

# **“Liberating Voices” in South Asia:**

## **Case Study of Networked Resistance in Jharkhand**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

In 2006, a study was conducted to analyze the relevance of Liberating Voices, a project emphasizing the use of pattern languages as a method of supporting ‘civic communication.’ The study sought to evaluate whether effective networks exhibit the elements defined within the Liberating Voices database, which claims to have amassed a number of archetypical patterns for effective communication and political transformation. The results of this study revealed that while the Liberating Voices project is not yet complete, various pattern configurations can be observed among effective instances of networked advocacy. This points to both legitimacy of the pattern language while opening up opportunities to further study these patterns as approaches to capacity building for ineffective networks struggling to influence political discourse at local and global spheres of policy making.

**KEYWORDS:** Pattern Languages, Advocacy Networks, South Asia, Community Resistance

### **Introduction:**

In the years following the publications of *A Timeless Way of Building* (1979) and *A Pattern Language* (1977) academics, managers, activists, engineers and conscientious citizens have recognized the usefulness of Christopher Alexander’s pattern language construct. Based upon Alexander’s usage of the words pattern and pattern language in his theory of design, it became clear to many that what was being articulated represented a conceptual framework for working with complex systems. Following from this recognition a growing number of pattern languages have emerged to address issues related to environmental sustainability, pedagogical praxis and the development of increasingly complex software systems. Perhaps the most notable of these can be found among the community of software engineers that have sought to encode solutions to problems regularly encountered in the design of complex systems. In fact, since the publication of *Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software* (Gamma, et al. 1994) pattern languages and pattern thinking has rapidly taken off. The outcome has been a series of related pattern languages touching upon Human Computer Interaction, Systems Architecture, Web-based Software Development and more.

Yet, arguably the most ambitious among these pattern languages has been the Liberating Voices project launched at the Directions and Implications of Advanced Computing (DIAC—2001). Organized as a “global participatory project,” this effort drew upon the wealth of experience and research among various scholars, activists, technologists and students, the purpose, to help co-construct a pattern language for civic and democratic communication (Schuler, 2001). This effort has culminated into hundreds of patterns representing an idealized approach to the ways in which researchers, activists and ordinary people can think about, and hopefully implement alternatives to dominant communicative processes within society. Though communication represents the central focus of Liberating Voices, the pattern language has grown to include elements of environmental sustainability, economic development, socially responsive health and general community problem solving (Smith, 2007). Rather than emphasizing a particular theory within the social sciences, Liberating Voices by its very design has incorporated a number of theoretical models related to social change. This has served to make Liberating Voices one of the most expansive and holistically focused pattern languages attempted.

## **Orientating the Study**

Despite growing interest in pattern languages as constructs for addressing ‘wicked problems’ has been little effort to empirically validate this work within the context of social empowerment, civic action or networked advocacy. This apparent shortcoming helped motivate an investigation directed towards analyzing and understanding pattern thinking as an approach to working with complex systems. In fact, this project represented the first empirical investigation of its kind into the relevance of the Liberating Voices pattern language. With that in mind, the research sought to address some of the fundamental assumptions surrounding pattern thinking by asking three basic questions: 1.) *Do the Liberating Voices patterns correlate to examples of effective real-world practices*; 2.) *Do patterns connect in a structured way to one another to construct a system of solutions*; 3.) *Are there relevant patterns absent from the Liberating Voices database?*

To help answer these questions the methodological approach emphasized the development of a single case study focused on an “effective” advocacy campaign within the “Tribal State” of Jharkhand in India. Interest in the indigenous communities of Jharkhand, derives from the fact that India possesses the largest indigenous population in the world (World Bank, 2005). Similarly, the problems the *adivasi* (term used in India for first peoples) face parallel many of the world’s other indigenous communities, such as systemic political under-representation and economic exclusion. Based upon the shared concerns over corruption, government mismanagement, displacement and resource exploitation which appear to be common themes of indigenous peoples experience (Gedicks, 2004), it is asserted that this particular area can serve as a useful test for evaluating the presence of these patterns and their potential as reusable elements in similar situations outside of Jharkhand.

Along with a particular regional focus, the investigation was orientated around identifying specific elements within the case related to: *Organizing Principles, Enabling Systems, Policy, Collaboration, Tactics, and Self Representation*, as well as *Community and Organizational Building*. The analysis was carried out through a process of information triangulation and pattern matching as articulated by Robert Yin (1998). Much of the information for developing the case study was acquired through a review of past research, government memos (both public and private), and a series of informal interviews among organizational leaders. This process was intended to enable the acquisition of relevant information on network links, communication resources and processes, as well as specific actions carried out by the network from the community level on up. Finally, beyond structuring the analysis it was also important to define success. The criteria for defining success included both an internal assessment (the network’s definition) and external observation (actual policy outcome). Together with a multi-source documentation review, open-ended interviews, mapping links with partners and identification of exchanges and processes, as well as the blockages faced by the network, a rich case study was developed that highlighted the elements that led to success.

## **Case Study Overview**

For the last 37 years, up to 1994 the Indian military has conducted firing exercises within a region of the Jharkhand state known as Netrahat. These military exercises entailed the mobilization of the army from its encampment at Namkun near Ranchi (the capital of Jharkhand) to the Netrahat hills. To reach the site the military must cross into the fields of local subsistence farmers, tearing up vital cropland and often during the monsoonal sowing season. Because of the serious danger involved with the exercise, all villages within the vicinity of the firing and impact areas were required to evacuate, forcing people to make long journeys away from their homes. Adding to the difficulty for the local communities, the government’s notification for evacuation was practically non-existent, leaving people little time to prepare. This of course led to increase property damage as people had to leave livestock unattended, a problem considering that government compensation for such losses were routinely ignored (PUDR, 1994; Kujur, 2006).

While these exercises were an annual occurrence, the response to the hardships imposed upon these communities was relatively quiet. Instead, it was the ground swell of opposition that emerged as a result of the Indian military's proposal to designate Netrahat as a permanent military installation, which initiated such a powerful grassroots response. With upwards of more than half a million people being threatened with forcible displacement (Sengupta, 2003), the response culminated into an effective networked struggle to resist the government's proposed policy decision.

### **Annotated Case Report: *Networked Resistance in Netrahat***

#### Round 1: 1992-1994

Despite the problems surrounding the practice, there appears to have been no apparent opposition except for minor indicators that discontent was brewing. Hardships in shifting people and property had increased due to state promotion of settled forms of agriculture in contrast to traditional nomadic practices. Yet, these hardships were minor sources of agitation in comparison to the rumors that the army had been quietly planning to permanently acquire a substantial part of the Netrahat plateau area (Hindustan Times, 1994; PUDR, 1994; Statesman 1994). By September of 1992 growing rumors regarding the impending land acquisition started to spread through the area villages, initiating the beginning of a full blown uprising. By July 1993 frequent military movement and aerial surveys gave further credence to the rumors. Again, this was amplified when a number of extensive surveys were carried out in 29 villages of Mahuadanr block by the local administration in later that year.

With growing alarm over the prospective proposal, various groups throughout the region began to discuss and coordinate on how to address the rumors. The Church which had been a powerful social entity within the region for well over a century through its numerous schools, rural credit institutions and cooperative societies facilitated in the genesis and growth of movement to oppose any proposed land grab (PUDR, 1994). As an intimate and interwoven institution in tribal life that had worked hard to end practices of usury by non-tribal elites and in its direct involvement with producing relatively higher literacy rates, the Church served as an informational and organization fulcrum that had secured the trust of both the Christian as well as non-Christian tribals, making it a central actor. Along with the local tribal panchayats and other social organizations such as the area's student unions, a highly dense network emerged in response to the troubles.

Initiated in Mahuadanr where in one of the tri-monthly meetings of the Christian Society, it was collectively agreed upon that the exercises would finally be resisted. In order to initiate this resistance Chhaoni Visthapan Sangharsh Samiti, a community-action association was created consisting of five representatives from each village in the area who would act as coordinators to assist in mobilizing village residents. Within two days of declaring their intent to oppose the exercise they were able to organize a major demonstration of around 10,000 people in the main village of Mahuadanr. The 'circle officer' was surrounded by protesters and local agitators delivered a number of memoranda written up for the Prime Minister, President, Chief Minister and the Governor. Meanwhile the movement spread out towards Gumla district. In order to mobilize more people and promote more effective coordination among the growing opposition, a number of additional samitis (or community action groups) were created to including a network of village samitis, as well as a regional, block and a central samiti.

The organization leading the struggle was renamed as the Netrahat Field Firing Range Pilot Project Jan Sangharsh Samiti to emphasize their specific focus and connection to the movement. The Samiti gave a call for a state and national level campaign demanding for a full repeal of the Act, specifically citing the rumored acquisition. But at the time the network still lacked any concrete evidence regarding the plans of the state. A hunt was on for gathering information. In November 1993 the Jan Sangharsh Samiti got hold of two Special Gazettes which had been published as far back as November 1991 and March 1992 through which the state government was publicly notifying 245 villages of Palamu and Gumla districts of an impending string of exercises to be carried out regularly over the next decade. Overall, the notification claimed to cover an area of over 100,066 hectares which would directly affect over half a million people (Jan Sangharsh Samati, 1997; PUDR, 1994). Not long after they launched their fact-finding mission the Jan Sangharsh Samiti was able to access a number of internal documents highlighting the exchange between the military command and the local state government indicating that a proposal for permanent acquisition had also been put in motion. Through the concrete substantiation of these rumors the Jan Sangharsh Samiti helped provide further momentum to the movement.

Along with the Church and panchayats, students played a significant role in furthering the movement, as well. They organized themselves under the banner of Palamu Students Union and Hira Barwe Students Union. The organizations undertook local campaigns aimed toward maximizing contacts and building up a network in the region through mass dissemination of information, holding local village meetings and coordinating with other organizations in and outside of the area. Within a period of a few weeks the organizations were able to effectively organize a series of rallies, demonstrations and public meetings. By mid December 1993 a newly formed Banari-Bishunpur Student Union also stepped in and together the Bharat Naujawan Sangh from Daltonganj in Palamu also coordinated a protest campaign. By now the public response had become an enormous display of public outrage over the clandestine proposal of the government and military.

In a very short amount of time the agitation had already become a mass movement with additional support coming in from a number of major political parties such as the Congress, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and even the Bhartiya Janata Party; Vikas Bharti, an RSS organization even passed a resolution to oppose the pilot project. Along with the growing political support within the area, the Adivasi Yuva Sangh (AyS), a Delhi based organization which sought to encourage greater visibility of the issues taking place on the other side of the country by organizing a rally and sit-in in Delhi, aimed at personally delivering a series of memoranda to the President and the Prime Minister.

In response to the movement, different and often conflicting reports kept pouring in from the state government, army officials and politicians as well as from the media (Jan Sangharsh Samati, 1997; The Pioneer, 1994; PUDR, 1994). It is unclear whether this was a campaign on intentional disinformation or whether the government's own channels of communication were out of sync. Regardless of the information coming out to the public nothing had been formally announced to the adivasi, which ultimately served to fuel an 'atmosphere of wild speculation, confusion and anxiety.'

While the debate continued over the proposed acquisition the commanding officer of the 23rd Artillery Battalion had sent notice to the District Collectors to go ahead and evacuate the villages for its annual exercises. In an attempt to make a stand against both the firing practice itself and reiterate their opposition to a permanent military installation, more than 50,000 people assembled at the road junction connecting Netrahat with Mahuadanr and Ranchi on March 21, 1994. According to reports most came on foot, walking from their villages for two days carrying their food provisions with them. Overnight the land between the villages of Jokipokhar and Tutwapani was transformed into a massive settlement where temporary dwellings were constructed.

Through a flurry of media, numerous rallies across the country and sustained contact with both state and national level leaders, the adivasi were effective in bringing public awareness to the issue in the Chota-Nagpur, as well as provide a window to the world of how the Indian state treats its tribal populations. When set against the fact that India had become a signatory to the UN's declaration of the 'Year of the Indigenous Peoples' this opened the door for yet another wave of increased criticism as groups began to respond to the Nation's own stated goals of providing inclusive and responsive policies towards its people (Kendriya Jan Sangharsh Samati, 2004). With all of these elements coming together, culminating in the last stand (villagers blockade), it was finally acknowledged by the government that this was not just an uninhabited backwards region, but rather a place of serious consequence to their political legitimacy. Following the blockade of the military the government finally decided to put the firing exercises on hold for 11 years. Though this was not completely what they wanted it presented the villagers and their growing network of supporters with an opportunity to respond openly and directly when it was time to revisit the issue.

#### Round 2: 1999-Present

While it was thought that the next phase would be an open process of negotiation, just five years later in 1999 the Bihar government in coordination with the military had once again quietly extended the notification of the Project. This gave the army uninhibited accesses from 2002 till 2022 (ISI, 2004), reversing its previous decision without debate. Fortunately, the plans leaked to the public and notably much earlier than before. As a result, the people under the aegis of the reconstituted Jan Sanghash Samiti vehemently opposed the Project this time with only one demand; 'the Project should be cancelled permanently,' as well as all temporary exercises (ISI, 2004; Jan Sanghash Samiti, 2004). It seems they had grown tired of having to protect their land and livelihoods from those who would try to take it from them.

These announcements and the renewed commitment to local and national levels of agitation and advocacy sparked yet another clash between the governments' public pronouncements and its actual policies regarding the tribal areas. Unfortunately, it has also helped fuel the more violent agitation taking place in the form of Naxalite militants striking out against elites and government installations throughout the region. Though it is not clear that this has been directly linked with the spike in Naxal violence, for many, the ongoing struggle has become a sign of the inherent untrustworthiness of the government and to the limitations of peaceful political action. These views have been growing, resulting in the growth of Naxal forces as well as their geographic sphere of influence throughout the entire Chota-Nagpur.

Despite the increased regional violence, in this second round of resistance the network that had emerged in the early 90s now has greater access to media, international supporters, as well as a developed body of useful strategic frames for advocating their case to the local and national governments, and just as importantly the public. Upon hearing of the government's resumed plans for both the acquisition and renewed military exercise in the area the network quickly mobilized its media network, as well as local constituents, supporting government officials and began coordinating informational events both within the capital, and in Jharkhand. Since it had been several years since the nation had seen the images of protesters blocking military armaments in the newspapers, many of their tactics were about reifying the problems the tribals have faced within the minds of the public, as well as actively promoting a rapid process of conscientization of movement actors. They achieved this through providing the information and context of the problem taking place, highlighting the historical discriminations, framing it as 'an ethnocide exacted upon the peoples of the region' (ISI, 2004; Palamau-Gumla & Jan Sangharsh Samati, 2004).

In highlighting the continued problems they activated the memory of the Sardovar Dam project and the millions of displaced peoples that were the result of the massive development program. They sought to remind both officials and the public that Netrahat was even worse; and that this was a case that did nothing to promote development of the people as had been argued by supporters of the dam project, rather Netrahat was in comparison a "senseless acts of forcible displacement" (ISI, 2004; Palamau-Gumla & Jan Sangharsh Samati, 2004). To strengthen this argument and to represent the scale of the trouble they note that intended numbers of people to be displaced by the proposed project would even exceed the numbers projected from the Sardovar Dam (Jan Sangharsh Samati, 2004) (though this appears an exaggeration based upon the numbers available to researcher at the time). They also sought to promote a sense of pride and unity among the tribal groups in direct opposition to the dominate Hindus and the growing religious nationalism that has been spreading throughout the nation (Corbridge & Harrison, 2000; Corbridge, 2003; Roy, 2002). Many of the rallies were accentuated with a festive atmosphere consisting of traditional adivasi dance and music. There were events in which old adivasi war songs and prayers were recited to evoke a sense of connectedness to each other and their land, a place of collective history (AIFAIP, 2001; PUDR, 1994).

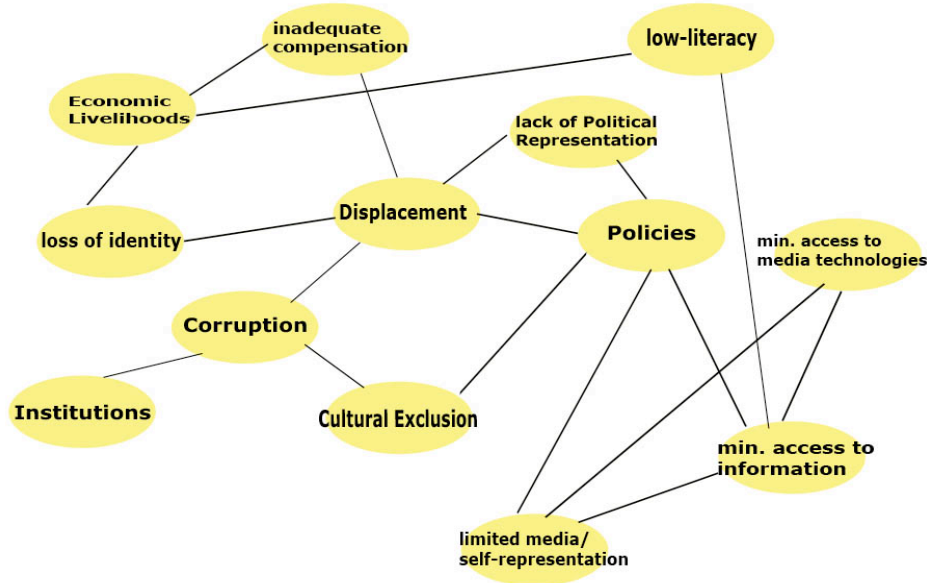
This time however, they began to activate a larger sphere of nodes in the network based upon the growth in relations developed through the proliferation in communication technologies and an overall global peace and justice movement that was rapidly gaining steam among local and international NGOs in the form of regional international forums. These forums such as the World Social Forum (WSF) or the World Federation on Tribal and Dalit Rights (WFDTR) provided venues for groups such as the Jan Sangharsh Samiti, South Asian Peoples Initiative (SAPI) and ISI to tell of the troubles taking place in Jharkhand. In bringing awareness to other groups they also sought these spaces as venues for the exchange of ideas and new strategies for engagement.

### **Perceiving the Context:**

In order to better understand how possible pattern address specific problems, it was deemed necessary to perceive the problems themselves. For example, it is apparent that the motivating factor for the networked response was the fear of permanent displacement. Indigenous subsistence farmers were being threatened with loss of property and livelihood. Based upon this observation, the issue of displacement was designated as the central focus for organizing a visual model for conceptualizing the interrelated forces. Following from this central element an array of problems emerge that feed into, as well as flow from this central issue. For instance, the threat of displacement arose out of a proposal put forth by the Indian government without the consent of the affected population. Thus, the issue was linked to the perceived lack of political representation (Singh, 2003). While at the national level political

representation may be poor or even non-existent, it is possible to link this broader issue to local level deficiencies, such as minimal access to information or the capacity to use information to communicate one's political positions. Without a system, whether institutional or technological in nature that enables an effective two-way flow of information between political representatives and the region's constituents, there would be no space through which to contest these policies. Thus, the ability of local citizens to access channels for information consumption and production was fundamentally necessary for providing the communicative space to negotiate political alternatives.

Figure 1: *Diagram of Context*, depiction of problems as a system of issues.



Further analysis highlights other connections, such as the relationship between inadequate compensation for lands lost and the deterioration of economic livelihoods. While compensation links to institutional mechanisms that enable or hinder appropriate implementation of social policies, livelihoods relates back to concerns over forcible displacement and the ability of subsistence farmers to support community and family. Interestingly, livelihoods also connect to problems of information awareness, with the government's notification to take control of the region as being just one example. With these notifications often non-existent, the ability of villagers to protect resources was limited, resulting in the loss of livestock and other durable assets. Though the notification was issued, its affect did not reach the intended audience. Again, this issue connects back to the institutional problems associated with the ways the government chooses to implement its laws and policies.

Though these shortcomings could be associated with a number of reasons, systemic corruption and cultural exclusion are often cited as the culprits (Corbridge & Harris, 2000; Dreze & Sen, 1999). These are perceived as influences leading to greater failures of institutional mechanisms that stifle accountability in government. As a result, the scope of the *Figure 1* is further extended by tracing access of direct political representation to these more abstract or high-level problems such as cultural exclusion. This has fed into the poor implementation of policies resulting in low-literacy, making access to and use of information more problematic (Dreze & Sen, 1999; Sen, 1999). Of course issues of literacy can be linked to more general concerns over income insecurity that often forces children to forego education in order to assist their families in earning a living (Dreze & Sen, 1999).

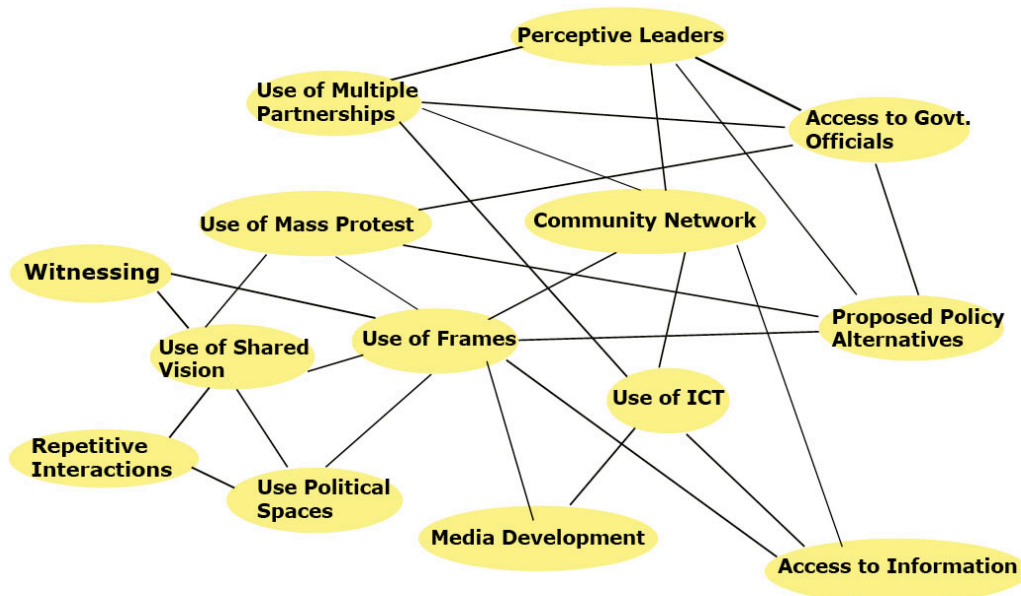
Though these outlying elements may not be directly linked to the campaign, following this line of reasoning enables a view of a dynamic system with a range of conspiring forces that influence day-to-day realities, as well as the capacity for advocacy. By understanding how these pieces are locked together it becomes clearer that one is working with a complex system represented by a web of interconnected

components that are to some degree all influencing one another. Again, this also aids the work in understanding how patterns emerged to address particular forces as a system of solutions.

**Patterns as a Systems-based Response:**

Organizing the central findings from the case into a visual diagram was considered important in helping to highlight the relationships between patterns identified within the case and Liberating Voices. The rationale was based upon the notion that patterns as defined by Alexander, and as proposed by the Liberating Voices project itself suggests that patterns are to be interconnected in such a way as to help strengthen and reinforce one another to create a powerful structure. Similarly, patterns are thought to solve particular problems, by understanding the context of forces it is possible to observe how the network’s patterns emerged to address the range of problems affecting the community. It was also central to the researcher for conceptualizing how these patterns link within a real world example, and thereby providing some insight into how the patterns within Liberating Voices might be configured to provide for effective actions in the future.

Figure 1: *Diagram of Case Patterns.*



By taking the information provided within the case study along with previous literature it is possible to get a picture of how these pieces intersect to create a web of reinforcing patterns. For example, let’s start with the element, “Use of Frames.” One of the primary functions of the network was its usage of frames. This was enabled and supported through a link to the role of media production for communicating a set of frames to different political and social groups. The network was able to use language in context specific ways depending upon who they were attempting to communicate with. Press releases geared towards the larger public of the Indian state sought to draw mental and emotional connections between the results of “British colonial rule” and the growing public angst over what has been labeled “internal colonialism” (Roy, 2003). Framing was also used in the development of visual media, while other media was produced in the form of research reports and op-ed pieces that drew connections between political corruption and the failure of democracy in India.

Extending this analysis it is apparent that media production is supported by the presence of multiple partnerships and extended associations, which act as channels for the exchange of resources and expertise needed to carry out media development projects, as well as an outlet for distribution (Della Porta, 1999).

For example, a number of researchers and activists affiliated with Indian Social Institute (ISI), or directly linked through the organizational structures provided by the Church's global justice network, such as Jesuits in Social Action (JESA) helped coordinate media production and distribution, engaged in academic research and published volumes of information that was distributed to various audiences. These groups also provided venues for workshops and conscientization sessions aimed at sharing experiences and information regarding respective issues. These types of programs were aimed at encouraging the development of greater "Shared Vision."

While ISI and JESA were not specifically associated with the initial thrust of the movement, as organizations directly linked to the Church and other Christian institutions by way of past collaborations, as well as the personal connections staff had with the movement, these advocacy and research centers began to take a much more direct role. Not only did they act as conduits for the flow of information and resources within the network, but as linkages thickened they became central partners in the facilitation for mobilizing local constituents in the urban areas, such as Delhi. In fact, ISI and JESA both in coordination helped organize numerous rallies of "Mass Protest" in Delhi to bring awareness to lawmakers polices had a direct impact upon the adivasi. These groups have also shared strategies, exchanged resources such as media contacts, or served as conduits through which smaller groups could thereby gain access to government ministers and other decision makers in Indian society.

In this light it is clear that without the ability to communicate, or the ability to utilize effective framing to engender responses from one's audience, the capacity of the network is minimized. Likewise, without the material support, expertise or the systems of human and technological channels for distribution, the ability to produce and disseminate the media is also compromised. Overall, each pieces within the diagram served to provide a certain level of positive feedback and thus producing a structure comprised of patterns related to: *Organizing Principles, Enabling Systems, Policy, Collaboration, Tactics, and Self Representation.*

Along with observing these interactions within a dynamic space it is possible to draw parallels to the patterns within the Liberating Voices database, this helps build upon the issue of validity, as it is apparent that many of the effective responses presented by the network correlate with a number of the Liberating Voices patterns. Likewise, it is possible to begin identifying areas where additional efforts through the use of patterns can be focused. For instance, while the campaign was successful, the network served primarily as a channel for people to directly address the government by opening access to political discourse, but failed to radically transform the environment that has perpetuated political exclusion in Jharkhand. In fact, it is now 2008 and the state government has failed to hold local election for almost 30 years (Mathew, 2004). Similarly, other than the recent discussions over reforms on rehabilitation and compensation polices, there remains little change in the mechanisms for voicing grievances, or in the cultural practices and bureaucracies of the Indian civil services and in the Jharkhand state (Singh, 2003; Sengupta, 2003). The continued institutional problems can be related back to Jonathan Barker's assessment (a pattern contributor) who cites social advocacy as a predominately responsive or reactive phenomenon (Barker, 1999). While groups can be effective they rarely define new pathways for policy development, instead they tend to get caught in a continual defensive cycle. Looking at a list of past advocacy campaigns in Jharkhand it is possible to recognize that some have been successful and others not, but the primary problem is that there has been little move towards defining a new way forward. Apprehending such problems can open up opportunities for perceiving additional supportive patterns such as: *Social Dominance Attenuation* (Schuler, 2007), *Grassroots Public Policy Development* (Maranda & Schuler, 2007), or *Free and Fair Elections* (Schuler, 2006). There could be a number of patterns that could also support the development of literacy, such as *Self-help Groups* (Smith, 2007) or *Informal Learning Groups* (Smith, 2007), and perhaps *Durable Assets* (Smith, 2007) to promote economic security (some of which is already taking place).



Though like all patterns, the level of success would be dependent upon the capacity to implement such an approach, as well as the configuration of, and additional patterns chosen to act as support elements. Nonetheless, Barker’s findings open a door for perceiving new options while calling for more proactive campaigns. While this list of possibilities is by no means an exhaustive list of either the opportunities or patterns available to leverage these opportunities, they do however point to the initial relevance of the patterns within the context of this research. And perhaps more importantly, opportunities for further actions defined among network actors.

To strengthen the relevance of these patterns it is necessary to provide a comparison between the identified responses of the network and the available list of patterns. By going through these patterns one can recognize a number of obvious correlations. In some instances there are direct connections while in other cases there are more general or abstract correlations. In providing a comparison of these elements it is possible to recognize that the responses and patterns fit together.

Table 1: *Response-Pattern Matching*: correlations between responses and pre-defined patterns.

Case Elements	L.V. Patterns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community Network</i></li> <li>• <i>Mass Protest</i></li> <li>• <i>Repetitive use of political space</i></li> <li>• <i>Use of Frames</i></li> <li>• <i>Multiple Partnerships*</i></li> <li>• <i>Perceptive Leaders</i></li> <li>• <i>Unified Voice*</i></li> <li>• <i>Media Production</i></li> <li>• <i>Use of ICT</i></li> <li>• <i>Use of Shared Vision/Experience</i></li> <li>• <i>Understanding Opportunities</i></li> <li>• <i>Identifiable Policy Alternatives</i></li> <li>• <i>Witnessing</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community Networks</i></li> <li>• <i>Mass Protest</i></li> <li>• <i>Political Settings</i></li> <li>• <i>Strategic Frame 344</i></li> <li>• <i>Civic Intelligence*</i></li> <li>• <i>Strategic Capacity</i></li> <li>• <i>Big Tent for Social Change*</i></li> <li>• <i>Indigenous Media/Tactical Media</i></li> <li>• <i>Tactical Media/AOI**/INAM**</i></li> <li>• <i>Shared Vision</i></li> <li>• <i>Opportunity Spaces</i></li> <li>• <i>Grassroots Public Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Power of Story</i></li> </ul>

(\*) Patterns and Properties do not match, yet they may still be relevant. (\*\*) *International Networks of Alternative Media* (148), *Accessibility of Online Information* (295). Patterns worth noting: *Community Building Journalism* (521), *Civic Capabilities* (721), *Control of Self-Representation* (315), *Community Inquiry* (636), *Power Research* (293), *Multi-Party Negotiations for Conflict Resolution* (710), *Transparency* (523) *Open Action and Research Network* (633). Patterns not found within the repository: *Repetitive Interaction*, *Sustaining the Movement*, *Information Politics*, *Symbolic Politics*, or *Leverage Politics*.

By taking a look at Table 1 we can observe the central characteristics in column 1 drawn from the case report. In column 2 of the same table we can also see similar elements represented as patterns. For instance, the usage of *Peaceful Public Demonstrations* (Schuler, 2006), *Shared Vision* (Schuler, 2006), *Strategic Frame* (Schuler, 2006), and *Community Networks* (Day, 2007) all relate in a direct way with the case-study examples. There are other examples within the repository that match up as well: *Tactical Media* (Renzi, 2007), *Political Settings* (Barker, 2006) and *Big Tent for Social Change* (Reister & McCarthy, 2007). *Indigenous Media* (Alvarez & Schuler, 2006) is another type of media development that was evident.

Overall, the study produced clear connections between what takes place among effective networks naturally and the patterns contained within the L.V. database. Similarly, it became evident that the database is not yet complete and that there are potentially a number of other critical patterns that still need to be codified. For instance, these patterns were not found within the L.V. repository: *Repetitive Interaction*, *Sustaining the Movement* (Smith 2007), *Information Politics*, *Symbolic Politics*, or *Leverage*

*Politics* (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). However, it is clear from the case report, as well as past research in the field that these patterns need to be added to the system in order for it to evolve into a greater body of knowledge, and thereby prove greater support for communicative action.

## **Conclusions**

The Liberating Voices project intends for patterns and the pattern language paradigm to be useful in a variety of applied settings, as well for an overall re-conceptualization of the ways in which communities and a networked civil society think and engage to avoid common pitfalls. While this research represents only an initial assessment into the pattern language, the findings do appear to provide a positive indication into the potential for applying these patterns in situations that necessitate the empowerment of relatively weak actors. And though, many of the patterns in the project have been oriented towards the technological potential of ICTs, it is obvious that many of these patterns extend their scope to include the face-to-face interactions, which represent vital elements to the development of communicative systems that can be used to support social action. Similarly, by considering additional patterns not found within the case it is possible to see where the addition of certain patterns could potentially increase the effectiveness of the network by extending the scope of the network's function to simultaneously address issues of literacy, property rights and community driven policy development.

The research also indicates that the pattern language is not yet complete, and there are potentially numerous other patterns that might be added to further increase the power and usability of the language across a range of settings and situations. While this might be perceived as a shortcoming to potential users and scholars interested in further research of the pattern language, it seems important to note that patterns dealing communicative social systems are inherently complex and dynamic. As a result, it would seem only appropriate that Liberating Voices also be dynamic, and thereby in a continual state of evolution. Understanding the dynamic nature of the language is important in that it reminds us that the work of social change is not a linear feat, but rather a continually generative and iterative process.

As communities and civil society as a whole begin to consider the vast array of interrelated social forces that hinder or enable progressive social change it is possible that people could begin to see another shift in how systems of power operate and recognize those who have been historically excluded from possessing political and economic power. In understanding these forces it is possible that groups can be more effective in applying and adapting specific patterns for their needs. Unfortunately, many social scientists and activists alike have tended to focus upon a one over the other approach concerning the primacy of resource mobilization, political opportunity structures or framing (Canel, 1997). By emphasizing an integrative approach to both analysis and the means for social action the pattern language would appear to provide a stronger foundation by including the range of elements thought necessary for effective advocacy and empowering communication.

Overall, with this positive assessment of the Liberating Voices pattern language it is now perhaps necessary to begin considering some fundamental ways in which the community of users can help to further develop the technological components, methodologies for pattern usage to include systems thinking, community pattern mapping (need for better approaches to visualization), and adaptability of community driven pattern uses. By addressing these pieces which presented problems in conducting the research, we can hope that not only future research in this domain will be easier, but actual application of these important principles can be effectively applied to support community livelihoods and social empowerment on an ever increasing level.

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