Destruction in the name of Development

A study on grassroots advocacy in rural India

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6/3/2011
Abstract

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to find keys to successful advocacy in a rural, Indian setting. The study is based on inductive, explorative research at a grassroots level, from a bottom-up perspective. Geographically, it takes place in the East Godavari District, in the state of Andhra Pradesh. At the centre of this study is the NGO:s Sujana and the Kadali Network, who are both advocating the rights of poor, marginalised and deprived people, as well as training people to carry out advocacy themselves.

The theoretical framework for this thesis originates from theories within development communication, advocacy and Participatory Rural Appraisal. The research was carried out by making 16 individual interviews and 3 focus group interviews. Findings from the interviews have been categorised into themes and analysed through meaning condensation.

The result of this study shows that there are multiple ways in which grassroots movements in East Godavari conduct advocacy. The analysis states that advocacy can be successful in a short to medium time span; the most prominent keys to success being: having a driving spirit, being creative, developing networks and being knowledgeable about laws and rights. In a longer time span though, the advocacy and struggle for change is hampered by lack of, or conflicting, political interest from the local government and by conflicting economical interests from companies.

Key words

Advocacy, Development Communication, Grassroots movements, Bottom-up, Participatory Rural Appraisal, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, Special Economic Zones, Sujana, Kadali Network
Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the support from the Henry Martyn Institute, and the organisation Sujana. Both of you have our uttermost gratitude for arranging our stay in East Godavari. It has been an unforgettable experience for us to visit villages and to take part in the admirable work of Sujana. A special thank you, we want to give to Sir Rajendra Kumar with family for inviting us to stay with you, and for providing us with lots of wonderful Indian food that always filled our bellies with joy.

We also express our gratitude concerning the financial support that the Conflict Transformation Team at the Henry Martyn Institute provided us, making this study possible. Especially, we want to thank Sir Hemendar Pusa from the Henry Martyn Institute for coming with us to East Godavari as our interpreter and friend.

We would also like to thank Sir Satya Srinivas for giving us a comprehensive orientation about East Godavari and lending us books to broaden our knowledge.

At the Linnaeus University of Sweden, we want to thank Associate Professor Tanya Elder for feedback, good advice and inspiration. As our mentor, you have really guided us through the sometimes difficult and complex process of analysing the material and writing this thesis.

Not to forget, we want to thank our loved ones at home for supporting and encouraging us all the way from start to finish. We are lucky to have you!

Finally, we want to thank our neighbours on our street in Yeleswaram, who were always nice to us and gave us a very warm welcome.

Thank you!

Mr Julle Bergenholtz
Ms Åsa Ljusenius
June 2011
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Service to the reader

1. Introduction to this study
This is an introduction to what we have studied, and why we chose to study it. In here you can also find the explanation to why we named the study ‘Destruction in the name of Development’.

2. India, the State of Andhra Pradesh and the District of East Godavari
This chapter offers the reader facts worth knowing about India in general and about the geographic area of this study in particular. Subjects such as the political system, the caste system, the Indian Constitution and some legal acts are touched upon. Brief facts about population and livelihood are also presented.

3. Earlier research
Here, earlier research that can be related to this study is accounted for.

4. Purpose and research questions
In this section, the purpose of this study is clarified, and the research questions are presented. Also, the limitations of this study are described.

5. Theoretical framework
In this chapter, the theoretical framework for this thesis is laid out. The theories are: development communication, advocacy and Participatory Rural Appraisal.

6. Empirical material
In this chapter, a concise review is given of what we observed in the field. Three different cases from three geographical areas are described. They have in common that poor people have been deprived of their land and livelihood, and that these people are now conducting advocacy to voice their grievances and claim their rights. Also, human rights organisations working in East Godavari are presented.

7. Method
The Method chapter presents our research approach, and declares how this study was conducted. The methods used to collect and analyse data are presented. Reflections about difficulties and challenges when doing field research are brought up. The final part of the chapter discusses the reliability and validity of the methods, and highlights some research ethics.

8. Result
In here, the results from the study are described.
9. Analysis
The analysis chapter presents the keys to successful advocacy along with some obstacles that can get in the way of success.

10. Discussion
In this section, we discuss our findings and reason about how our results portray development.

11. Conclusion
Here, we present some final conclusions and give recommendations for further research.
1. Introduction to this study

Can development and destruction be the two sides of the same coin? How come that the Indian Gross Domestic Product is growing by 7-9% a year, while at the same time as India is home to “one third of the world’s poor people”? (World Bank India Country Overview 2010). According to one of our interviewees – whose words touched us so deeply that we decided to make them the title of this study – the authorities in India are indeed developing the Indian economy at expense of the poor and marginalised part of the population.

What you hold in your hand right now is a study on grassroots advocacy in rural India. Advocacy is a way to make the voices of marginalised and deprived people heard, so that policy makers, the media, the general public, and also other marginalised groups can hear the grievances and demands for change. In our own words, advocacy is communication in any form, about a problem you want to solve, to someone who can solve the problem, or help you on the way. Hence, the prevalence of advocacy implies that there is a problem to be solved. Hopefully it goes the other way too; hopefully wherever there is a problem, there will be advocacy.

This Bachelor Thesis analyses advocacy from a grassroots, bottom-up perspective. It focuses on poor, marginalised and deprived people in a rural part of India, namely the East Godavari district in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Given what is stated above about economic growth walking hand in hand with widespread poverty, there is indeed prevalence of problems; and in East Godavari, the setting of our study, there is fortunately also advocacy.

Being students of communication and development from Sweden, we set out on a journey to find out how communication is used in development, in a real setting. Taking a particular interest in marginalised and deprived people at the grassroots level who were trying to advocate their grievances from the bottom-up, we asked: What are the keys to success in advocacy work in this setting?

We have explored how advocacy is conducted, by whom and with what effect. During our ten days among villagers and activists in East Godavari, we realised that advocacy is so much more than running a campaign: it is a long, sometimes lifelong, struggle where dedicated groups of people do everything they can to voice their problems and claim their rights.

We also realised that development and sustainable development is not necessarily the same thing. The so called ‘development’ that we saw was: a tribal village exploited by a mining company, a whole set of villages brutally displaced due to an irrigation dam, and miles of fertile coastline turned into Special Economic Zones for industrialisation. To us, the destructive element in that form of ‘development’ is evident.

We welcome you who read this to follow us on our quest for successful advocacy in rural India. On the way you will, like we did, learn a lot about politics, laws, media, and development issues in India!
2. India, the State of Andhra Pradesh and the District of East Godavari

2.1 India

**India in numbers**
Democratic federal republic, 28 states (NE)

**Surface**: 3.2 million square kilometre (NE)

**Inhabitants**: 1.21 billion people (Census of India 2011)

**GNI per capita**: 1180 USD, whereof 52% comes from agriculture (World Bank 2009, source BBC 2011a)

**Poverty level**: 35% living on less than 1 USD per day (UN statistics 1992-2002, source NE)

**Religion**: 80.5% Hindus, 13.4% Muslims, remaining Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists or other religions (NE)

The Republic of India, with its 1.21 billion inhabitants is the second largest country in the world regarding population (Census of India 2011). In fact, every fifth person born on this planet is Indian, and of those, 29% live in urban areas (ibid).

2.1.1 Democracy and the Indian Constitution

India consists of 28 states. Each state has its own state parliament, state government, and high court. These are united by a national government and parliament. Election is held every fifth year. The head of state is the President, but in terms of real power, the Prime Minister rules the country. The national government deals with international affairs, military defence, communication networks, currency, etc, while state governments deal with local administration, law and order, police force, agriculture, healthcare, etc (NE). The parliaments – both at state level and national level – have legislative power. The national Supreme Court is the highest judicial authority in India. By right of the Indian Constitution, the Supreme Court has the power to invalidate laws.

The Indian Constitution came into effect in January 1950. It states that everyone is equal before the law and gave all citizens freedom of thought, speech and assembly. Further, it forbids any form of discrimination based on religion, sex or castes (NE).
2.1.2 The Caste System

Even though the constitution forbids discrimination due to caste (The Indian Constitution), the caste system in India is still very much alive (BBC 2011a). In brief, the caste system consists of four main categories or varnas, as demonstrated in the picture. Below the varnas are the Dalits, or untouchables. A person is born into his or her caste, and each caste is traditionally connected to an occupation. Sudras and Dalits are used as servants and to take care of land—but they are often not allowed to own any land. In the past, the upper castes feared that if the lowest castes received education, they would try to rebel and take over. Hence, low caste people who tried to get education would be severely punished (interviews with Sujana).

Today, to counteract discrimination, low caste people are allocated a quota of the places in education and politics. Those qualified to avail such benefits are labelled either as Scheduled Castes or as Scheduled Tribes in line with the Indian Constitution Articles 341 and 342 respectively. These articles lay down that it is the President together with the Governor of a state who has the power to give either of these labels to a group of people (Census of India 2001b). In 2001, 16.2% of the population in India was Scheduled Castes, and 8.2% was Scheduled Tribes (Census India 2001a). A national government policy allocates 15% of the places at universities and 15% of the government jobs to Scheduled Castes. The percentage for Scheduled Tribes is 7.5% (Maps of India). Yet, from what we have learned from the interviews; in reality, the extremely poor people do not have enough time or money to engage in education or politics, even though there are quotas.

2.1.3 Poverty

A steady annual growth in GDP has given India membership in the G20, the 20 most powerful economies in the world (NE). Despite that, the country is facing severe problems with poverty and underemployment (BBC 2010). According to UN statistics from 1992 to 2002, 35% of the Indians live on less than one US dollar per day (NE). The scheduled castes and tribal castes are particularly poor and vulnerable. Often, they make a living as landless rural workers in the countryside, very dependent on employment within agriculture. More than 60% live in rural areas, but the cities are predicted to provide 70% of the new jobs. Every year, large numbers of rural workers move to the cities in search for better lives. They end up in slum areas or sleeping on the streets, and they remain poor (BBC 2010). More and more, rich people are investing in land, causing the land prices to rise. Also, the living costs in India are rising. This makes life harder for poor people (interview with Sujana).
2.1.4 Media in India

With 60,000 papers printed in a total of 155 million copies, papers are an outstanding channel for communication in India. The majority of the papers are privately owned by small companies or by family businesses (NE). The state monopoly on TV channels was broken in 1992 (BBC 2011a), and radio channels went through the same change in 2000 (NE). Almost 80% of the population had access to watching TV in 2006, but less than a third of the population listened to radio. Of the radio listeners, the majority live in rural areas (NE). When it comes to the Internet, 81 million Indians were estimated to be online in 2008 (Internetworldstats, source BBC 2011a). Concerning liability, the organisation Reporters Without Borders claimed in their annual report from 2008 that ‘the violence of political parties as well as religious and separatist groups’ constitute a threat to the freedom of press in India (Reporters Without Borders, source BBC 2011a).

2.2 The State of Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is by a geographical measure the fourth largest region in India, accounting for about 8.37% of the total Indian territory (Andhra Pradesh Portal Home). It is situated in the south-eastern part of India. Approximately 83 million people live in the region. Hyderabad is the state capital with slightly above 4 million inhabitants (Siasat 2011). The main languages are Telugu and Urdu, with Telugu being exclusive to the state. Andhra Pradesh is constructed by the regions Telangana, Andhra and Rayalaseema, which were connected to form Andhra Pradesh after the Indian independence due to the same usage of the Telugu language (Andhra Pradesh Portal History).

According to the Human Development Report from 2007, Andhra Pradesh has in recent years been successful in developing the state and addressing poverty and underemployment by for example working with self-help groups and economical reforms. However, the report also remarks that these efforts, while commendable, are not sufficient, and that the state should focus on a more ‘inclusive growth’ to make sure that a larger part of society can benefit from the development (Andhra Pradesh Human Development Report 2007:187ff). Encouraging social movements and addressing the divides of economic status between different castes are seen as key points by the UN to make Andhra Pradesh more developed for everybody (ibid).

Industry and technology has been the focus of much attention during recent years to enhance economic growth; partly due to the fact that Andhra Pradesh does not attract the same amount of tourists as neighbouring states do. (Andhra Pradesh Industries Portal). The state is one of the most developed industrial states in India, and the
number of people leaving the countryside to work in urban industries grows larger (BBC 2010).

As Seethalakshmi (2009) explains, Andhra Pradesh is one of the leading states, when it comes to implementing the 2005 legal act about Special Economic Zones, second only to Maharashtra (2009:xvii). This has led to a land reform in which state authorities have been grabbing land to make room for the construction of industries. This has displaced large segments of population and lead to conflict over land. Those who suffer the consequences of this land grabbing are especially the small scale rural farmers owning less than 10 acres of land, which stands for 96 % of India’s agriculture (NE). These small scale farmers have raised their voices concerning this issue; and we have interviewed some of these farmers in this study.

2.3 The District of East Godavari

The district East Godavari, which is the setting for this study, is located in the north east of Andhra Pradesh, neighbouring the Bay of Bengal in the east. The population is approximately 5 million people (Census India Maps 2001c). The district is known for being ‘the rice bowl of Andhra Pradesh with lush paddy fields and coconut groves’ (East Godavari District Centre). The area is characterised mostly by agriculture and fishing along the coastlines. Foreign tourists are very sparsely seen outside of the district capital Kakinada, and we noticed that everywhere we went, we were greeted as something extraordinary.

It is estimated that about 10 % of the agricultural crops of Andhra Pradesh is produced in East Godavari, making the district an important contributor to the state income (ibid). However, due to the Special Economic Zones act, this percentage is at risk in the future; as more and more industrial settlements are established.

The district has a large rural and tribal populace, constituting approximately 75 % of the entire population (Census India Maps 2001c). As stated by Sujana, this portion of the population to a large extent contains people from the lowest castes, who are living on limited resources. We believe that if we can analyse tribal and rural citizens’ possibility to advocate and communicate their issues and problems, our study can be of great importance to a large part of the population of East Godavari.
2.4 Why this geographical area is of interest to us

Minding what is described above about the harshening living conditions for the poor, we argue that Andhra Pradesh in general and East Godavari in particular is a suitable place for conducting a grassroots advocacy study. We reckon that protests from grassroots organisations are a sign of deprivation, which in turn can be fertile soil for advocacy. Since Andhra Pradesh is the second most affected state in India regarding the grabbing of land for Special Economic Zones, we are interested in looking at advocacy measures there.

When it comes to East Godavari, we learned from Sujana that there are many examples of marginalisation and deprivation in the district as a result of actions from the local government and from companies. We were also informed that Sujana and the Kadali Network are carrying out advocacy there, and we were invited by Sujana to come and do this study. Seeing that our study could fill a gap in the existing knowledge about advocacy in East Godavari, and hoping that the result of our study would be of help to grassroots movements, we were happy to accept the offer.
3. Earlier research

Since East Godavari has not been the subject of much academic research within the discipline of communication studies, it is hard to find viable sources of information on this topic. However grassroots advocacy is a prevalent issue not only in the region, but across India. Our review of earlier research thus addresses the issue of advocacy in India and seeks to find both the general as well as the specific features of grassroots mobilisation.

Gail Omvedt (cited in Ray et al. 2005) describes in her article Farmers’ movements and poverty that the shift in economic development in India towards neo-liberalism has created a situation in which ‘all public responsibilities are being forsaken and the old ideas and values are being lost’ (2005:180). Thus, according to Omvedt, the Indian government is taking a step away from its historical affiliation with Gandhism, which focuses on traditional village oriented life, to instead focus more on urbanisation and economic growth.

Omvedt further explains that to protest against political decisions and injustices, four different kinds of movement have been present in India: anti-caste movement, women’s movement, environmental movement and farmers’ movement. She however notes that neither the government nor most of the social movement groups advocate for poverty reduction in monetary form. Instead, the changes that the different groups are advocating for usually centres around life quality variables like caste equality and the recognition of human rights (2005:183ff). Focusing on key issues such as these, the movements seek to raise awareness through dharnas (protest marches) and road blockades, and by making rallies of different kinds (ibid).

Omvedt describes that farmers’ organisations, rural environmental movements and unorganised villages rose up in rebellion in the 1970’s and has since strived and fought to ensure their rights (2005:184ff). Seethalakshmi (2009) also recognises that fighting inequalities is carried out extensively by rural movements; and that historically these movements have been crucial in preventing unjust legislations and criticising human rights violations. In her study Special Economic Zones in Andhra Pradesh, she sees that the mobilisation of farmers and the techniques used by them to prevent them from losing their property are vital in keeping the rural life of Andhra Pradesh intact. She sees that some affected regions in Andhra Pradesh have started a protest, resisting the Special Economic Zones. This has lead to questionings about the so called ‘development’ process (2009:139). Protesters have put pressure on politicians regarding their rights, and filed court cases against those responsible for land grabbing. Such protest actions have made it possible for media to cover the issue. Seethalakshmi’s study shows that grassroots advocacy can – if it is mobilised correctly – resist decisions made by the authorities.

Neema Kudva also sees in his article Strong States, Strong NGO:s that mobilisation is a key part in grassroots advocacy in modern India, and that NGO:s play an important role in creating change in society. He believes that the role of NGO:s has undergone
tremendous change as India shifted course from ‘a Nehruvian democratic socialist state to one where market triumphalism and religious nationalism have become dominant forces’ (2005:234). NGO:s are now struggling to get the voices of the people heard while simultaneously trying to be an ally to the state, or as Kudva describes it, shifting from a consolidating relationship to an antagonistic relationship to the state (2005:238). Aware of this challenge, leading political NGO:s made a strategic plan in 1992 to handle the state while at the same time bring about social change. This consisted of four approaches:

- Working with governments to change political policies
- Focusing on lobbying and advocacy to a larger extent than before
- Broaden the field where the political NGO:s would practice advocacy
- Network to a larger extent between NGO:s and other interest groups (2005:239)

With this in mind, the NGO:s themselves need to be strong and organised in their advocacy work in order to take on the state in an efficient way. Kudva also claims that these techniques in addressing the political system are only one aspect of the struggle to make change. The local communities where many NGO:s are situated are just as important. Kudva sees that a strong local political mobilisation against poverty and above all effective communication methods are essential for grassroots groups to get a say in developmental matters. Kudva concludes that NGO:s at best have a limited impact in actually changing legislations and policies, but they are nevertheless an important actor in the development sphere when it comes to raising public awareness.

In his book on grassroots advocacy in India, John Sommer provides different examples of movements and campaigns. When describing the work of a rural empowerment movement in Maharashtra, (2001:21ff), he emphasises that there are several key points in advocacy that needs to be addressed in order for initiatives to be successful. Firstly, knowing the field you want to change, and especially being aware of laws that may assist you in your struggle, gives you leverage against the government and the credibility to create a following (2001:36). Secondly, Sommer sees it as important to be able to counter your opponent’s moves, thereby creating action plans that will enable you to tackle arguments or actions against you (ibid). An example of such a situation could be caste discrimination, and addressing the, according to Sommer, lack of engagement against it (2001:50). By pointing towards the existing laws and the effects they have nationally as well as from an international perspective (ibid), Sommer argues, attention and discussion can emerge.

Even though grassroots movements and local projects garner a lot of praise for what they achieve, Friedmann argues that while small projects are admirable in what they do, they still lack the greater impact of development projects (1992:139ff). Friedmann sees that local projects often make a change for the limited population it wants to serve, but that such projects are costly to finance and hard to replicate since they are situational. According to Friedmann, it is also impossible to make small scale development projects grow into large scale initiatives, since he argues that “small works because it’s small. (...) Painted on a larger canvas, small may not work at all’
(Friedmann 1992:141). He also believes that small organisations and NGO:s, which stands for the alternative development cannot avoid contact with the state if they want to make large changes. This is problematic since for an alternative development to occur, since having the state get involved means having a powerful presence nearby that can minimise the impact the project searches for. (1992:142f). Grassroots advocacy may therefore not have the impact that is expected, and while Friedmann sees it as a great addition in the developmental sphere, he realises that poverty alleviation, not development, is what grassroots movements has the potential to reach.

Meera Tiwari also acknowledges that the difference that grassroots movements are able to make, are at a level where outsiders may not see the difference (2009). In fact, Tiwari highlights that a lot of the work that grassroots movements do is not seen by researchers in the field, making the impact that the movements have go unnoticed. She is therefore critical towards quantitative studies of grassroots movements, since they seldom see the details of what the grassroots movements achieve. She therefore argues that grassroots work should be more qualitatively examined, and that it is important not only to look at what can be found, but also what can not be found, in order to truly map the work and impact made by the movements that work in the field.

Instead, advocacy concerning the poorest segments of society can be made more visible through the intervention from an international level. Although many movements are created by the people themselves, Martin Aranguren argues that international influence could be helpful in raising the voices of the poor to a greater extent (2011). This might sound like a classical top-down perspective, but Aranguren believes that if an international force intervene, in this case the UN addressing Dalit discrimination in India, many positive changes can happen over a small period of time. In this example, the UN included Dalit rights on its agenda against the will of the Indian state, scoring a victory which grassroots movements would have had difficulty in reaching themselves. Even though new legislation would not have been able to be achieved solely through advocacy, a legislation and policy change was finalised after putting pressure on the Indian government (2011). It can be argued that grassroots movements have a greater responsibility and opportunity to change the situation of its specific community, but in achieving larger national policy changes, the influence of international voices might be necessary. Another example of this is the fight against the Ugandan proposition to make homosexual activities punished with death sentences. As BBC explains, due to large international outcry and critique, Uganda was not able to pass the proposed legislation (BBC 2011b); something that very well could have happened had the international community been silent. Grassroots movements might therefore need assistance in making the long term changes at a societal or national level.

Even though the odds are against the common citizens and NGO:s, earlier success stories show that if you know your territory, it is possible to make use of the legal acts to push for further rights. Martin Webb sees that grassroots movements can apply laws like the Right to Information Act (an act which enable anyone to access governmental documents) to check possible governmental inconsistency and corruption (Webb 2010). By being able to falsify statements from the government about actions made or not
made, it is possible to expose the inconsistencies of the government and put pressure on it to actually fulfil its duties. In this process, media can also be used to raise the issues at hand claims Webb. This can be highlighted by producing articles about governmental misconduct, making it necessary for the government to rectify what individuals or groups within the government have caused. The arguments put forward earlier by Kudva about the impact on NGOs can therefore be problematic, as local governments often are suspicious of false conduct, making it difficult for NGO:s and grassroots movements to make a difference without becoming the enemy of the government.
4. Purpose and research questions

‘Destruction in the name of Development – A study on grassroots advocacy in rural India’ is a Bachelor thesis in Media & Communication with focus on advocacy. The purpose of the thesis is to study development communication and advocacy from a bottom-up perspective. The aim is to find keys to success in advocacy at grassroots level in a rural Indian setting.

The following research questions have guided us through this study:

- What are the keys to success in advocacy at the grassroots level in East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, rural India?
- How is advocacy conducted in this setting?
- Who are the actors involved, and what roles do they play?
- How do the organisations Sujana and the Kadali Network work with grassroots groups?

To be able to answer these questions, a definition of success is needed, along with ways to measure success. Given the following definition of advocacy, the success we are looking for needs to be based on the same definition:

Public advocacy is a planned and organised set of actions to effectively influence public policies and to have them implemented in a way that would empower the marginalised. (NCAS, cited in Subedi 2008:56)

Hence, our conclusion is that success is when public policies are changed, and when the changes are implemented so that people’s lives are improved.

When it comes to measuring successful advocacy, we found that our initial intention – to look at the outputs of single advocacy activities – was not enough. The model below, published in Advocacy Strategies and Approaches (Subedi 2008:124) illustrates that measuring ‘outputs’ is a step on a larger ladder. To climb the entire ladder and measure successful advocacy, this model highlights the need to look at the ‘effects’ and ‘impacts’ of the outputs of every advocacy activity. During our research process we realised that the people we interviewed and the organisations we studied used the full ladder to measure success. For this reason, we have come to embrace all five steps when we refer to successful advocacy in this thesis. Put in other words, success is when the implemented policy changes are sustainable, when the effects and impacts will last.
It may take long time before effects and impacts on a grassroots level occur, and in some cases the policy changes are not implemented in a way that actually improves people’s lives (Subedi 2008:124). Therefore we discovered that in order to map successful advocacy, it is also necessary to look at disruptive structures that hamper the successes of advocacy.

4.1 Limitations

Since this is a Bachelor Thesis at undergraduate level at a Swedish university, the allocated university credits for this thesis is 30 ECTS, which is equivalent to 10 weeks of full time studies. Given this time frame, we had to give our study some limitations: We search for keys to successful advocacy by investigating how advocacy is conducted and who the actors involved are. We do not look at advocacy carried out by other actors than those at the grassroots, bottom-up level. What we do though is glance at how other actors facilitate or interfere with the grassroots advocacy. In addition, we do not take the question of what the keys to successful advocacy are further into normative questions about how successful advocacy should be.

Our host, the organisation Sujana, got to play a pivotal role in teaching us about East Godavari and matching us with interviewees. We would not have had the time, money or knowledge about the geographical area to conduct this study without the support from Sujana.
5. Theoretical framework

5.1 Development Communication

According to Thomas L McPhail:

*Development communication is the process of intervening in a systematic or strategic manner with either media…or education…for the purpose of positive social change. The change could be economic, personal, as in spiritual, social, cultural, or political (2009:3).*

Development communication in the form that we have studied it is *bottom-up* communication from the *grassroots*, or – at the best of times – a two way communication between the grassroots and the decision makers. Tying that to the quote above, the process of intervening could be broadened beyond media and education, and also target the political debate. (For a continued discussion on development communication in a political forum, please see the section on *advocacy* below.) McPhail points out that the discipline of development communication has undergone a transformation from a linear, top-down approach towards greater participation from the grassroots (2009). He emphasises that the power of grassroots movements and a bottom-up approach should be acknowledged in order to bring about social change. We agree with McPhail that the participatory, bottom-up approach deserves more attention; and that is why we chose to study it. To explicate why we deem it important to position our research in a bottom-up angle, a quick overview of how the field of development communication has evolved is appropriate.

When development communication first came about, it was as a tool for those providing development projects or programs to persuade the presumable benefiters to participate and agree to be developed. Thus, the communication was linear from a sender at the ‘top’ to a receiver at the ‘bottom’, inspired by the marketing industry (Mefalopulos & Tufte 2009:1). Such approach can be referred to the *modernisation theory* (Waisbord 2001:2-6). In short, the modernisation theory believes that communication should focus on providing enough information to persuade people to change their attitudes and behaviour in order to enable development. The core of the problem with underdevelopment is – according to modernisation theory – *lack of information* combined with a *culture* that hinders change and development. A very influential branch of modernisation theory is the *diffusion theory* by Everett Rogers (ibid:4). A linear flow of information is diffused step by step to convince the receivers to change attitude and behaviour. The diffusion theory is described in Mefalopulos’ & Tufte’s table below (2009:8).

During the 1970s, criticism against the top-down hegemony of modernisation and diffusion made scholars like Everett Rogers reconsider and instead embrace the value of ‘mutual understanding’ (Rogers 1976, cited in Waisbord 2001:5). The time when persuasion was at the top of the agenda started to slowly fade into history. Participatory communication, as McPhail describes it, builds on three principles: firstly the people
whom are to be developed are seen as experts on their own situation and should therefore take part in the debate to find possible solutions. Secondly, people at the grassroots have a human right to put forward their needs and perspectives, and to have a voice in matters that affect them. Thirdly, whatever the development project is about, including the affected population in it has proven to be a good way to enhance local support and commitment – which in turn are keys to succeed with the development and maintain the result (2009:28,160-161).

A middle way between the modernisation or diffusion approach and the participatory approach to development communication is the life skill model (Mefalopulos & Tufte 2009:7). Like the name suggests, the model is about developing personal skills to improve one’s life. The desired skills can be about attaining better health, generating more income or taking part in the political life in the community and claiming one’s political (and human) rights (ibid 2009:2). Although we focus mainly on participatory bottom-up communication in our research, we have found when conducting interviews in the field that skill training is a necessary and useful tool to gain the knowledge and skills needed to do successful advocacy.

The picture below is borrowed from Mefalopulos & Tufte (2009:8). It visualises the similarities and differences between the modernisation/diffusion model, the participatory model and the life skill model on nine key aspects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Communication</th>
<th>The Diffusion Model (one-way/monologic communication)</th>
<th>The Life Skills Model</th>
<th>The Participatory Model (two-way/dialogic communication)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of the problem</td>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>Lack of information and skills</td>
<td>Lack of stakeholders’ engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of culture</td>
<td>Culture as obstacle</td>
<td>Culture as ally</td>
<td>Culture as “way of life”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of catalyst</td>
<td>External change agent</td>
<td>External catalyst in partnership with the community</td>
<td>Joint partnership (external and internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of education</td>
<td>Banking pedagogy</td>
<td>Life skills, didactics</td>
<td>Liberating pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of groups of references</td>
<td>Passive: targets audiences</td>
<td>Active: targets trainee groups</td>
<td>Active: targets citizen/stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How you are communicating</td>
<td>Messages to persuade</td>
<td>Messages and experiences</td>
<td>Social issues engaged, problem-posing, dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main notion of change</td>
<td>Individual behavior</td>
<td>Individual behavior, social norms, experiential learning</td>
<td>Individual and social behavior, social norms, power relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected outcome</td>
<td>Change of individual behavior, numerical results</td>
<td>Change of individual behavior, increased skills</td>
<td>Articulation of political and social processes, sustainable change, collective action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of activity</td>
<td>Short- and mid-term</td>
<td>Short- and mid-term</td>
<td>Mid- and long-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mefalopulos & Tufte 2009:8
As seen in the picture, the diffusion model promotes a short- to midterm change of individual behaviour instilled by persuasion from an external actor. This external actor is presumed to be superior when it comes to knowing the right information and having a culture that is more suitable to embrace development (compared to the recipients, whose culture is an obstacle to development). The life skill model is similar in the sense that it wants to bridge the gap of ‘lack of information’ and change an individual’s behaviour in a short time span; but it differs because it calls for partnership between external actors and target groups in the skill training. The aim is no longer to persuade, and culture is no longer seen as an obstacle. Finally, to the right is the participatory model, defining the core problem in development communication not as a lack of information, but as a lack of engagement from those in power to bring about change. Hence, social norms and power relations are questioned. The participatory model promotes a dialogue with affected citizens, and the citizens are encouraged to take collective action to voice their demands for a sustainable, long-term social change.

In our study, we find it essential to look at an active grassroots level who takes initiatives to question existing power relations and claim their rights. To us, it is natural that the affected population should be in position to debate their problems and present possible solutions. We certainly do not blame culture to be an obstacle for change – instead we acknowledge the capacity of every marginalised and deprived group to define their true problem and voice their needs. Joint partnerships and long-term perspectives are preferred by us in order to harvest successful development that can be stable and sustainable.

5.2 Advocacy

In this study, we use a definition of advocacy from the Indian National Centre for Advocacy Studies, NCAS:

"Public advocacy is a planned and organised set of actions to effectively influence public policies and to have them implemented in a way that would empower the marginalised. In a liberal democratic culture, it uses the instruments of democracy and adopts non-violent and constitutional means. (NCAS, cited in Subedi 2008:56)"

NCAS states that advocacy must empower the marginalised people whom it aims to benefit, and not just give them their rights without involving them as actors in the process. Advocacy should be done by mobilising a front of marginalised and deprived citizens to represent the issue at hand and claim their rights (Subedi 2008:57).

Advocacy as a theory is – according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, ICIMOD¹ – multifaceted. ICIMOD states that advocacy can for instance be actions to enhance empowerment, claim one’s human rights, address political corruption or pinpoint discriminatory legislations (Subedi 2008:57). In addressing these

¹The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development is a learning and knowledge centre focused on improving living standards and ecosystems in the Hindu-Kush – Himalaya region. Member countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan (Subedi 2008).
causes, advocacy works as a bridge between the deprived side and the powerful side to facilitate a ‘win-win situation’ (ibid 2008:128), leading up to a negotiation about the issue at hand.

However, Edwards highlights that there is more to advocacy than building bridges. He argues that “it is not enough to present a critique of policy without also demonstrating what might have worked in its place” (1993:165). True advocacy must therefore go beyond claiming that there is discrimination and ignorance of human rights going on, and provide those in power with concrete advice of what to do instead. For example, this can be done by referring to how similar cases have been solved in another society. Edwards therefore argues that combining actions at micro level – grassroots – with experiences at macro level – national or even global – is a crucial part of successful advocacy (ibid 2009).

In line with Edwards’ reasoning, ICIMOD puts forward three important focus areas to address when advocacy measures are being planned (Subedi 2008:59). These are known as the three P:s, and include:

- Making and reforming policies
- Making sure policies are practiced the way they are supposed to
- Making sure the practices empower people to claim their rights

By following these focus areas; one can start moving towards accomplishing the objectives of the advocacy campaign. In this, ICIMOD pinpoints that media plays a significant role in putting the issues at hand on the agenda. By showcasing the issue in the appropriate media, and taking care of opportunities given to proclaim the issue, a large step can be taken in order to start a dialogue with the authorities to change the situation at hand (Subedi 2008:107).

An old catchphrase in developments goes something like ‘If you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day, but if you teach him how to fish, he will eat for life’ (Sommer 2001:13). As the technological progression of developing countries takes off at a rapid rate, and as the gaps between rich and poor grows wider, John Sommer claims that advocacy is no longer sufficient in the 20th century. While many development projects have moved away from providing people with what they need, giving them a fish, to enabling them to do it themselves, teaching them how to fish, he sees that one step further is needed:

“If it is clear that without free access to waters containing fish, and the absence of resources to obtain fishing nets and effectively market the fish caught, knowledge of fishing is not enough (Sommer 2001:13)

With this, Sommer declares that advocacy is about challenging power relations, in order to empower the poor. Advocacy should not only aspire to change things at a local level, but to change structures in society at large.

In this thesis, we look at the kind of advocacy that Sommer describes – advocacy which seeks to change policies, laws and structures in society. In our own words, advocacy is
communication in any form, about a problem you want to solve, to someone who can solve the problem, or help you on the way. With this definition, and the definition from NCAS (above), we studied advocacy performed from the bottom and up. We discovered different techniques used at a grassroots level to get attention from politicians – someone who can solve the problem. Sometimes the way to get the politicians attention was to raise support from likeminded NGO:s, engage the media, or even to file a case in court – steps that help you on the way.

5.3 Participatory Rural Appraisal

To study development communication and advocacy from a participatory, bottom up perspective, it is vital that we as researchers go about collecting information in a manner that promotes participation and presents the findings from the participant’s point of view. We were influenced by a research form called Participatory Rural Appraisal – PRA. Robert Chambers, an influential scholar within this discipline explains that PRA builds on using existing knowledge; a researcher must be humble and realise that the local population can teach her or him a lot (2008). The backbone of PRA is that it takes its point of departure in the attitudes, behaviours and world view of the participants. Further, the research methods should be chosen by, or at least in a dialogue with the respondents. The whole process is a mutual learning experience for the researcher and the participants. The results of the study should according to Chambers be shared with the participants in a manner that is useful for them, and also with other groups that might be interested in the study. In this way, the knowledge produced by the study and the result can be a tool for empowerment (ibid). As proof of this, we have decided to write this thesis in English, to enable the people we have worked with in the field to take part of our findings. This thesis will therefore not only be beneficial to us as authors, but also for Sujana and other interested parties that want to know more about grassroots advocacy.

A further description of PRA methods will be presented in the Method chapter.
6. Empirical material

6.1 Description of the three cases

6.1.1 The Yeleru Project

Initiated in 1982, the Yeleru Project was a project to build a dam in the Yeleru River which was supposed to provide a steel plant with water. To convince the population living close by the proposed dam site that the dam should be built, the steel plant made a successful propaganda campaign. They spread the message that having a dam and a steel plant in the surroundings would be beneficial for the people. This worked, and the people supported the idea. However, the people did not know that by constructing the dam, their villages would be drowned, and they would lose their property and land. When the losses were a fact, the government promised monetary compensation and job opportunities at the steel plant; but today, almost 30 years afterwards, the population still awaits a rightful compensation. According to Sujana, the inhabitants of eleven villages are today living in five different displacement villages due to the Yeleru Project. This is the setting for the conflict.

To protest against the maltreatment, the villagers have during the last decades tried in numerous ways to communicate their grievances to the local politicians. By taking advantage of the judicial system and filing court cases, by conducting long protest marches, by placing grievance letters in the ballot boxes along with their voting bills, and other advocacy actions, the Yeleru people – with the help of Sujana – have stood up for their rights to compensation. The fight is still going on, and according to interviewed villagers of Lakkavaram and Kambala Palem, more campaigns are planned for the future.

In this case, it is worth mentioning two judicial opportunities used by the Yeleru people. The first is the public interest litigation (PIL) which is a government financed initiative enabling a citizen or a group to get free judicial counsel for filing court cases (Public Interest Litigation 2008). In short, the people use this government funded litigation to make court cases against the government itself! The second judicial measure used is the Lok Adalat. The Lok Adalat is an open court where political parties and citizens with grievances meet in order to come to a mutual agreement (Lok Adalat 2002). Though looking good at first glance, the Yeleru people have abandoned this initiative since they felt that the judges and the government were cooperating against the people, ‘scratching each other’s backs’. For a more detailed description of the Yeleru conflict, see Appendix 1.
6.1.2 The Vanthada mining

The Vanthada village is situated on the top of a hill in the mountain range called the Eastern Ghats. It is a tribal village, inhabited by approximately 300 villagers. When Sujana first approached the village in the year 2000 about what concerns it had, the villagers explained that they needed a road down from the mountain to the valley. Through government funding, the building of a road leading down the west of the mountain was initiated. The government funding was however stopped. One year later, the government built another road but this time on the east side of the mountain. By chopping down a large area of trees, this new road was made wide enough not only for pedestrians, but for heavy vehicles as well. Ultimately, it allowed a mining company to start investigating the mountain for mining possibilities. After some research, it was discovered that the mountain had rich amounts of the valuable minerals bauxite and laterite. Mining started.

After being tricked into signing an agreement with the company, the villagers of Vanthada have been struggling for ten years to close the mine. They have used advocacy measures like getting media attention from papers and television, bringing politicians to the mining site, sending grievances to the government and blocking the road to the mine. The mine has been closed several times, but due to political interests in the mining and complaints made by the company, the site has been reopened soon after being closed. As of today, the site has been closed since January 2011 as a response to a case study report made by Sujana to the government. This conflict is however not looked upon as solved, since political stakes and legislative loopholes have altered the situation before.

Several points are worth recognising in this case, where Indian laws and rights have been ignored. Firstly, building the Eastern road was a crime against Indian forest laws, because the trees that were cut down in order to build the road were part of a protected forest under the Forest Right Act. Further, the chopping of trees goes against a forest protection scheme called *Vana Samrakshana Sammiti*, which is financed by the World Bank to stop the decrease of forest lands in India (World Bank Report 2009). It also goes against the *D-form patta land*, an act where low caste people have been given stewardship over land by the government to earn a living from that land (Seethalakshmi 2009:xvii). By claiming that the land in the Vanthada area was government land, the mining company could use the land for mining; while in reality, it was illegal for the company to mine on D-form patta land. For a more detailed description of the Vanthada conflict, see Appendix 2.
6.1.3 The Special Economic Zones - SEZ

As India changed its economic system to neo-liberalism in the 1990’s, a lot of changes happened in India’s politics. Economic growth and profit became something that was necessary for the country’s development. In the 2000’s, neo-liberalism had been in system for some years, but the Indian government felt that something more needed to be done in order to attract national and international companies to invest in India. Therefore, in 2002-2004, the government began to compose a new legal act which would enable companies to establish themselves in India without having to pay taxes during the first 10 years. These areas would be known as the Special Economic Zones – SEZ, and would not be considered as Indian territory once a company had established itself there. When this act was presented in 2005, it was proclaimed as a great employment opportunity for millions of Indians, which would in turn be very beneficial for the economy of the nation.

With this, the government began making so called ‘SEZ notifications’, meaning that the owners of land in a specific area were notified that their land would soon become Special Economic Zones. With this, the government wanted landlords and farmers to sell their land in order for companies to use it. In return, they promised monetary compensation and job opportunities. The reality of these promises has, according to several villages, been different. Farmers who have sold their land have in many cases received a much lower compensations than expected; and farmers refusing to sell have been threatened with police forcibly removing people from their living area. An anti-SEZ movement has been formed both in Andhra Pradesh and in other Indian states. Advocacy has been made by for example doing national hunger strikes, marching long protest marches and having media cover large protest rallies and mass meetings. Though many advocacy methods have been used, little impact has been spotted as the government continuously notifies new areas for a future SEZ. The conflict is thereby very much alive.

The Special Economic Zones have displaced millions of people and deprived them of working opportunities since no compensating job opportunities have been given to the majority of the affected people. This harsh reality highly contradicts the act of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme – NREGS, which guarantees a rural or Dalit household a daily wage labour job for minimum 100 days per year (NREGA AP). But, since the SEZ notified areas are considered foreign territory, the people cannot apply to get a NREGS financed job according to Sujana and Seethalakshmi (2009:xx[sic]). The people therefore use the PIL and Lok Adalat laws to promote their cause and implement NREGS in their society. For a more detailed description of the Special Economic Zones issue, see Appendix 3.
6.2 Organisations working in the area

Many of the advocacy methods used in the cases we have studied would not have been possible by the strength of the villagers alone. Having an ally was crucial for an advocacy campaign to have impact, and here we will present some of these partner organisations.

6.2.1 The Organisation Sujana

This human rights organisation, with its base in Yeleswaram, East Godavari, has worked since the 1990’s with different issues in the region concerning human rights in general and Dalit rights especially. It has featured in many human rights campaigns as a mobilising force. During the 1980’s and 1990’s, the founder of Sujana (who we, out of confidentiality, will not mention by name) became known in the area for his engagement in empowering the oppressed, garnering Sujana a great reputation among the marginalised people in East Godavari.

An important part of Sujana’s work is to create awareness among rural and tribal people. The main communication method used in this area is to conduct cultural events where staff from the organisation sing songs and perform theatre plays and dances about concerns that people run the risk of facing in the future. This has proven effective in order to make people discuss their current situation and to mobilise them into taking action.

*The Right to Information Act (RTI)* is another way for Sujana to create awareness, and to critically examine the government. This is done by sending an appeal to take part of specific government documents (Right to Information Act, East Godavari District Centre). Sujana thereafter examine if what is written in the document has actually been truthfully carried out by the government. If this is not the case, this is brought forward to the community affected by the government’s deception, and also to the RTI court. This enables Sujana to pinpoint governmental corruption and to make sure that those responsible receive judicial punishment.

Sujana also makes investments in different projects for villages to take on. By for example instituting self-help groups, implementing grain banks to improve village food security and by helping with providing water resources to villages, Sujana gives support to those in need. Sujana also networks with other human rights organisations, particularly the Kadali Network in the struggle against the SEZ movement.

6.2.2 The Kadali Network

The Kadali Network is, as the name suggests, a network of activists and organisations that has come together in order to fight the SEZ movement. The network has been active since 2005 and has since then supported villagers who have refused to sell their land. Also, they have helped people that have been displaced after selling. When interviewed, displaced Dalits describe that without the support and enthusiasm from
the Kadali Network, they would have been lost – or to quote them: they ‘would have been taken by the sea’.

The Kadali Network also cooperates with other social movements against the SEZ on a national level. In the past, the network has worked with Medha Patkar, a well known Indian human rights activist, to put the SEZ issue on the agenda in Andhra Pradesh. This has been done by organising mass meetings and giving presentations to the citizens.

Another famous scholar who has been a partner of the network is the late Kandalla Balagopal, who before his death publicised several reports on the devastation that SEZ brought about.

6.2.3 Other organisations

There are smaller organisations in the region too, which struggle for similar causes and have connections with Sujana and the Kadali Network. Some examples are:

- **CRYNet** – a union of several small organisations, one being Sujana, that fights for enhanced rights for Dalit and tribal people in four districts of Andhra Pradesh (CRYNet).

- **Samata** – an organisation working with nature preservation and with improving tribal people’s rights. They also promote sustainable development and cultural preservation (Samata).

- **National Alliance of People’s Movement Andhra Pradesh (NAPMAP)** – an organisation which cooperates with other human rights organisation in the fight against problematic government legislations. They also address corruption among politicians in India and urge voters not to let their votes be bought by fancy gifts or false promises (Napmap).
7. Method

7.1 Research approach

Trying to define our academic point of departure, we found ourselves drawn towards hermeneutics, interpretivism and to a certain extent Grounded Theory (Davidson & Patel 2003; Mikkelsen 2005). Hermeneutics is concerned with understanding human values and world views. Meanings are created by people and can be studied by looking at behaviour and language. Scholars within this research tradition use their own subjective understanding to interpret what they find, and they strive to establish mutual understanding between themselves and the participants in the study (Davidson & Patel 2003:28-32). Interpretivism agrees with hermeneutics that reality is socially constructed. It strives to grasp the subjective meaning of social actions and processes and put in context. The central question is why people behave like they do (Mikkelsen 2005:135-136). We felt at home within hermeneutics and interpretivism precisely because we are interested in how people understand and give meaning to the acts of advocacy that they have been engaged in. We allowed ourselves to be subjective and take an active role in the research; because we wanted to engage in a dialogue with the persons whom we studied. Thus creating mutual understanding between us provided us with the data that we needed.

Grounded Theory deserves to be mentioned since it approaches the area of study in an inductive manner (Davidson & Patel 2003:24, 31-32; Mikkelsen 2005:168). To be inductive means to start from empiricism and then formulate a local theory based on the empirical findings in the specific situation studied (ibid). The process of analysing empirical data and eventually shaping a local theory is done by categorising the findings and sorting them under labels that the researchers decide (Mikkelsen 2005:142). The material is sorted again and again until a theory can be built. This process of analysing has much in common with what Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) calls meaning condensation. It is a method where ‘[l]ong statements are compressed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words’ (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:205). (For a more detailed description of meaning condensation, please see the section ‘Analysing the findings’ below.)

We used an inductive research approach whereby empirical investigation paved the way for us to construct theories. We did not have ‘grand theory’ from which we departed; instead we formulated a ‘grounded theory’ whose validity is limited to the setting of East Godavari (Davidson & Patel 2003:31-32). In line with what both Grounded Theory and meaning condensations recommends, we used categories and labels to analyse our research material (please see the section ‘Analysing the findings’ below).

A short reference to critical realism is in place. Critical realism deals with identifying and changing unjust structures in society (Mikkelsen 2005). Often the changes that advocacy wants to bring about include changing unjust social structures (Subedi 2008). However, our main focus in this study has been the advocacy itself, not the structures
it tries to change. Therefore, we don’t want to label our study as a ‘critical realism’ study.

7.2 Type of study and type of research questions

Our type of study is what the academia refers to as an explorative study (Davidson & Patel 2003:12-13). The purpose of such studies is to fill gaps in existing knowledge. To a great extent, explorative studies are done in an open and comprehensive manner (ibid). In our case, we explored how advocacy was conducted and the strategies adopted by various actors in order to identify successful forms of advocacy from the grassroots in rural India. According to the organisation Sujana, no similar study had been done in Yeleru, Vanthada and the SEZ area before. There had been many social workers doing research on the issues, but when it came to advocacy, our study fills a gap.

Speaking in more practical terms, the way in which our study was carried out, it can be labelled as a PRA-study. PRA stands for Participatory Rural Appraisal. A typical PRA-study searches for qualitative data during a relatively short time span (Chambers 2008). As Chambers describes it, PRA was invented as a time-effective alternative when researchers wanted to gain in depth understanding without spending years in the field like social anthropologists do (ibid). In our case, we only had 10 days to see East Godavari and interact with villagers. A key to succeed in gaining maximum information within a minimum timeframe is to promote participation from the persons whom are studied. In PRA, the borders between researchers and participants are blurred, and the ‘objects’ of the study may take initiatives on what to show the researcher, and how to describe their situation. This requires the researcher to be both humble and flexible. In return, she or he may be rewarded with precious insights to how the participants regard their lives: how they interpret the world around them and what they think is important (ibid). In our study, that was precisely the case. Our ‘study objects’ graciously invited us into their lives and did their utmost to convey their reality to us.

Since our questions start with ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘who’, they are empirical questions (Mikkelsen 2005:127). If instead we had asked ‘How should advocacy be conducted to be successful?’ that would have been a normative question (ibid). But in our case, we were more interested in taking an empirical approach.

7.3 Discourse on quantitative and qualitative approach

Mikkelsen (2005) explains that quantitative research is focused on collecting large amounts of data in order to make generalisations and comparisons. In this tradition, commonly used methods to collect data are surveys and interviews with standardised
questions. The results are often presented in statistical tables and diagrams (ibid). Qualitative research on the other hand normally picks a smaller research group but instead goes deeper into details (Davidson & Patel 2003). It shows interest in ‘softer’ data, like what people think and feel. Typical methods to collect data are in dept interviews with individuals or groups, and observations (Laws et al 2003). As Chambers (2008) points out, the interviews do not need to be standardised. He recommends that instead of fixed questions, semi-structured interview guides should be used to make sure that the key purpose of the interviews is covered. In this way, the researcher can have more flexibility to adapt the questions throughout the interviews depending on the respondent’s answers (ibid). Laws et al state that generalisations are not always possible or even desirable in qualitative research (2003). Still a qualitative study that looks into for instance the specific situation of a minority group can be highly needed and useful for that minority group and everyone in contact with them, even though no generalisations can come from that research (ibid).

We chose to conduct a qualitative study because we were interested in collecting in depth knowledge regarding the challenging situation for grassroots groups and thus being able to present a detailed picture of the context in which advocacy is carried out. We paid attention to peoples’ opinions and thoughts regarding what advocacy measures were considered successful, and we encouraged people to share their personal experiences and feelings of the advocacy actions that they had taken part in. A quantitative approach would not have provided us with such depth and detail (Davidson & Patel 2003:14ff; Mikkelsen 2005:140ff). Further, as stated in the Theory chapter, we believe in having a participatory approach to development, and therefore we favour participatory methods for research – an approach which fits under the umbrella of qualitative research methods (Mikkelsen 2005:140ff).

### 7.4 Research technique: interviews

We conducted interviews with 16 individuals and three groups. In addition, we visited villages and sites to understand the context in which the grassroots advocacy groups work, and our interviewees were happy to show us around.

The interviews we conducted were semi-structured (Laws et al 2003:287). On our case, this meant that instead of preparing exact questions beforehand, we listed topics or broad questions that we wanted to cover during the interviews into interview guides (Chambers 2008). Such interview guides are praxis within PRA (see ‘Type of study’ above).

There are both benefits and drawbacks with interviews as a method for research. In an interview, the researcher can go deep. Being face to face, the researcher can instantly see how a person reacts to a question, and can if necessary explain the question in more detail to make sure the respondent understands (Laws et al 2003:287). Focus group interviews are, compared to individual interviews, more suitable when the researcher wants to collect the opinions from a larger scope of people. Also, a group interview can trigger a debate amongst the participants that is interesting for the
researcher to hear. It should be noted though that group interviews can restrict people who do not want or dare to speak in front of too many people. Therefore, group interviews are not to be recommended on sensitive topics (Laws et al 2003:298).

7.5 Choosing a sample

In total, we conducted 16 individual interviews: 7 with villagers affected by changes in their societies (see the Material section), 4 with staff members of the Sujana organisation, 3 with village council heads, one with a journalist and one with a local politician. The respondents came from Yeleru, Vanthada, the SEZ notified coastal area and from the Sujana staff. In the case of the journalist and the politician, as they had cooperated with Sujana organisation before, they were summoned to the headquarters of Sujana for their respective interview. We also conducted three group interviews: two with the villages of Lakkavaram and Kambala Palem in Yeleru and one in a SEZ resettlement camp.

The sample of respondents chosen for our study is what Laws et al describes as a convenience sample (Laws et al 2003:366). Since we lacked both the time and the prior knowledge of the area to find a satisfying sample on our own, we accepted what was suggested to us through collaborating with Sujana. Sujana is a highly trusted organisation who has worked in the area for fifteen years. By using their network of contacts, and by having them accompanying us in the field, we have gained access to people that we would not have been able to reach on our own. Yet we did have a say in the process of picking a sample. We specifically requested respondents from three villages, and we expressed out desire to interview politicians and journalists. In addition, after the group interviews in the field, we ourselves picked respondents from the groups that we wanted to conduct further in depth interviews with.

We identified different categories of respondents that we wanted to interview with the intention of gaining a comprehensive picture of the field. To begin with, we interviewed Sujana staff members in order to explore the field we were about to dig into. In this manner, the staff served as experts, or key informants (Marshall 1996) thereby providing us with relevant information, providing access to research sites and introducing us to other key actors in the field. Next, we found it essential to interview the villagers since they could portray how they themselves perceived their situation. They gave us insights to how they looked upon the advocacy efforts that they had seen happening in their community or which they had participated in themselves. As part of interviewing villagers, we got the opportunity to speak to three village heads who told us about the cooperation across village borders.

Attempting to further broaden our perspective, we requested interviews with members of the media and politicians in order to find out how they perceived the advocacy manifestations targeted towards them, and their role in the advocacy process. We got to speak to one person from each group: one journalist and one politician. Unfortunately, the journalist’s interview was lost due to the poor sound quality on that video recording. This was the only interview out of the 16 individual interviews and three group
interviews that we were unable to use in our result. We acknowledge that our study could have been strengthened if we would have had the opportunity to interview more politicians and media representatives.

7.6 Preparing and carrying out the research in East Godavari

The initial idea behind this Bachelor Thesis was born during the workshop Slow and Fair Food for Peace at the Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad on the 16th to 26th of January 2011. The topic of the workshop was fast food versus slow and organic food grown locally. Today, many farmers in India are indebted to large food grain corporations, and when they see no way out of their debt crisis, a large number commit suicide. Being interested in the research area surrounding the farmers’ situation, we asked to follow one of the workshop participants into his field of work. This man turned out to be the key person in the local NGO Sujana. He contributed to shaping our thesis and broadening the scope of our research. With his compassion and dedication to the issue of human rights and peoples advocacy, he truly formed and inspired this thesis!

Before going into the field, we prepared ourselves by doing one test interview with a research journalist. The answers from that interview are not included in our study results, but the interview was important training for us in order to prepare us for the real interview situation. Further, we read up on valuable advice when doing research where the researcher is not familiar with the culture and habits of the people studied. Some key advice that turned out to be useful was to always wear respectful clothes according to the local dress code (Laws et al 2003:249), and to always sit at the same level as the respondents, even if that sometimes meant politely declining a chair (ibid). We also learned some key phrases in the local language in order to show respect, and we continuously asked our interpreter for advice on how to act and how to pose our questions to fit into the local context (ibid 2003:256).

We went to East Godavari for 10 intense days. The town Yeleswaram and Sujana’s office became our ‘base camp’ where we started our research every morning. From Yeleswaram, Sujana took us to Yeleru, Vanthada and the SEZ notified coastal areas – in that order. Sujana made sure to contact the local population regarding our visits and thanks to Sujana’s good reputation people were willing to show us around and let us interview them. As our companion in the field, we had an interpreter. This interpreter was Indian, and well familiar with culture and customs. However, he was not from the geographical area of our research, and he did not know any of our interview respondents beforehand. We believe it was to our advantage to have an interpreter who did not know the respondents, because we did not want any personal relations to influence the answers given (Laws et al 2003:256ff).

When it comes to documenting our findings, our primary resource was pen and paper. Since we were two people conducting the study, at least one always had the opportunity to take notes during interviews. About half of the interviews were also documented on video. However, one drawback with using video recordings was the temptation to conduct a whole interview in Telugu and then do the translation afterwards. This was
tried in three or four cases, but we soon found that it made it impossible for us to ask any follow up questions, and it took a lot longer time to do the translations afterwards.

### 7.7 Analysing the findings

We have used what Steinar Kvale & Svend Brinkmann calls *meaning condensation*. It is a method where "[l]ong statements are compressed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:205). This happens in five steps. First, an interview is read through to grasp a sense of the content as a whole. Secondly, the transcribed interview is divided into natural units or statements. Thirdly, such units or statements are categorised under a theme or a headline. Fourthly, the newly emerged categories are linked to the theoretical framework and the purpose of the study. Finally, all the themes found to be essential for the study are tied together to form a descriptive statement (2009:205-207).

For us, using meaning condensation as a method of analysis has helped us boil down extensive information into a format that is manageable. We realised halfway through our study that we would not be able to include everything that our interviewees told us into our study. We were told entire life stories, but for this study we are only able to digest information related to advocacy. Therefore, meaning condensation has proved to be an appropriate tool for us.

### 7.8 Reliability

Since the notions of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ derive from quantitative nature science, Lewis & Ritchie (2003) argue that these notions need a bit of modification to be applicable to qualitative social science. Traditionally, they explain, reliability has been equal to ‘replicability’ (2003:270). But in qualitative research, replicability - or in Laws’ et al words generalisability – is not always possible or even desirable (Laws et al 2003:82). The solution instead is to speak of ‘confirmability’ (Lewis & Ritchie 2003:270f). We have found that to a great extent we can draw a parallel between the tendencies that we have found in East Godavari and similar cases elsewhere in India (see the chapters ‘Earlier research’ and ‘Discussion’). Therefore we argue that there is a level of confirmability in our research.

When it comes to the reliability of methods used, we have to trust the people we interviewed. Since we were associated with Sujana, we believe that the interviewees were motivated to be honest with us. Only once did we feel that that the setting of an interview hampered one respondent since that person felt uncomfortable speaking in front of curious bystanders. Due to a controversial divide in the village with some villagers being in favour of the mining and some against it, this respondent felt uncomfortable discussing the issue with us. Unfortunately, we never got the opportunity to speak to that person on the side.

Working with an interpreter poses certain challenges. As described above, we had an interpreter who was familiar with local customs, yet he did not know the interviewees prior to our arrival. We believe that this meant that he stayed neutral towards the
persons we interviewed, and that his interpretations were truthful. However, it is
difficult for any interpreter to translate everything word by word. We soon realised that
it was not possible to demand exact interpretations. Instead, we found that the most
convenient way to go about was to include our interpreter as a member of our research
team and make him aware of the purpose and the essence of our study (Laws et al 2003:256ff). The result was that he translated the questions we wanted to ask, but
then he could take the initiatives to ask follow up questions because he knew what
information we were looking for. When he translated the answers, he often summarised
what had been said. That meant that we can never be sure exactly what every
respondent said. Instead we have to trust our interpreter’s good judgment. In addition,
it made it difficult for us to ask people to explain back to us if they had really
understood our questions (Laws et al 2003:256ff). Also, when we asked a second time
for details on exactly how, when and by whom a certain advocacy action had been
carried out, both the respondent and our interpreter would look at us somewhat
confused. In their opinion, they had already answered the question, and considered
further details were unimportant. As a final remark, we must also recognise the
different academic background our interpreter came from. Since he was from a social
studies background, and we come from communication studies, our field of interest
sometimes differed. This entailed that when we or our interpreter wanted to ask follow
up questions from different angles, sometimes leading to confusion between ourselves
and the interviewee (Laws et al 2003:256ff).

Transcribing the interviews also affect the reliability. It helps to have two researchers
present; however when transcribing interviews on the spot, as was the case in our field
work, we were not always able to get exact transcriptions. Further, spoken words can
transmit a different meaning than the same words written down, since a reader will
interpret and guess the original meaning. Even the smallest things like a comma can
distinctly change the meaning of a sentence (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:185).

Despite the challenges described in this section, the fact that we can draw parallels
between the information we got from our interviews and earlier research points to a
certain level of reliability (Lewis & Ritchie 2003:270ff).

7.9 Validity

Allowing Sujana to pick our research sample is of course handing over a lot of control to
them. If we had had more time, resources and pre-knowledge, we might have acted
differently. As it was in this case, we were dependent on cooperating with Sujana in
conducting this study and this has probably influenced the reliability of our result. On
the other hand if it had not been for the organisation, we would not have had the
opportunity to visit these three villages, and we would not have been given access to the
people we did. This would have resulted in a very different study.

For a study to be valid, Lewis & Ritchie declare that it needs to really study what it
promised to study. Furthermore, the researchers must understand their findings and
interpret them in a comprehensive way (2003:273ff). When we apply Lewis & Ritchie’s
teachings to our study, we are certain that we have investigated the right topic, namely *advocacy*. The next two points - whether we *understood* and *interpreted* our findings correctly - is harder to tell for certain. Both *understanding* and *interpretation* are culturally and linguistically contextualised; and since our collection and interpretation of the material has taken place across cultural background, the question of validity on this point remains open.

### 7.10 Research ethics

Like in any research, a discussion regarding *research ethics* is in place (Laws et al 2003: Chap 13). Our greatest problem concerning ethics was to explain to the persons participating in our study exactly who we were and why we were conducting a study. Putting ourselves in the shoes of the villagers we met, it is understandable that they were confused about *why* people would come from halfway around the world to talk to them, especially since these people were *not* representative of any government or funding agency. Most of the people we interviewed in the villages had never heard of neither Sweden nor Europe, or for that matter of *students* who were rich enough to travel around the world. In fact, it seemed like many of them had never even met a white person before, and we were treated as very special guests wherever we went. We tried our best to fit in by wearing respectful clothes, sitting at the same level as our respondents and adopting good manners in general. We also tried our very best to explain that it was *voluntary* to participate in our study, that we could not give any monetary compensation, and that we had no connections with the government in Sweden, India or elsewhere. The latter seemed to be the hardest piece of information to get across. It seemed to us that no matter what we said, people still hoped that showing and telling us about their situation would somehow bring about major changes in their lives.
8. Results

In this part of the thesis, we will present the direct findings and trends of our interviews and observations. We will also analyse what these trends mean.

8.1 Advocacy from the bottom-up

As we have heard from our interviews and seen in our observations, there have been multiple attempts from the population to communicate their problems and advocate their rights to the powerful authorities. Usually they focus on trying to receive attention from media or the government in order to initiate a discussion about their specific subject. In this chapter, we will present the trends that are shared by two or three of our case studies. However, it is worth mentioning that there are advocacy measures that are specific for each case which we will not present here. For a more in depth account of these, see the different appendixes.

8.1.1 Baseline studies

Throughout Sujana’s history, it has devoted itself to raising multiple issues for the rural and tribal population of East Godavari. To provide a better understanding of what the situation looks like, a baseline study is usually conducted. These studies are also used for project submittal to the government, opposing companies or other stakeholders in order to provide a picture of what the current situation looks like. The studies usually supply statistics as to how many people have been affected by an action, identifying the underlying problem and to what extent the people have been affected by it. As baseline study is also able to present qualitative information that expresses how the people directly feel about the way they have been treated. The studies also reveal aspects of law which have been violated or illegal conduct that has been used by the powerful authorities.

Sujana has been involved in the Yeleru case since 1995, and has during this time presented several documents and studies to the authorities in order for them to address the devastation created by the Yeleru project. The report Yeleru Reservoir Project: Disaster Disguised as Development (2005) presents the villages affected by the dam, what natural resources that were lost due to the dam and also how the dam from the beginning was meant to be used for irrigation and to prevent floods. This is conspicuously different from what actually happened, as the dam now is the main cause for floods in the area. Sujana’s study also exposes what kinds of promises were made by the government to the people regarding for example new land allocation and employment opportunities at a steel plant nearby.

Through this in depth study, Sujana was able to reveal the situation of the Yeleru people and demand that officials from an appropriate department would make surveys on their own to realise what everything looked like. However, actually getting officials to visit the dam site is hard, and instead of conducting a proper survey, governmental officials have turned around claiming “there is no people there!” or claimed that they do
not dare to come to the site because of the people’s wrath. Conducting studies such as those done by Sujana, has shed light on the situation, but has in reality made little differences in receiving the compensations demanded.

In the Vanthada case, studies have also been carried out, by different NGO:s interested in the case. According to Sujana, in 2004, a non-partisan NGO from Hyderabad conducted a study regarding “destruction of agriculture, forest and wildlife by illegal mining’. This report entailed that what the mining company was causing to the environment, and requested that the government should shut the mining down. The government responded and shut the mining temporarily. Sujana also conducted its own study concerning the mining in Vanthada in late 2010, which presented the events over the latest eight years and how the mining company had affected the community. This report also contributed in closing down the mine, making the act of conducting studies a seemingly effective way of getting the issue addressed. However, as in the case with the first report, the mining has reopened before. This can possibly mean that conducting studies may only lead to temporary changes.

As the SEZ case is still a relatively new addition in comparison to our other case studies, not many full reports has been made and distributed to the authorities as of yet. However, as presented in the background chapter, the anti-SEZ movement conducts smaller studies of the KSEZ, the regional SEZ area, and educated scholars to raise the problems of the SEZ, spreading findings orally to citizens more than in writing. Seethalakshmi’s (2009) book is a comprehensive study of SEZ not only in East Godavari, but in other parts of Andhra Pradesh and presents the devastation described by the populace. The book strongly argues for the removal of the SEZ act, since Seethalakshmi finds that the Indian state itself will not gain economic growth from this legislation, thus rendering it useless.

### 8.1.2 Cultural events

While bringing the issues to the attention of the government officials is a very important part of the grassroots advocacy in East Godavari, it is also necessary to make the people themselves aware of what is happening and what they can demand from their politicians. In order to educate people of the threats that come from the authorities, Sujana organises cultural events. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, these events communicate through dances, songs and drama made specifically to warn the community of what it is about to face, and what needs to be done to prevent it. Looking at this, it mirrors Albert Bandura’s theory about edutainment (entertainment education), and how important messages might be easily learnt through entertaining measures as drama and music (Waisbord 2001:12ff).

After a cultural meeting s held, village action groups and activists are mobilised, and the message is spread from village to village in order to create a larger momentum for the specific issue. This technique is also used at traditional festivals where a lot of people gather to enjoy celebrations. By taking advantage of the huge gatherings, Sujana have an easier time spreading the messages about the issues at hand.
The idea of cultural events has also been used in the Yeleru case. However, they have not been utilised as Sujana usually conducts them. Instead, they are used to make villages network with each other to form a united front. According to Sujana, this has resulted in the formations of community action groups, a village leader committee and a better cooperation between the affected villages. This has therefore proven to be a useful mobilising technique in the Yeleru issue. Sujana continue by claiming that this network has through its cooperation “created pressure on government and leaders. Sujana is in the background and the village in the front’, thus allowing the village to be the face that is oriented outwards in the conflict.

Cultural events have also been used in relation to the SEZ issue, mainly to make people refrain from selling their land and being tricked by SEZ officials. In this case, the cultural events proclaim the agricultural heritage of the farmers and pinpoints that farming is what they know and practice. The Kadali Network, which is the main NGO working against SEZ in East Godavari, argues that the farmers will not easily get jobs outside of the farming sphere. Kadali therefore states that “they can’t get employment anywhere else, natural knowledge is all they have’, stating that industrial jobs will not be given to farmers who have no industrial knowledge. In all, making the population realise their opportunities, but also their limitations as farmers is crucial, and by using cultural events, this message is spread.

8.1.3 Marches

Throughout India’s history, with emphasis on the movement made by Mahatma Gandhi, marching has become a signature way for Indian peasants to make their voices heard and communicate their issues. Through marching, a lot of people can join the cause at hand and show their support by cheering on and spreading the word of the march. Also, it is a terrific way of attracting the attention of media, since movements similar to those of Gandhi still garners enough interest for the public.

A long and much publicised march was carried out by the people of Yeleru in 1999. This was made after a study by Sujana was conducted regarding the displacement and the devastation brought by the dam. The 120 kilometre long padayatra, which is a local word for marching, between Lakkavaram, a displaced village and Kakinada, where the office of the District Collector lies, took place during six days and gained the attention of the government and the press. As presented in the report Yeleru Reservoir Project: Disaster disguised as Development, the government and the District Collector formed a commission after the padayatra had been finished and the grievances had been presented. The commission promised according to the report a quick response “but ha[s] done almost nothing in action’ (Sujana 2005:6, Yeleru Report). Although this might sound as a failure, it did raise the issue of Yeleru, something that has proven hard since this case has been ongoing for several decades, thus making it old news.

The anti-SEZ movements have also used marches as a way to communicate their issues and pinpoint the problems of the SEZ legislation. This has been done not only in East Godavari, but in other parts of Andhra Pradesh and India, making it a common method
for the anti-SEZ movement. One example of such a march took place right after the tsunami of 2004 had struck the Western coast of India. Many people had lost their livelihood and housing, and the SEZ legislation was coincidentally presented shortly afterwards. Since many citizens had very little financial resources at the time, selling was the only way of receiving money, thus rendering a large part of the populace displaced. According to Kadali Network, a protest march from Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh to Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu took place the year after, protesting against how the government took advantage of the deprived people’s situation. To raise awareness at the local level, a march from a SEZ notified village to Kakinada took place in 2007, garnering media attention. While marches have been a successful way of raising the issue with the farmers, it has however shown little success in actually bringing a direct positive change for the parties marching.

8.1.4 Court cases

One of the most frequently used techniques to promote a specific cause is by going through the judicial system. In East Godavari, the high court is a place where the people and another party can meet on a neutral ground, without the risk of being at a disadvantage due to economic status or caste. Sujana explains that one of the most important activities the organisation engages in is to educate people on how to construct a court case and how to build up an argument that has a chance to win. In order for a legal battle to be won, Sujana claims, “activists must know the constitution and legal acts very well to know what to demand”. There is also a court that Sujana uses that is called the Right to Information court. In this court, cases can be filed if the governmental documents supplied through the Right to Information Act are not handed to the party requesting the documents.

The Yeleru people have filed several court cases during their drawn out conflict. For example, after having conducted a study showing the poor living conditions of the Yeleru people, a court case was initiated to receive benefits that the people was already supposed to have received, but that government officials had put elsewhere. By presenting the study in court and giving statements regarding the situation, the high court ruled that compensation had to be paid out, which it eventually was. Prior to the 2004 elections, the late political leader Rajasekhara Reddy also ensured the Yeleru people that if they wanted change to happen, claiming court was the way to go as the politicians “can’t do anything to people not filing in court”. In addition, by making a court case, media often cover the proceeding s and verdict, raising awareness about the issue.

The Vanthada movement has also made use of court cases against the mining company, with the result usually being that the mining shuts down until further notice. In a similar way to Yeleru, the court cases have been preceded by a study conducted by Sujana or other interested organisations demonstrating how laws have been broken against acts such as the Forest Rights Act. Sujana and its partner Samata also filed a court case during the construction of the road the mining company would use in the future, delaying the usage of the road for some time. As we can see in this example as
well, court cases communicate grievances in a concrete fashion, making it difficult for court decisions not to benefit the people.

However, this has not stopped the mining company from retaliating and opposing the decisions made in favour of the Vanthada movement. At times when the mining have been shut down, the company has filed court cases against the government, trying to argue that the mining is perfectly legal. Sujana claims the company tries to “use the legal system to fight people’s rights”, making it a tough struggle for Vanthada to stand against.

The overall largest number of court cases being filed has been in regards to SEZ, filed by different villages taking a judicial stand against the government and pro-SEZ movement. As land began to be SEZ notified, the village head of the village Rajivnagar filed a court case to stop the attempted land grabbing. With the verdict “no buying and no selling”, a formal document could be presented to SEZ officials preventing them from buying land. Similar court cases has been made in other notified areas in Andhra Pradesh claims Seethalakshmi (2009), but she and Sujana also recognise that the SEZ movement continue to persuade people to sell. In order to encourage people to make court cases, Sujana finds and educates activists in the affected villages so that the villages, and not the organisation, are at the forefront of the grassroots movement.

8.1.5 The role of media

In order to truly conduct a successful advocacy campaign, it is necessary to receive attention regarding what is actually happening. With this knowledge media plays an immensely important role in providing coverage to the advocacy campaigns. Sujana however declares that in order for media to engage itself in a human rights campaign, it is not enough just stating that human rights violations and illegal conduct are occurring. “Human rights violations happen every day. That’s why it is not something new”, claims Sujana. With this in mind they state that it is necessary when contacting media to explain that a creative or new advocacy measure is taking place, thereby creating something newsworthy.

Sujana also reflects upon the necessity of having individual contacts with media staff. In all of our cases, our interviewees have claimed that in order to carry out successful advocacy, it “requires outside support, individually it is impossible’. We were told that “if Sujana calls, media will come, if we [the villagers] call, nothing happen’ by the Yeleru people, thus making the relationship to Sujana imperative for them to get any attention whatsoever. To further complicate the matter, the Yeleru cause dates back more than 25 years, making it an issue that is far from new and interesting, as explained by Sujana. With this in mind, in order for the Yeleru cause to be lifted up into the media, special advocacy campaigns are necessary. The previously mentioned march is one example, since it received a lot of media cover during its six days duration. The Yeleru people also performed a very provocative act during an election, in which they attached a note outlining their grievances together with their vote. When this was discovered, election officials wanted to discard the votes, but by protesting and getting medial
support, the Yeleru people were allowed to continue with the operation. Media can therefore be said to be a decisive factor and a strong force to have behind you when carrying out campaigns like this.

In Vanthada, media has had a completely different role. Since Vanthada is a relatively new conflict, partnered with the fact that there was another famous case of mining exploitation at the time, media has been alert when news regarding Vanthada has reached it. There have been several TV broadcasts and newspaper articles about the case, and if there has been a change of events in the conflict, like the mine closing or court cases being filed, media has been there to cover it. For example, in 2003, media covered a visit from the District Collector to Vanthada, in which he spoke about the violations of acts that the mining company was doing. Media has also been active when other government officials have entered the village. This has helped making the issue of Vanthada a political issue where politicians have to take a stand – pro-Vanthada or pro-company, making the Vanthada issue a debated one.

Since the SEZ issue is only a couple years old, and due to the fact that new proposals, notifications and protests happen continuously, media tends to cover many aspects in this issue. It is therefore relatively easy to get the media to cover the latest news in the conflict. However, the pro SEZ movement also uses media to proclaim the benefits of SEZ, making media coverage of the SEZ issue a relatively mixed one, as all the major stakeholders in the conflict uses media to push forward their own agenda. Thus, media does not have the impact that it does in other conflicts.

8.1.6 Recruiting activists

As explained earlier, in order for the specific village to get attention, either from media or from politicians, it is important that the village is the one leading the movement. According to Sujana, this is done so that the individuals working for Sujana are not endangered and also in order to communicate to other villages that change can be made through the force and energy coming from the grassroots. Recruiting activists is done in two different ways: building community action groups (CAG:s) in village or by picking out individuals that can actively work with advocating a specific cause.

The CAG:s work on a very local level, to promote the issue of the village in which the CAG is situated in. The action group is formed by around 15 village members where there is no hierarchy in the group to avoid internal conflicts. In the action groups, training is given members on what Sujana defines ‘how to handle themselves in governmental issues’ and to write letters to the appropriate governmental department when the village faces problems.

The second method for recruiting activist is when individuals are handpicked. This method focuses on recruiting activists to fight for causes beyond the village level, and instead join Sujana in its struggle at various levels. This kind of recruiting is visible in the Yeleru and SEZ cases, where Sujana found people who were not afraid of speaking their mind to the authorities and through their energy and passion make them activists.
with the tools to carry out advocacy campaigns. Many of these activists, several of whom are village heads, have also become members of the Kadali Network. Thus, it is possible to gain contact with other villages and activists, thereby allowing stories and strategies that other villages have used regarding their rights.

8.1.7 Scheduled Tribe identity

As explained in the background chapter about India, there is a benefit system for low caste people. Those people who are recognised as ‘Scheduled Castes’ – SC or ‘Scheduled Tribes’ – ST (The Indian Constitution, Article 341-342) get benefits such as a quota of the places in education and politics (Maps of India). It is the President of India together with the Governor of the concerned state who have the power to recognise a group as SC or ST in that state (Census India 2001b). However, in order to spare the government of Andhra Pradesh from having to give any benefits, the government has declared that “there are no ST:s in the village, [therefore] no benefits’ when it comes to the Yeleru case. This has lead to two outcomes: First, the village has fared worse economically, as the benefits have disappeared. Second, the villagers have become confused as to their caste identity, as their historical and cultural identity makes them feel one way while the government refuses to acknowledge their indigenous identity. Therefore, the Yeleru people express that they feel that they have “lost [their] tribal identity’. By fighting for their identity through advocating their past and present lifestyle to the government, the people of Yeleru hope to achieve clarity in this matter.

This problem is also evident in the Vanthada case. In a similar way to Yeleru, they have also been somewhat deprived of their identity as tribals, especially due to the exploitations they have endured through the mining company. To secure their tribal identity, and to further make a statement that the mining is unwelcome in the village, an application to register Vanthada as a tribal settlement is on its way. “It will make Vanthada open only for tribals’, the villagers argue, and it will provide the villagers with a greater opportunity to live as they want – as tribal people. Advocacy in this matter moves beyond achieving benefits for the individual, to also include the collective right of being a tribal.

8.1.8 Implementation of NREGS

Since the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme - NREGS was introduced in the beginning of the 21st century, millions of rural people have been able to get daily wage labour for 100 days per annum. As it is a guarantee scheme, all those falling into the category must be offered this kind of work. Sujana has however in many instances seen that this has not been the case. One of the activists in Sujana claims that he worked with the implementation of NREGS in his village area. Sadly, he realised that there were ongoing problems with this legislation, as the government tried to limit the days that people could work. The activist says that he “was able to expose corruption in the scheme’. “When I tried to make it public, I was transferred to another village’. Actually gaining the advantages of NREGS is thereby hard, making it an important issue that Sujana wants to bring to the canvas.
Yeleru have long struggled for NREGS benefits, and advocated for jobs outside of the village borders since there is not many possibilities of working on the lands close to the dam. Several of the inhabitants in the village Lakkavaram have received this kind of labour, but for a large part of the population that is not the case. Through writing letters and grievances to the District Collector, the people have tried to receive the jobs that they are entitled to. However, much like other grievances, it is hard to make a change without a more creative and innovative advocacy campaign.

The community’s affected by SEZ that have sold their land are also crying out for the implementation of NREGS, since the promised jobs from the newly established companies many times have not been forthcoming. As mentioned in the background chapter, people displaced by the SEZ legislation do not have the legal status to apply for a NREGS job (Seethalakshmi 2009). This makes for an unpleasant paradox, since every Indian citizen that live in a rural setting have the right to get work, no matter where the person lives (NREGA, AP). Kadali Network therefore wants the NREGS to be implemented with special focus on already displaced people, as they have sold their livelihood for SEZ. This will be done in the same manner as in the Yeleru case, by making representations and petitions to the District Collector and other governmental departments.

8.1.9 Hunger strikes

As a final advocacy measure, some of the grassroots movements in East Godavari use hunger strikes in order to further state that the people in the conflict would rather starve than living in the situation they are in. This kind of advocacy has a historical connection in India, as Dalit activist Mahatma Gandhi made several hunger strikes while being imprisoned by the British colonial force (Take Part 2010). They therefore carry with them a historic victory, as hunger strikes made the British government change the legislation about Dalits Gandhi was working against (ibid).

In Vanthada, hunger strikes have been used to further strengthen the resentment towards the mining company, and to get media attention. This was also done in the same time as Vanthada did several other advocacy measures, as road blocks and representations to government, showing that it might be beneficial to do different advocacy campaigns at the same time.

A larger hunger strike has yet been made in the SEZ area. As a formal protest against the avalanche of SEZ notifications that had been made in India, national activist Medha Patkar declared that she was to do a hunger strike for 20 days as a statement against SEZ (Indian express 2006). As Kadali Network is a member of the national movement, and due to the fact that some members of Kadali are village heads, many villages in the East Godavari SEZ area joined Patkar’s hunger strike, which were seen as a success. Patkar has later visited the East Godavari region in a crowded rally against the SEZ in the region. Hunger strikes have therefore not only been a successful advocacy measure to make the government listen to SEZ related grievances, but also to include the struggle of East Godavari in the national movement against SEZ.
8.2 Disruptive strategies from the government and companies

In our three case studies, the farmers and villagers we have visited are not the only ones that have used different types of advocacy to push their agenda forward. The government and involved companies have also been working towards reaching their own objectives, many times through methods that involve taking advantage of the people.

8.2.1 Divide and conquer

As we have explained earlier, our three case studies demonstrate how people and livelihoods are affected by the intervention from either the government or companies wanting to use the designated areas. As a way to get approval from the population that is affected by the new initiatives, the companies or the government sows seeds of conflict in the villages they approach.

This has been prevalent in the Yeleru case. To quell the voices of discontent regarding the displacement after the dam was built, the upper caste population and the government drove a wedge in the village. As the villagers of Kambala Palem, an affected village, claim:

> Within our community, there are now two groups. Outside politicians willingly created a conflict among us. Since three years, we have been fighting against each other instead of focusing on agriculture.

By creating internal conflict within the protest the movements against them, the government has been able to proceed peacefully and does not have to worry as much about campaigns directed against them. In the case of Vanthada, a lot of the village youths were recruited to side with the company through bribery in the form of cars, motorcycles and luxury visits to Hyderabad. Afterwards, they were won over and later served as contact persons for the company when something was up in the village.

Even in the SEZ case, there has been traces of the divide and conquer technique on the part of the government. A village head, of a village notified by SEZ, had gone against the government and refused to sell his land. Being the village head, he also spread this resolve to his fellow villagers, creating a united front against the government and SEZ. He was then targeted for encounter, an Indian term for an illegal killing that is used to hunt down people working against the government (South Asia Citizens Web 2009). During the three years that he was marked for encounter, people were afraid of being close to him due to the possibility of being killed alongside him, thereby isolating the leader of the village movement from the rest of the village. While he no longer is in danger of his life, the threats of the government continue. He however claims that to defend their land, the villagers are “ready to die, and ready to kill”.

8.2.2 Inferior compensations

To a great extent, the grievances in our case studies are about the compensations promised by companies or the government. As we have generally seen, these have either not been accorded or only a fraction of what has been promised has been paid out. In
all of our case studies this has been evident and been raised multiple times through the interviews with the poverty stricken villagers. According to an interview with Sujana, the people affected by the construction of the Yeleru dam were “promised alternative land and jobs’, as they lost their home and livelihood due to displacement. This has however not been achieved during the three decades that the conflict has been going on.

In Vanthada, the mining company also made similar promises, to restore land and nature lost due to the mining. When this possibility became reality, the company blamed lack of financial means when they were not compensating the losses that the people of Vanthada addressed. This is described by the villagers as the moment people started thinking that the mining might not be in their best interest. Instead of saving the company money and effort, as it originally was meant to, it became the starting point of the movement against the company.

The people displaced due to SEZ also portray how they have not been compensated enough. They claim that “the government plays games with people’ and the jobs and the housing that they promise are nowhere to be seen. They go as far as to claim that if Kadali Network had not helped them after their displacement, the people would have “been taken by the sea’. They also claim that the government no longer has any interest in implementing support for them, as a SEZ area is considered foreign territory once it has been notified. Kadali Network however calls for the attention of the government, urging it to “make use of NREGS (...) to get employment’. Instead of addressing this proposal, the government and the SEZ affiliates deem their work successful and that the people affected by SEZ have everything they can ask for, according to Kadali Network. We can therefore see in our case studies that despite wanting to save money, the authorities and companies manage to anger the population to the degree of protesting, thereby putting themselves in a vulnerable position.

### 8.2.3 Mini compensations

The government and involved companies have a third technique that they use – compensating in small portions. While this might be seen as a victory at first for those receiving the compensations, this is actually a technique to communicate false intentions of compensation. By benefiting a small portion of the population, the people will be lead to believe that if some of them benefits, it will eventually include all those involved. This belief buys time for the authorities since the people begin to think that their benefits will arrive shortly, and it also temporarily strengthens the trust from the people to the authorities. Ultimately, this pattern is uncovered by the people and the conflict picks up once again after a while.

As presented by the Yeleru people, this strategy on the part of the government has been evident. Every year, the area around the dam (where the Yeleru people have their houses) gets flooded and many are drowned or partially drowned by the water. When the people have sought for help, the government has only helped those whose houses have completely succumbed to the water. “The government has been giving small subsidies, but it’s not enough. We need pakka [concrete] houses to survive’, claim the
villagers, and the subsidies given are usually not close to the amount lost due to the flood. In addition, the government does not address the devastations affecting the village as a whole, like roads being flooded.

In Vanthada, the mining company put up a similar strategy to quell protests from the villagers. Initially, a promise was made to compensate villagers for any land or livelihood lost due to the mining, but when this expected to take place, the mining company claimed they were passing through a tough economic situation. To calm the people, the company therefore gave land compensation to one citizen of Vanthada in a satisfactory manner, somewhat repairing the relationship between itself and Vanthada. Similar to the Yeleru case however, this was not to become a regular practice, but instead a diversion to halt the protests from the Vanthada people.

Finally, in the SEZ issue, as it affects a much larger population than any other of our case studies, the government has usually paid some kind of compensation to the displaced population. However, low paid jobs, one time monetary benefits and no land to provide for livelihood has lead to a feeling of deprivation in many villages. Several villages talk about the youth population, and how they have almost no possibilities in getting a good job due to the livelihood loss of the family. By saving money and communicating a message that compensation will come in the end, the authorities continuously evade taking the responsibility and meeting the demands of the population.

### 8.2.4 Trick people into signing documents

Finally, the government also uses a technique in which the illiteracy and lack of education in our case studies are being taken advantage of. This is tricking the affected population to sign documents or other legally binding papers in order for the government to gain access to land that it wants to use.

However, using illiteracy is not the only technique that has been used, claims Sujana. There have also been cases when companies or the government have had people sign documents under the influence of alcohol, where the people have been easier to persuade signing documents. In Vanthada, this has been exactly the case, making the documents signed illegal. Proving that the situation involved alcohol is however tough without solid proof, which has not been possible to find.

In the SEZ case, making use of an illiterate population has been a regular conduct in order for them to sign their land to the SEZ officials. As mentioned in the court case chapter, a verdict was made telling that no buying or selling was to be done regarding the SEZ issue. However, an interview with displaced people states that a government official:

> came and said that the case failed and that it was allowed to buy land. Since we can’t read, we didn’t know what was really going on.
With this situation, according to the displaced people, the government have claimed that “no one can stop us, and protests won’t help”, solidifying a feeling of hopelessness for the displaced people. Making people sign documents therefore not only deprive the people of their rightful belongings, but also make use of the difference in power between the two parties.
9. Analysis

9.1 The keys to successful advocacy

As visible in the chapters above, there are multiple ways that Sujana, Kadali Network and the people from our case studies work in order to enhance their rights and improve their situation. Through our research, we have been able to pinpoint several qualities in the movements that make them successful enough to make a change.

9.1.1 Being a driving spirit

Even though Sujana and Kadali Network have limited financial resources, they are still able to help people who live in poverty and deprivation. We consider this as a sign of their driving spirit. Sujana has been described by the communities we visited as being the reason the communities have been heard and the reason progress has been made. Villagers say that “it would not be possible without Sujana’. By being fully committed to the causes of the people, and by being a major force in advocating for people’s rights, Sujana has gained a reputation for itself. This has given the organisation credibility within the field of advocacy and within the rural and tribal community of East Godavari. It has also allowed Sujana to strengthen its public appeal outside the development sphere, as both media and the government are aware of what the organisation stands for. The dedication of Sujana to these causes is also stated by the Sujana members themselves, claiming that “if you want to help the poor, you have to take risks’. This implicates that advocating for human rights is not just another job for the Sujana staff, but a passionate cause worth sacrificing oneself for. We see this as a major reason for the successes achieved, and a proof that it is possible to make a difference if you are dedicated and work hard enough to reach these goals.

9.1.2 Creativity

The movements in our case studies have used many different kinds of advocacy strategies and forms of campaigning. There have been protest marches, grievance letters submitted in ballot boxes and other organised protests like roadblocks and hunger strikes in the SEZ and Vanthada cases. With all these different approaches to grassroots advocacy, we believe that the creativity of the movements is another reason for the success that has been reached. The unique creativity of several of the advocacy campaigns has attracted the eye of not only the surrounding communities, but also of media, politicians and other stakeholders. We believe that originality in the grassroots advocacy movements is important as it gets harder to be inventive in the 21st century, where everything seems to have been done before. This is also important since the flow of information that reaches the media is so extensive, that something extraordinary and creative is necessary to get the attention of the media and the Indian government. We also think that it is important for an advocacy movement to look out for trends in other advocacy campaigns. As seen in the Vanthada case there was another famous mining campaign to which Vanthada was linked. Timing and the right moment to present an issue might be crucial for advocacy to succeed.
9.1.3 Network and contacts

Even though these movements do achieve changes and progress by acting on a local level, it is apparent that contacts and networks are needed in order for messages to be relayed and for a larger impact to be made. Working together with other organisations and movements has enabled the grassroots organisations to attract larger crowds at meetings. For example, in the case of the Kadali Network, being a part of a national network against SEZ has been helpful in organising rallies and getting national activists to visit East Godavari. It is also important to establish contacts in settings which are not associated with grassroots movements: for example with media and with politicians. Sujana states that “we have contacts in media that we can call”. Continuing, Sujana claims that “we trust media; they just need a push to do something”, indicating that even though Sujana has established contacts, there may be issues that prevent media from covering a story. Establishing contact with politicians has also shown to be important for the grassroots movements, as these politicians are able to include the issue on the political agenda of the state and spread information across different channels.

9.1.4 Legal awareness raising

As stated by Sujana, it is imperative that those involved in human rights advocacy their legal rights and what demands they can make of their government. Legal education is important in empowering the poor, since it is possible to make use of legislations to create changes. As Sujana claims, seeking out and training activists in legal matters is not only creating a larger alliance for advocacy, but it also promotes people to step forward, instead of letting the organisation be at the barricades. Another important legislative issue that people need to be educated on is the Right to Information Act. Sujana has used this act to address governmental corruption and to find those individuals in the government that have forged documents. With the dissemination of this type of knowledge, it would be possible to implement the argument of Edwards (1993) that advocacy is not only about protesting, but also about making suggestions and policy plans. We see that the legal awareness tool that the Right to Information Act provides is a key point in the successes that Sujana has had.

9.2 The obstacles for successful advocacy

Even though we have seen a lot of admirable advocacy campaigns, it is still obvious that there are several challenges involved in allowing grassroots advocacy to develop into something successful. It is therefore important to identify these challenges, and identify the major problems associated with them.

9.2.1 Financial strain

The financial resources of the advocacy movements that we have studied in East Godavari are often strained, and on several occasions advocacy measures have been hampered due to monetary shortage. For instance, state politicians can insist that complaints must be submitted to them in person by the protesters. In practice, this
means that a person representing the complaints from the people must travel all the way from East Godavari to the state capital Hyderabad, a journey of almost 400 kilometres. For a movement with scarce economy, it is not possible to afford the tickets; and they are therefore unable to submit complaints to the state government.

9.2.2 Few long term changes

As we have demonstrated in this study, grassroots movements in East Godavari have made a substantial difference in the communities they are active in, and kept people’s hopes alive regarding the possibility of achieving lasting change. While there have been positive outcomes from many of the advocacy campaigns, few of the changes can actually be considered permanent. In most cases, the struggles have continued. A perfect example of this is Vanthada, where many short term victories have been won when the mining company was forced to shut down but then reopened a couple of months later. Sujana explains this feature of advocacy work by claiming that “ten years is not a long time’. According to them, for long term change to actually occur, it is necessary to move at a slow but steady pace. Still, with regards to the Yeleru case – which has been ongoing since the 1980’s – it can be argued that long term objectives are hard to meet in this kind of setting and social structure.

9.2.3 Power structures

Even though it is possible to create changes from the grassroots level up to the level of decision makings, it is still a very difficult route to travel. The differences between rich and poor – or in other words high and low caste – are great; and for a small grassroots movement to rise against a powerful government is not easy. It is also apparent that the unequal distribution of resources between these actors weighs in the favour of the authorities, and that organisations like Sujana have neither the financial nor the human resources necessary to change the power balance. We do not claim that this makes it impossible to make a difference for the grassroots movements. However, it is still a weakness.
10. Discussion

Through this study, we have been able to discern that the grassroots movements and the government have at least one thing in common: They both strive for development. However, it is apparent that the parties do not have the same kind of development in mind. We realise that there are different kinds of development, and that development as a paradigm is not necessarily always beneficial for those that take part of it. We therefore believe that it is necessary to differentiate between ‘development’ as practiced by the government, and sustainable development. The latter we believe, to quote the Indian National Centre for Advocacy, is when ‘public policies (...) [are] implemented in a way that (...) empower the marginalised’ (NCAS, cited in Subedi 2008:56)

We have come to the conclusion that ‘development’ as implemented by the government is often not in the interest of the people it is supposed to serve. Instead, higher regards are given to what is best for the state or national economy, as India has great aspirations when it comes to achieving economic growth (World Bank India Country Overview 2010). With this argument, we can also draw a parallel to the caste system. Even though it is no longer practiced according to law, the caste system is still active (BBC 2011a). This means that discrimination and segregation of the rural poor and tribal communities is still happening, and that these groups are still at the bottom of the ladder. Pouring resources into developing the more modern, urban and rich parts of India is considered to be more beneficial for the Indian state, since investing in this sector of society will garner more revenue than investments in poor, rural areas. This is in sharp contrast to the political reforms that were promised after the independence of India (Ray & Katzenstein 2005; The Indian Constitution), when the government promised that justice and equality would be the building blocks of society.

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The preamble of The Indian Constitution:
WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:
JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;
IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.
(The Indian Constitution)
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Omvedt’s arguments concerning how the former, people centred values of India are being ‘lost’ due to the introduction of neo-liberalism has proven to be correct in the case of East Godavari. We also been able to prove Kudva’s theory regarding how NGO:s take on the state and play an important role in representing the grievances of the people (2005). Many times, we have heard from our interviewees that the government is not an ally or a power that is trusted. On the contrary, the government is seen as the
antagonist that Kudva talks about, creating a strenuous relationship to their citizens when they are trying to steer which way development is supposed to go.

The arguments put forward by Martin Webb (2010) are relevant in our research. The efforts of Sujana, the Kadali Network and other NGO:s in this region have been successful due to their substantial knowledge regarding the area, the context they work in, as well as the legal framework. The studies submitted to the government by Sujana are examples of an NGO presenting strong and legally binding evidence in order to achieve change.

The NGO:s and movements that we have analysed are conducting advocacy in line with what we have seen in earlier research. They are focusing to an increasing extent on lobbying, advocacy and networking (Kudva 2005). Also, the hardships for Sujana and the Kadali Network are similar to problems that grassroots movements in other parts of India face.

From our research, we have observed how the government of East Godavari has adopted a modernisation/diffusion approach to development (Waisbord 2001:2-6; see the Theoretical framework chapter). We definitely see a tendency on the part of the government to adopt a top-down perspective, thereby deciding what kind of development should be introduced. This is done without getting in touch with the realities of the rural population and without listening to the voices of the people actually affected. This form of development obstructs any opportunity for the people to have a say about their future and the form of development that they would like to see happen. We now view the term ‘development’ in a very different light than we did when entering this study; and we argue that state agencies and governments policies should be critically examined regarding their so called development practices.

Sustainable development, as exemplified by the grassroots movements we have studied, is however different. It has focused on the Indian peasant and strives to embrace poor and lower caste people, and include these in sincere development programmes. These movements have learned to communicate through creative forms of advocacy the interest of the people and seek to provide them with the possibilities and rights they are entitled to. Another aspect of sustainable development that we have observed is environmental sustainability. In all of our case studies, the projects initiated by outside agents believed to represent development, have all lead to environmental destruction.

Through this study we have seen that the grassroots movements and NGO:s have a large responsibility: not only are they the ones who must voice the needs of the people, but they are also the ones who have to advocate for preservation of nature. In this way, these movements have to assume the responsibility that the government was supposed to exercise. However, the NGOs do not have sufficient resources to take on that responsibility. The government has put the grassroots movements in a position where the responsibility of sustainable development is up to the movements.
If this situation goes any further, it may have a devastating effect on the tribal, Dalit and low caste people in East Godavari. We therefore see reason for advocacy from these movements to target not only the government, but also larger movements on a national, or even international level. We believe that Martin Aranguren (2011) is right when he points to the impact that outside organisations such as the UN can have on solving a local conflict. For example, raising international awareness about SEZ and the destruction it carries with it, could spur an environmental and humanitarian outcry. The challenges are once again the lack of resources.

Can advocacy be a solution? In our opinion, advocacy should be considered a tool. The current advocacy done from the bottom-up is not changing the mindset of governments. However, it is raising the awareness at a grassroots level, thus counteracting misinformation coming from corporations and governments. But to actually change the course of development and make it more sustainable, it comes down to compassion and solidarity. From what we have experienced in the field, neither governments nor corporations have shown enough of those qualities.

Maybe it is time to scale up the advocacy further. We think that the message of what the current situation is like at a grassroots level in rural India should be transmitted beyond state authorities and companies. Hopefully, voicing grassroots movements nationally and internationally can awaken solidarity from likeminded movements elsewhere in India and in the world. We believe that such a network of solidarity is needed to get the ball rolling towards a more sustainable future.
11. Conclusion

Going into this study, we were determined to find successful traits of grassroots advocacy that could be useful for movements working in poor, rural areas. The reality however, is that the long-lasting successful measures are very few, perhaps non-existent. In the situations we have seen where success is achieved, only small steps forward are taken, and the vision of getting one’s needs fully met still remains.

Through our study, we have seen that there are many areas and angles that are eligible for research in the future. For instance, looking at the grassroots advocacy from a perspective of the government would reveal more about how the government reacts and responds to the advocacy. Another possible study for the future would be to map how the issues of Yeleru, Vanthada and SEZ are presented in the state media in Andhra Pradesh, and investigate what impact media attention has on the issues.

As a final note, we realise that through our experiences in India we have witnessed how development policies function ‘out in the real world’, and that the truth is not always possible to learn through secondary sources. Instead, it is sometimes necessary to literally put yourself in the shoes of the people at the bottom of society in order to understand what the effects of power structures and political decisions really are.
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Appendixes

Appendix 1
In this appendix, we will give a description about the Yeleru issue, from where the conflict to where it is today.

The Yeleru Project
Water from the Jarderu and Maderu springs from the mountains come together in the Yeleru River. The river runs through the northern part of the district of East Godavari, and eventually ends in the Bengal Bay. The so called ‘Yeleru Project’ is a huge dam built for industrial and irrigation purposes. It supplies water to the Vishaka steel plant 150km away through pipelines. The Vishaka steel plant did a successful propaganda campaign before the dam was built, to make communities in the area believe that the plant would be good for them, and that it was their “right” to have a steel plant. When the dam was built in 1982-1990, 11 villages were evacuated. The displaced villagers were promised compensational land and houses. But until today, no satisfying compensation has been given. Also, job opportunities were promised to the displaced people. Today, 20 000 employees work in the Vishaka steel plant, but only approximately 10-20 of them are from the displaced villages.

After 1990, industries increased the land level of the delta just before the river would have reached the sea, because they want the water to stay so they could make maximal use of it. In total, 70 industries use that water. The result is that the agricultural lands next to the stopped water are flooding every year. Scheduled cast communities live in these low land areas and are thus affected by the floods. The companies had no legal right to heighten the land, but did so anyway.

The Yeleru Project – Timeline
In 1948-1949 there was a huge flood in the Yeleru river.
In 1950-1951 the government sent a committee called the ‘Water Board Commission’ to investigate the possibility of building a dam for flood control.
In the 1960s-70s it was also suggested that a dam could be built for irrigation purposes.
In the 1970s-1980s it was suggested to use the water for industrial purposes. An amendment in the law was made to open the possibility to use the dam for industrial purposes.
In 1982-1990 the dam was built. Its main purpose was to provide water for the Vishaka steel plant, 150km away, and to provide for irrigation in agriculture. Two pipelines were built: one to the left leading to the steel plant and irrigation, and one to the right letting the water back into the river.
After 1990 the land level of the delta was increased just before the river would have reached the sea. Industries want the water to stay so they can make maximal use of it. In total, 70 industries take the remaining water in the river.
Today in 2011, the idea of controlling the water to prevent flooding has been forgotten. Now there are more floods than before. The displaced people have still not received satisfactory compensation.

The Role of Sujana in the Yeleru Project
Sujana entered the scene in 1995 with a baseline study. In every village 10-15 families were selected and in total 350 households were in the baseline study. The result of the study was that Sujana should focus on health problems related to the dust from stone crushers. The displaced people came to live in this area close to the crushers only because they wanted to live close to the city. Also, Sujana wanted to work with
rehabilitation and resettlement, as well as supporting people to go to court to claim their rightful compensation for the land taken from them.

The 1997 election and the “Yeleru people’s tears in ballot box”
When there was election in 1997, all the people in the affected community would attach to their vote a note presenting their grievances. These notes had been collectively written and printed on an initiative from Sujana. In meetings with key persons from the community, it was discussed what to add on the note. Issues like reducing pollution, giving compensation for land grabbing and highlighting ongoing court cases made it to the list.

Actually, it’s not allowed to put anything in the ballot box apart from the votes, but Sujana trained people how to hide the printout in their clothes and then attach it to their vote once they were in the booth for voting, so that nobody could see what they were doing. But some incidents happened while dropping notes to the ballot box. The ballot box became full after only 25% of the votes were in the box. The staff therefore opened the box to look, and found out about the notes. Initially, the staff tried to stop people from attaching the notes to their votes by standing next to the ballot box looking at what people put in the box. But the people immediately got angry and asked “Who are you to look what I put in the ballot box?” They threatened to boycott the election if the staff persisted. So the staff gave up, and let people put their votes without anyone watching.

One more strategy from Sujana’s side was giving the same leaflet with grievances to politicians to spread. The politicians thought they would make themselves popular and gain votes by distributing these notes and Sujana used the opportunity so that more people could get the note. The politicians were proud to stand next to Sujana and tell that they had handed out the leaflets. And when the staff managing the ballot boxes tried to prevent people from submitting the note with their vote, the politicians who had given out the notes stood up for the people and said “Let them voice their complaints!” That same list of needs was also sent to the Election Commissioner and the District Collector before they counted the votes. Sujana requested media to write about the issue while vote counting was going on. And the media did. The headline of that article was “Yeleru people’s tears in ballot box’.

From March 17th to 22nd in 1999, a long march of 120km was conducted. After the long march the chief minister responded and formed a commission. During six months, the commission existed without achieving any notable changes.

On the 5th of March 2000, there was a Human Rights Forum mass meeting in Andhra Pradesh. The chief inviter to this meeting was the lawyer and human rights activist Dr Kandalla Balagopal. Sujana was leading the meeting along with legal experts. During the meeting, Dr Balagopal suggested to Sujana that a study was needed of issues linked with the Yeleru project. Thus, an in depth study was carried out in 2000-2001, with funding from the Centre for World Solidarity. 5 teams of 10 people each were trained to do the research. After Sujana completed the study, it was submitted to the Minor Irrigation Principal Secretary of Andhra Pradesh.

Among other things, Sujana encourages people to file cases against government officials, based on the rights in the constitution. The high court (district level) had already judged that the government should distribute compensation to the people, yet the government had not done so. Therefore, in 2003-2004, Sujana helped people to file an executing petition to the high court telling that the government still hadn’t paid any compensation. Then the high court stated that unless the government pays, their office and
everything in it will be seized and given as compensation! The government got scared and paid. Media wrote about the court case.

In 2003-2004, before the election, one of the politicians in opposition, Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, made a long march. He visited the villages with the people displaced by the Yeleru project. The people made a poster to show Y.S.R. Reddy their grievances when he passed by their village. Through the media, Y.S.R. Reddy (still in opposition) forced the sitting government officials in the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) to pay a grant to the villagers. In total 50 lakh (5 million) rupees was paid to 350 villagers.

The villagers displaced by the Yeleru project boycotted the election in 2004, until the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) made a promise on TV that they would improve the villagers’ situation. That was at 10 o’clock on the Election Day. People therefore decided to vote and Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. He wanted to help the villagers, but the local MLA must represent people’s problems, in order for the Chief Minister to do something about it. Because of an opposing MLA, Reddy’s hands were tied (according to interviews with Sujana).

After that, in 2005, Sujana launched the 10 000 application strategy. The plan was that every Monday, in total 500 petitions from 11 villages would be submitted to the Collector’s office. The campaign was planned to last for 6 months, but lasted about two months and resulted in about 5000 petitions. It was enough to get publicity in the media, and to get government response.

In 2006 the government came forward to organize a Lok Adalat, as a response to the 5 000 applications. A Lok Adalat is an open court. The goal was to make political parties and displaced people come to an agreement. But the people felt that Lok Adalat was not speaking in their favour, so they got angry and went home – refusing to negotiate in the Lok Adalat. The judges and government were said to be “scratching each other’s back”. Sujana was not allowed to attend the Lok Adalat because the organisation was deemed as “not involved” according to the government and the judges.

In 2009 the District Judge held a legal awareness meeting and helped people to file cases to the high court of Andhra Pradesh.

For the future, to get justice in this problem, Sujana claims they need:
- Mass movements
- Legal battles
- Political parties representation in parliament on the issue
- Media putting pressure on everyone to fulfil their promises
Appendix 2
In this appendix, we will present a more detailed description of the conflict concerning the village Vanthada and the mining company, and has happened in the conflict since its origin in 2000.

The Vanthada Village Mining Issue
The Vanthada village is situated on the top of a hill in the mountain range called the Eastern Ghats. It is a tribal village, inhabited by approximately 300 villagers. Eleven years ago, the villagers of Vanthada asked for development. They wanted a proper road to their village, because they only had narrow paths. Further, they wanted access to safe drinking water all year around, so they wouldn’t have to carry water from very far. Today they have gotten water and a road. But along with the road came a mining company who tricked and persuaded the villagers to let the company dig for bauxite and laterite. The mine has caused loss of land and environmental destruction to the villagers of Vanthada. For many farmers in the valley below who use the water sources from the mountains to irrigate the lands during the dry season, the water is not enough anymore. This is because laterite and bauxite are needed to store water in the ground. The mining has disrupted this natural water reservoir. The mining company has promised compensation for land lost and environment destroyed. But until this day, no satisfactory compensation has been given. Further, there are some legal question marks to whether the mining company really had legal permission to do mining and to build a road to the mine. Sujana organisation has encouraged the villagers of Vanthada to protest against the mining and to represent their demands for a just compensation to the government, to politicians, to courts and to the media. During the years, the mine has been closed and reopened several times. Latest, in January 2011, the mining stopped.

The Vanthada Village Mining Issue – Timeline
In 1990-93 The Forest Department of Andhra Pradesh contacted the World Bank to get forest protection funding. Since India gained independence, the part of India covered by forests has shrunk from 18% to 10%. To stop this alarming trend, there is a Forest Protection Scheme called VSS – Vana Samrakshana Sammiti. This scheme is sponsored by the World Bank.

In 2000 the head of Sujana organisation visited Vanthada for the first time. He helped them with health issues, mostly malaria. With him on his first visit, he had Gemeni TV. The villagers of Vanthada were first scared of Sujana and Gemeni TV, and ran away. They believed that all people dressed in pants and shirts would seek to exploit them. But one woman was brave enough to speak to the strangers. She told Sujana that all the inhabitants of Vanthada wanted was a road to the village and safe access to drinking water all year round.

In 2001 a pond, a well and 30km of pipeline was constructed. The same year, the VSS (Forest Protection Committees) entered the area of Vanthada to make erosion protection and other measures for forest protection. With a budget of 3-4 lakh (3-400 000) per year, the VSS provided employment, which in turn halted migration from the hill. Also in 2001, a narrow road started to be built by the villagers from the top of the hill, going down to the west of Vanthada. But only 2/3 of that road was finalised, and then the government funding stopped.

In 2002 the government started building another road instead. This one started from the valley, but was constructed to the east of Vanthada and would thus not meet the road initiative started from the hill top (see last point). The east road was much wider and stronger – suitable for heavy vehicles. The
organisations Sujana and Samata filed a case to the Forest Department saying that the government’s road destroys the forest. As a result, officials came and requested the government’s road to stop.

In spite of the stop in 2002, the government’s road was finalised in 2003 due to political pressure. On the 1st of October 2003, the villagers of Vanthada were fooled to sign a document allowing mining. Villagers were fooled with false promises of development benefits, they were given expensive gifts, and they were under the influence of alcohol when they signed the document (see picture). After this, the mining commenced. Sujana mobilised the media (TV9, a commercial sponsored TV channel) and made a telecast. After the telecasting, the mining stopped for a period of 6-7 months.

The District Collector responded on the 2002 representation and made an enquiry commission led by an IAS (Indian Administration Service) officer. Committee cooperated with the ITDA (Integrated Tribal Development Agency). The IAS and ITDA visited the mining area and found that:
- Forest was destroyed
- Mining was illegal
- Revenue rules were broken

In 2004, an NGO network made an in depth study on the illegal mining causing destruction of agriculture, forest and wild life. The report from the study was submitted to the government. The report stressed that at the same time as the government was giving mining land to the company; the World Bank was giving money to protect the forest. On the 2nd of December, the District Level Mining Administrative Director sent an official letter to the District Collector and the ITDA saying that the mining is officially stopped. Also, the State Level Mines and Geology Department sent a letter. The mining company however protested and they filed a court case to the State Level High Court. But the High Court didn’t take on the case. In 2003, the Telugu Desham Party (TDP) was ruling. They gave the permission for mining. But in 2004, they cancelled the permission due to pressure from the public.

In the 2005 election, the Congress Party lead by Chief Minister Rajasekhara Reddy got to power. A member of the Legislative Assembly MLA (he represented people in East Godavari) gave the permission again to start the mining. The MLA had consent from Reddy, because Reddy has direct share in the benefits from the mining.

In 2006, in total 20 village councils made a resolution saying “We don’t want mining, because it creates pollution and affects the water resources”. (Water for farmers during the dry season was threatened by the mining, because the bauxite must stay in the ground and store water. The resolution was in December sent to all government departments (Revenue, Forest, Mining, and Irrigation). Thanks to this village
council resolution, the mining was stopped again. The mining company then asked for a government permission to start mining again.

In 2007, on the 18th of July, the mining company representative Shoban Babu got 20 years of lease of the land from the government, in the name of “unsurveyed land’ (unsurveyed land means the land does not belong to any department or people, but to the government). Shoban Babu sent a map of the planned mining. The planned mine sites were at the exact same spot where tribal people were growing cashew trees. But he didn’t mention that. Instead he claimed that the land was “unsurveyed’ and not used. The mining started again. However, in 1984 the people got that same land as d-patta land to be used for agriculture (d-patta land = decade-patta land given to people, but can be taken back by the government at any time). Because this land had been given as d-patta agriculture land in 1984, it was against the law to give the land for lease as unsurveyed land in 2007.

2008 The public started a movement to claim their rights. NGOs and political parties supported them. They did rallies, long marches, representations to the government, and more. They even blocked the roads.

2009 Because the public was stopping him, the mining representative Shoban Babu filed a court case to 26 members of the legal system, showing that he had government permission to do mining. The public visited Sujana and gave Sujana updates on what was happening. The “Revolution for more change’ campaign before the election succeeded, through having the sitting MLA lose power in the 2010 election.

2010 Studio N TV broadcasted the issue of the Vanthada mining under the title “Obalapuram mining at Vanthada’. This was a powerful title, because the Obalapuram illegal mining is very large and very well known. When the media publicised the issue, many politicians stepped forward and acted as front figures. Sujana stayed backstage, because it didn’t want to receive life threats from the mining company, which had happened before. Thanks to the media and the politicians stepping forward, it became a state level issue. Sujana submitted a process report to the District Collector in 2010, telling about the entire process of the mining. In October, the government made a commission against the mining, called the Joint Collector Commission. The Mining Joint Director, the Revenue Officer and the Forest Department Director were all in that committee. They made a statement that 14.94 crore (almost 150 million) rupees must be paid as a tax by the mining company. 13 government officials were put to trial accused for corruption. The lease of the land for mining was cancelled. However, the commission’s report was not properly done, and had to be remade. Finally, in January 2011, the mining stopped.
Appendix 3

In this appendix, we will give a broader picture of the conflict concerning the Special Economic Zones - SEZ. We will describe what made the proposition concerning SEZ into reality, and also what kind of effects it has had in the regions SEZ have been notified.

The Special Economic Zones – SEZ

Special Economic Zones, or SEZ as it is abbreviated, has emerged as one of the major threats towards rural and tribal livelihood ever since its implementation in 2005. SEZ are letting large companies take over land belonging to people – just for the sake of profit. However, this is not the first time that the Indian peasant has been affected by the interests of major stakeholders. Before India gained its independence, the East India Company and the British colonial masters exploited India’s natural assets by trading silk, cotton and colour, and by chopping down trees for use abroad. India’s resources were thereby brutally seized for company profit, much similar to the situation of today.

In the 1990s, neo-liberalism was introduced as the new economic system – on the world market and in India. This meant that attracting international businesses became more important in the eyes of governments than creating jobs, social security and welfare for the citizens. For the government, developmental investments became lower and more intense; leading to short term development but very limited long term change. The Special Economic Zones is just one of many results of neoliberal trends in India.

The SEZ law is presented and put into motion

In the 2000’s, neo-liberalism had been in fashion for a while, but the Indian government felt that something more needed to be done in order to attract more international companies to invest in India. Therefore, in 2002-2004, the National Democratic Alliance and the BJP, which were the parties in power in the national government, began forming a new legal act which would enable companies to establish themselves in India without having to pay taxes for the first 10 years. Also, companies would not need to abide to laws concerning labour rights or environmental preservation. To make this possible, it was decided that the land that the company would build its factories on would not be Indian territory. In practice, this meant that the Indian police force would have no power to question illegal actions carried out by the companies. In 2005, this new legal act was presented as the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act, and was proudly proclaimed by the government via an announcement that India is in a prosperous period, and that a lot of employment would come from the establishment of the SEZ Act. Hence, the government said, it was crucial for the act to be implemented as soon and effective as possible.

With its establishment, the SEZ movement urged small scale farmers and landlords to sell their land to the government so that companies could be provided with land for their factories and businesses. Coinciding with the SEZ movement, the tsunami disaster struck large parts of coastal India, devastating farmers’ and fishermen’s communities, partially destroying their land and livelihood. When the benefits for those affected by the tsunami turned out to be low, many farmers had huge debts and no livelihood. So the tsunami left them in a situation where they pretty much had to sell their land to survive. Elsewhere, lands across India became SEZ notified by the government, meaning that these lands would be converted into company property, displacing the inhabitants of the land as a consequence. In the process of buying, the government promised that the people who would be displaced would get compensated with new lands with the same value as their old ones. Further, the displaced persons were assured that employment
would be offered within the SEZ companies. All such promises convinced many small scale farmers to sell their land.

Voices from people affected by SEZ

The reality of these promises have however been proven to be different. By interviewing people from several villages, the true consequences of SEZ have been shown to us. We talked to a few village heads living in villages that had been SEZ notified several years ago, and they explained that SEZ middlemen had come to the villages, threatening and in some cases torturing people into selling their lands. The threats have been everything from lowered prices ("if you don’t sell now, we will pay much less for your land next year"), filing court cases and having police forces entering villages to vacate them from people.

While many villages and small scale companies have been submerged due to the SEZ movement, many villages try to resist, making the government develop further methods in order for people to sell their land. Villages that resist have for example been treated differently in receiving flood benefits than villages that have cooperated with SEZ, even if the devastation has been at the same level. Also, government bodies like the District Collector usually ignore complaints and grievances sent to them by the resisting villages.

The resistance from the villages may seem to the outsider as futile. People will get a lot of money if they sell, and they will also get another place to stay provided by the government, as stated by the SEZ supporters. While this is true, there is another side of the coin. When discussing the SEZ with people who had already been displaced and sold their lands, it became brutally obvious that the SEZ had destroyed their lives. The displaced people claim that they were promised daily wage labours and equal living facilities as those they had before, but have instead received no work whatsoever and small houses with one room, making the living situations for families tremendously difficult. The villagers also feel cheated by the government. Since they are illiterate, they were convinced by SEZ officials that the documents they signed granted them rights and privileges. On top of that, seeing how huge landlords sold large parts of their land, people were easily tricked into believing that the SEZ would be beneficial for them. The villagers we have met shares a similar fate with 3 crores (30 million) of Indian citizens distributed over 975 kilometres of Indian land.

There have been several occasions where organised protests have taken place to show the media and the government what the SEZ movement is causing for the affected people. Villages have arranged media covered marches to Kakinada to give complaints to the District Collector, hunger strikes to support the national anti SEZ movement leader Medha Patkar, and they have filed court cases against those who threaten farmers to sell land. While several of these practices have been moderately successful and garnered attention, there has been limited real progress in concretely stopping the SEZ movement from continuous land grabbing.

Kadali Network’s involvement in battling SEZ

Since SEZ was announced in 2005, Kadali Network has worked with villages and other organisations to prevent SEZ from taking over more land. With the collaboration of stakeholders, professors and villages, Kadali Network was formed to have a united and broad front against the SEZ movement. Kadali Network has had three main activities to raise the awareness concerning SEZ:

1. **Research and study.** When the tsunami struck the Indian coastland, no reports of what had been lost and what the affected villagers needed in terms of material and benefits were made. Therefore, the
Kadali Network together with other network organisations conducted surveys in affected areas to try to calculate the devastation. Thereafter, these surveys were sent to the government, with demands that the findings should be taken seriously.

2. **Intellectual resources.** To have a credible and reliable working force against SEZ, acknowledged professors and intellectuals have been used to present facts about SEZ that the government keeps the public from knowing. Examples of such intellectuals are Medha Patkar, anti SEZ activist, and the late Kandalla Balagopal, who was a well renounced lawyer and human rights activist until his death in 2009.

3. **Advocacy against the government.** Advocacy against the government on district, state and national level is done through lawyers and advocates that make court cases and represent people’s grievances due the responsive departments of the government. There is in fact a free legal service provided by the government, making government money work against the government itself.

The Kadali Network also works directly with village empowerment, having good contact with village heads and important inhabitants. A member in the displaced group states that without the support of the Kadali Network, the village “would have been taken by the sea’. Another village states that the Kadali Network has provided much needed support and confidence in continuing to fight against the SEZ movement. The network has also provided and recruited more activists to the villages to educate about the SEZ and how it should be tackled by village and action groups.
"I will do this work until my last breath. I don't know what will happen to me. Remember me."
Rajendra Kumar, Sujana