribution of resources and recognition of identity
Rights	Entitlement, benefits, ownership and control, dignity and respect, recognition of identity
Inclusive Citizenship	Voice, visibility, participation and power

The nomads' struggles for new types of rights that are not written in the Constitution highlight the manner in which their citizenship is eroded. They are protesting against marginalization at the hands of the government. They are increasingly expressing a demand for inclusion in governance while simultaneously challenging the nature of what it means to be included. The nomads are insisting on their rightful share in the power structure that defines society.

Civil Society Iintermediation

People as makers and shapers of rights can claim and define active and inclusive citizenship through their own process of constituency building, advocacy and change. Yet, many times the affected group may be so poor and marginalized that they lack bargaining skills, power and resources that would allow them to stake a claim to active citizenship rights. In such a context grassroot groups of social activists play a crucial role in organizing and mobilizing them purposively and consciously around a common or shared concern for claiming rights. Such groups provide affected groups with the space and operational mechanisms that would make their voices heard and thus realize their influence on the state and its policies.

The interests of the subaltern nomads were articulated only when the MDS intervened to address them as a collective and facilitated the articulation of their concerns vis-à-vis the state. The MDS articulates their concerns in the language that the state agencies and officials can understand. The nomads appreciate the importance of state institutions but doubt their integrity since they have not contributed much to the alleviation of their anxieties and

stress. They approach the MDS to influence the state agencies. By responding to the needs, concerns and demands of the nomads, MDS has restored their dignity and self-respect. They have a mutual two-way relationship. NGOs are more trusted than the government. NGOs, through their mutually reinforcing action, can help to break exclusions. They are in a position to lobby for policy change.

The participation and engagement in the identification and articulation of rights by the marginalized citizenry requires catalytic initiatives to promote their mobilization for group action. Partnerships in citizen action help in creating an inclusive concept of citizenship.
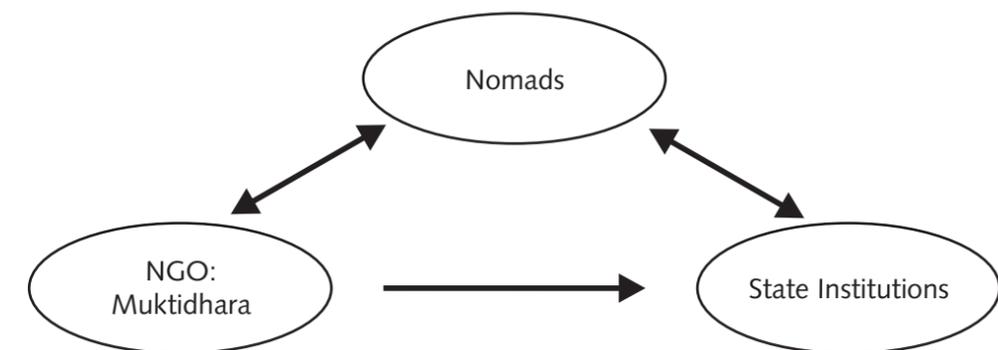

Figure 2. Nomads' relations with institutions

Dependent Citizenship

The near absence of accountability of intervening agents leads to exclusion. To date, the MDS has functioned more as a leader-centric organization than as a member-based organization made up of nomads. State officials, MDS activists and nomads see the MDS as an extension of its leader's identity.

Institutions and Access to Resources and Opportunities

The issues of rights and citizenship and good governance define the nomads' interface with the state. They share dialectical relations with the state. They understand the importance of state institutions. They are only challenging the state with a view to redefine policies and influence governance.

The nomads' relationship with the state can be traced to recognition and resource problems. The lack of recognition by the state agencies of the rights and entitlements of nomads and the lack of resources that would allow them to otherwise articulate their voices and demand their rights and entitlements have created exclusionary citizenship identities for nomads. The nomads' articulation for rights and citizenship focuses on both material and identity issues. They are not only demanding the redistribution of resources but are

also asking for the appropriate institutional conditions necessary for the development of their capacities (group identity rights). While the demands for redistribution recognize their right to be treated equally, the recognition of group identity rights, underlines a need for respect of their specific identities.

Nomads trust the MDS because it responds to their needs and concerns and is also pressurizing the state for their rightful share in the power structure of society. Yet, the MDS has so far been unable to build up new cadres of leadership amongst them. Lobbying without the citizens organizing themselves and the resulting situation of dependent citizenship does not address the roots of exclusion and discrimination that shape power.

State officials tend to see the MDS as oppositional and at times explicitly anti-governmental. Miscommunication and misunderstanding between the state agencies and the MDS has affected the nomads and the articulation of their interests adversely. A weak and tense relationship between the state agencies and the MDS affects the nomads who are being mobilized for change. It affects their access to or their influence on the resources of the state.

Both the state and the MDS have been unable to enable nomads to access rights, opportunities and power. The weak links between the institutions and between opportunities and access to resources have produced exclusionary forms of citizenship. A diagrammatic representation of these relations is as following.
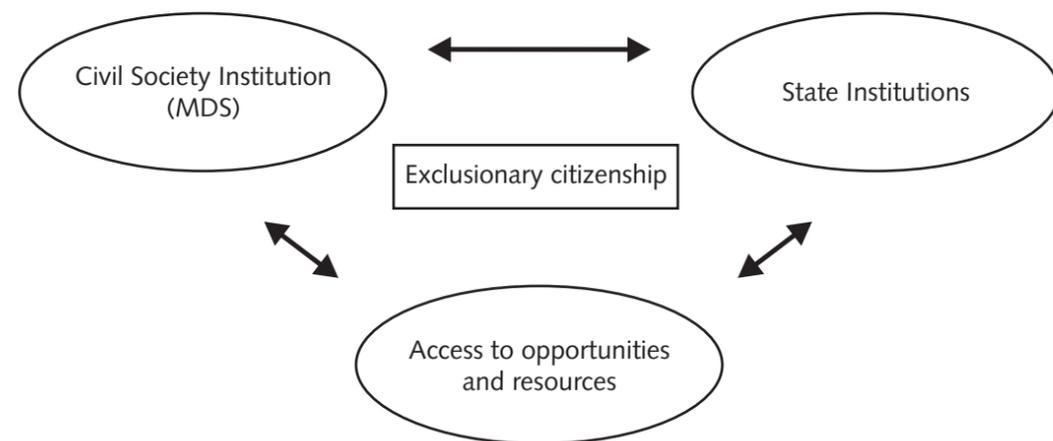

Figure 3. Weak links and exclusionary citizenship

Transforming Strategies

The institutional and financial bases of intervening organisations are impor-

tant dimensions affecting the nature of transforming strategies. Grassroots organisations are generally under-organised and lack institutional capabilities and financial resources at a scale needed to address the complex agenda of inclusive citizenship. With its limited material base and lack of institutional capabilities, the MDS is finding it difficult to replicate its interventions to other nomadic communities. The nomads fail to understand the consequences of such constraints. There is a risk that the nomads may give up the struggle and resign themselves to their fate. Stronger capacities are needed for self-reflection, for accountability and representation and for developing strategies in which advocacy are linked to the objectives of wider empowerment.

Lobbying without addressing the need for organising and empowering the marginalized citizens may not be able to sustain the interests of the marginalized communities, interested in supporting change, for a longer period. People can claim active citizenship through their own processes of constituency building, advocacy and change.

The state has a crucial role in enabling inclusive and active citizenship because governments set the essential policy environments that affect the quality of development. Accountable and proactive states can effectively enhance active citizenship by investing in the poor people's (nomads') assets and capabilities; protecting their rights and supporting partnerships with them.

Recommendations

Both the state and the civil society organizations have crucial roles in facilitating the nomads to achieve inclusive and active citizenship. The following steps would go a long way to ensure that such roles are played effectively.

- The state remains the key player in this regard. It should activate the nomads' access to the state schemes and plans of providing basic services such as dwelling, drinking water, education, public health and food security and nutrition.

- Low levels of literacy, basic education and the lack of modern technical skills have left the nomads with little employment options. The state should actively intervene with policy and programme initiatives so that the nomads could function as useful economic agents in the society.

- The state must also be proactive directly and in association with civil society organisations, to protect the nomads against any kind of discrimi-

nation and atrocities, by a combination of law enforcement and public awareness campaigns.

• Civil society organisations and local civil activist groups can play an important role in sensitising the state agencies and sedentary society to the concerns and issues of the nomads. Indeed their mutual partnerships are necessary to bring the nomads within the mainstream and to evolve fruitful policies and programme interventions on one hand and to hold the state accountable towards its duties for nomads as citizens of the state on the other.

Conclusion

The nomads' struggles for their citizenship rights have given way to a new discourse in inclusive citizenship. The actual participation of the nomads' in making and shaping social policy and provisioning is reflected in their experiences and the articulations of their citizenship rights. By vocalizing their primary concerns, the marginal citizens can seek to influence the state policy to legally claim their rights. The grassroots organizations, such as the MDS, can form the vehicle for their attempts. By providing suitable resources and intermediation between the nomads, state and society, they can initiate and give momentum to, the nomads' struggle.

References

Jayal, Niraja Gopal and Sudha Pai, 2001. **Democratic Governance in India**. New Delhi, Sage Publications.

Knight Barry, (Et al), 2002. **Reviving Democracy**. UK, Earthscan Publications Ltd.

Kovoori, Purnendu, 1985. **Seasonal Migration and Nomadism in Western Rajasthan**. Occasional Paper Series 11:No5. Jaipur, Institute of Development Studies.

Mahmud, Simeen: '**Making Rights Real in Bangladesh through collective Citizen Action**'. *IDS Bulletin*.Vol.33. No.2. April 2002.

Merfield, Juliet 2002. **Learning Citizenship**. Working Paper158. Sussex, IDS.

Mukherji, Debashish, '**Wanderer, Grow Home**', *The Week*, December 24, 2000.

Narayan, Deepa, 2000. **Can Any One Hear Us?** Washington D.C., World Bank.

Samarthan, 2000. **Citizens and Governance. Civil Society in the Millenium**. Bhopal. Samarthan.

Tandon, Rajesh and Ranjita Mohanty, 2002. **Civil Society and Governance**. New Delhi, Samskriti.

Appendix 1

Data Collection Procedures: An over view of study themes and methods

Though we had a broad set of research questions guiding us, as we progressed in our research we refined our research questions based on emerging study themes. The study is organized primarily around the themes of exploring citizenship identities and institutional relationships. The focus is on exploring (a) the problems and priorities of nomads in interrelated contexts of land, shelter, livelihood, rights and entitlements, and inter-community relationships and (b) their interactions with institutions, both state and civil society, in the context of their access to opportunities. We have described and explained meanings and expressions of citizenship through the voices of the nomads.

Problems and Priorities

Objectives

- To understand the characteristic traditional livelihood of the community.

- To understand the reasons, difficulties, and important events that the community considers important.

- To understand the impact of new forms of livelihood.

- To explore the dynamics of power relations within the village and understand it's implications on the nomads living in the village.

- To get an insight into their perception of the problems, and the opportunities relating to development and the quality of life.
- To understand the gap between formal rights and the actual situation.

Indicators

- Key incidents relating to powerlessness and vulnerability.

- Needs and expectations of the nomadic community.

- Need interpretations by state officials, and NGOs.

Methods

- Oral history

- Informal group discussions

- Mapping exercise

- In- depth interviews

Research Questions (Checklist)

❏ What is the kind of identity promoted by the traditional livelihoods practiced by the communities?

❏ Are these livelihoods still viable in the contemporary context? Why?

❏ What are the opportunities and threats to practicing the traditional livelihoods?

❏ What are the non-traditional livelihoods being taken up by the community? What are the prerequisites that are required to practice such livelihoods?

❏ How does a change in livelihood impact on the identity of the community?

❏ What are the points of contact with other communities?

❏ What is the basis for such relationships? (fear, competition, prejudice, monetary transaction, profit motive, power)

❏ How do the communities see themselves in relation to other nomads and, in relation to non-nomadic communities?

❏ What are the perceptions of the latter towards the former?

❏ How does this impact on the relationship between the community and the state?

❏ How does living in unrecognized shelters affect them?

❏ What are the impacts of sedentarization?

Institutions and Access to Opportunities

Objectives

• To understand the role of state institutions in providing access to rights, opportunities and power.

• To understand the role of the civil society organization *(Muktidhara)* in activating the struggle for citizenship rights.

Indicators

• Access to state institutions

• Strategies of *Muktidhara*

Methods

• Participatory observation

• In-depth interviews

Research Questions (Checklist)

❏ What are the different approaches being used? How are they different from each other?

❏ What is the individual and cumulative impact of such institutions on the community's idea of citizenship?

❏ Are people's own ideas of citizenship in consonance with the ideals promoted by different institutions?

❏ How do different institutions create spaces for promoting citizen participation?

❏ Are these spaces consonant with each other?

❏ Where are the conflicts and contradictions? Are they mutually exclusive or inclusive?

❏ How must these institutions act to promote inclusive citizenship?

Appendix 2
Participatory Research Tools

1. Activity: Group discussion with the nomads.

Objectives

To document their understanding of the problems and citizenship rights expectations and their attempts to achieve this.

Method

Group discussion

Description of the Activity

Meetings were organized with members of the nomadic communities in the *Muktidhara* campus. The objective was to (a)understand the nomads' perceptions of their problems, citizenship rights and their expectations from the state and Muktidhara, (b) analyze the ways to develop awareness both individually and collectively; and (c) develop an understanding of the means to mobilize in order to make claims. During the group discussion with the nomads, strategies employed by *Muktidhara* were also observed and interpreted accordingly.

Representative members of the different communities viz., *banjara, gadiya luhar, bhopa, and bawariya* participated in the group discussion. They discussed the identified issues and later one member from each group gave a presentation on it. Issues for discussion were:

• Problems commonly faced by the members of the community

• Expectations from the state authorities

• Expectations from Muktidhara

Findings

Group	Problems	Expectations from state authorities	Expectations from Muktidhara	Muktidhara strategy
Bawariya	• Impermanent residence • water • victims of prejudice-villagers, police officials • poverty • lack of education	• land with title deeds for cultivation • Permanent residence	• To pressurize govt for their demands	• Advocacy for housing rights. Sent a letter to chief secretary for rehabilitation • Legal aid to Suwa bawariya against police atrocity
Banjara	• No ration card • water • victims of prejudice-villagers, police officials • poverty • lack of education • no name in voters' list	• To provide all these facilities	• To pressurize govt for their demands	• Non-formal education centre • Advocacy: letter sent to Collector Jaipur for citizenship rights
Bhopa	• water • victims of prejudice-villagers • poverty	• To provide all these facilities	• To pressurize govt for their demands	• Advocacy: letter sent to Collector Alwar for security from the villagers' harassment
Gadiya Luhar	• water • electricity • title deeds • education	• To provide all these facilities	• To pressurize govt for their demands	• Non-formal education centre • Advocacy: letter sent to Collector Jaipur for citizenship rights

2. *Activity: Drawing*

.

Objectives

- To understand the discrepancy between the ideal and actual situation.

- To understand their understanding of the problems and expectations from Muktidhara, biases of the villagers and officials.

Method

Group drawing.

Group	Problems	Expectations from state authorities
Bawariya	• Pucca house • Hand pump in the centre of village • Permanent residence	• Living in the foothills of the Aravalli hills • Living in hutment • No water
Banjara	• Living in the foothills of Aravalli hills with pucca road • Water • School and Chaupal (common meeting place)	• Living in the foothills of the Aravalli hills • Living in hutment • No water
Bhopa	• Hand pump, chaupal within the limits of community. Do not want any kind of tension with villagers. • permanent residence so that they can live with dignity • Have all the basic facilities	• No hand pump near their place of living • Living in temporary hutment.
Gadiya Luhar	• Electricity • Permanent houses • All basic infrastructure	• No water • No electricity • Live in carts and open grounds

Description of the Activity

Groups were asked to draw two maps. One was about the place where they are residing at present and the other was the type of community they would like to live in. Later one member of each group was asked to give a presentation on it. The rationale was that the other communities could understand and empathize with each other's problems.

3. *Activity: Meetings with interlocutors*

Objectives

- To gain an insight into the understanding of articulate citizens, who can offer responses or clarifications on the views of the invisible and visible citizens?

- To document their understanding of citizenship, citizenship rights, and active citizenship.

Method

Group discussion.

Description of the Activity

Interlocutors were asked about their understanding of citizenship; the indicators of citizenship, citizenship of the nomads; ways to bring the nomads into the mainstream; and their experiences.

Key Issues

that emerged from group discussion are elucidated as below:

- Citizenship has a legal dimension. Citizenship addresses the question - who is a citizen? Birth, domicile, and residence are criteria that determine one's citizenship. The nomads in that sense are citizens of India.

- Citizenship is largely a system of rights and obligations. Individual-catering rights are interwoven with commitment to community rights in favor of SCs, STs, and OBCs. Nomads are classified under SCs, STs, and OBCs, therefore, have the benefits of special privileges.

- In Rajasthan, citizens below the poverty line are entitled to certain types of development benefit schemes. The nomads do not come under BPL identified citizens because they do not have any permanent residence. They do not have any land allotted to them. Therefore they are deprived of the benefits of the development schemes meant for the poor, marginalized communities. Their deprivation is largely because of a constitutional paradox. They are called citizens of Rajasthan because of their origin yet due to the lack of a permanent residence they are denied their rights. To be selected under the BPL is in fact not a right. It is an obligatory function of the state.

- Social and economic contexts are important in determining their ability to realize equal membership. Marginality and deprivation of the nomads is largely due to the social prejudices against them. The dynamics of power relationships within the village is a crucial factor. Local people do not want the nomads to settle within their village.

- The bias against them prevails. For instance, some pointed out that the government of Rajasthan has taken steps to settle them. The *Banjaras*, despite an allotment, did not settle down. They sold their plots and moved away. Some nomads such as the *Nat*s are engaged in prostitution. Villagers find the *Bawariya* food habits objectionable.

- Nomads only want a place to settle down to live life with dignity. They are aware of the social prejudices against them. They therefore, prefer to live on the outskirts of the village, with amenities like water to avoid conflicts with the villagers. Other needs follow later such as education, health etc.

- Civil society organizations and social workers play a crucial role in sensitizing the larger community about their rights. This is largely an issue of social distance. The constitutional safeguards are there, but social biases often influence legal interventions.

- The government can only bring about social change by making sensitive policies. Many communities such as the *Meena*, once branded criminals, are now a part of the national mainstream. This change came about through the reservation policy.

About PRIA

PRIA is a civil society organization, that undertakes development initiatives to positively impact the lives of the poor, marginalized and excluded sections of the society, by encouraging and enabling their participation in the processes of their governance. It strives for achievement of equity and justice, through a people centered approach, focusing on 'Citizens'- 'their participation and inclusion', 'awareness and empowerment' and 'their democratic rights'.

PRIA recognizes the value of people's knowledge, challenges traditional myths and concepts, raises awareness of people's rights and promotes experiential learning. It applies a multi-dimensional strategic approach to creating knowledge, training and capacity building of stakeholders, public education and policy advocacy and intervenes at various levels of the demand and the supply segments, to reach out locally, nationally and globally.

Operating under two broad themes 'Reforming Governing Institutions and Civil Society Building', PRIA's people centred interventions aim at promoting active participation of the poor and marginalized in the effective utilization of resources through local governance. It engages itself in strengthening of Panchayati- Raj Institutions and municipalities, promoting environmental and occupational health, facilitating a strong network of civil society organizations, promoting citizen leadership, monitoring policies and programmes of bilateral, multilateral and government agencies, to achieve an agenda of 'Governance where People Matter.'

PRIA proactively involves and engages a range of stakeholders including academia, media, donors, civil society organizations, trade unions, private business and government agencies in its efforts and provides a platform for a multi-stakeholder development approach.

PRIA is an International Centre for learning and promotion of participation and democratic governance.