

**The Power of Uncertainty: Reflections on the Nature of Transformational Initiatives**

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Abstract

If uncertainty is at the heart of the knowledge of the world that is possible for us, what implications does this have for transformational initiatives? Does it lead to confusion, enfeeblement, non-action? Does it paralyse us? Or does it define a particular course of action, with certain defining characteristics that derive from our recognition of the ineluctable presence of uncertainty? These are large philosophical, existential questions. But to these I propose specific, concrete answers, based on and illustrated through the work done as part of Samaj Pragati Sahayog, living in a tribal area over the last 20 years, and also by reference to my early work in the Planning Commission over the past year.

**Rural Indebtedness and Distress: Whipping the Wrong Horse**

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Abstract

This paper provides concrete evidence in favour of the hypothesis that indebtedness is certainly a trigger of farm sector distress, but it is not the only 'raison d'être'. The paper begins with a brief review of recommendations of various committees on credit and their policy relevance to consolidate our understanding on issues of farmers' distress and its linkage with indebtedness. It examines the impact of indebtedness along with other important factors causing farmers' distress in Karnataka. The paper also brings out imperfections in the credit market in the agricultural sector of the state, which is marked with highly inequitable distribution of institutional credit, declining trend in institutional credit flow in the backward districts and the existence of predominantly a non-institutional credit market. In the concluding remarks, the paper suggests measures to deal with the situation of farm sector distress. It argues that the government should first focus on timely availability of credit to farmers. In addition, policy instruments towards meeting the distress should primarily address: (i) production sub-systems, (ii) input sub-systems, (iii) welfare sub-systems, (iv) support sub-systems, and (v) social sub-systems.

## **A District Level Analysis of Food Insecurity in Rural Orissa**

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### Abstract

While there have been attempts at food insecurity mapping of different states of India, notable amongst them being the Food Insecurity Atlas of Rural India by the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and World Food Programme (WFP). Till recently there were not many district level analysis on food insecurity conditions in India. One of the serious limitations being the unavailability of disaggregated data at the district/village/household level. This paper attempts to carry a district level analysis of food insecurity in rural Orissa the poorest State of the country mapped as 'severely food insecure' State by MSSRF and WFP. Without commenting upon or critiquing the methodological limitations of food security mapping carried out elsewhere, the attempt here is to rank the districts of Orissa based upon selected food security indicators of availability, accessibility, and absorption and emphasise upon the intensity of food insecurity conditions prevailing in rural Orissa. The major finding of this exercise is that at the aggregate level, none of the districts of Orissa are food secure.

## **Structure, Conduct and Performance Relationships in Indian Pharmaceutical Industry: A Simultaneous Equations Investigation**

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### Abstract

In the backdrop of introduction to deregulatory policy measures for the corporate sector as a whole since 1991 and the important amendments to the Indian Patent Act (1970) in recent years in particular, the present paper makes an attempt to examine the structure-conduct-performance (SCP) relationships in Indian pharmaceutical industry. It is found that there exist strong inter-linkages amongst the market share of the firms, their business strategies, performance and policies of the government. While market share of a firm increases with its size and market presence and declines with more inclination towards foreign technology, profitability and export intensity, selling efforts are influenced directly by technology purchase intensity and inversely by performance. Profitability of a firm, on the other hand, increases with selling efforts and past profitability in the short run but declines with the latter in the long run. Further, market share can raise the profitability of a firm only in the short run. The findings of the present paper have important policy implications for the industry in product patent regime, especially, with respect to growth and expansion of the firms, imports and in-house R&D. Thereby, it calls for further research in this line to develop a comprehensive pharmaceutical policy for India.

Keywords: Structure, Conduct, Performance, Pharmaceutical, Patent, India.

## **Identification of Backward Districts: How Objective Are the Criteria?**

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### Abstract

In 2003, the Planning Commission of India under the backward area development initiative identified 144 backward districts in the country with the objective of ushering socio-economic development through focused development schemes. These districts were identified on the basis of an index of backwardness comprising three socio-economic parameters with equal weights. This paper attempts to evaluate the worthiness of selection of Sirsa district in Haryana as a backward district in view of the criteria adopted by Planning Commission. The discussion shows that even with these three adopted parameters, the district Sirsa cannot be ranked as backward in Haryana. The paper also attempts to discuss the limitations of these selected parameters of backwardness taking Haryana as a case study. It also reflects on the implications of the implementation of BDI scheme in the wake of flaws in the identification of backward districts in the country.