A PROLOGUE ON THE RESEARCH THEME

Introduction:

The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes according to the 1991 Census, number around 205.98 millions and constitute 24.56 per cent of the total population of the country. Their habitations are generally scattered in parts of major villages or small villages all over the country. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are by no means homogenous social groups. The category is composed of many separate castes, which share certain common handicaps in relation to the rest of the society. They are economically dependent, educationally backward, and socially the worst sufferers. It has been rightly said that no nation can progress leaving aside a large chunk of the population struggling hard for existence under the stress of economic, educational and social disparities.

The economic backwardness of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is due to the injustice, exploitation and oppression received from other sections for centuries in the past. The origin of this can be traced to the origin of the caste system in India. These people had been used for the
economic uplift and well being of upper castes in the society for years. They worked under chains as slaves. It can be explicitly stated that they were sold like commodities for hard labour and betterment of others. This continued for centuries together. As a result, these groups suffered social discrimination, economic deprivation and educational backwardness.

The scheduled castes contribute significantly to the sustenance and growth of the production system of the country and the nation’s economy. Even within the agricultural based economy to the country the largest single group amongst agricultural labourers in the country are the S.C.’s, going upto as much as 61per cent in Haryana, 71per cent in Punjab. In fact scheduled caste women constitute 72per cent of all women agricultural labourers in the country. Some of them are also found in various other professions like fishing, weaving, making leather goods like footwear and also scavenging. It is therefore a sorry state of affairs that these people who give so much to society get so little in return. They are the last rung in the production ladder and as it so often happens they are the last men in any productive process, who invariably add the maximum value to the final products. They constitute the bedrock on which our society and economy rests. Rarely has any section of a nation contributed so much for so long in return for so little.
Origin and Classification of Scheduled Castes:

The term "scheduled castes" appeared for the first time in the Government of India Act, 1935. In April 1936, the British Government issued an Order specifying certain castes, races and tribes, as scheduled castes in the then Provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa, Punjab and United Provinces. Prior to that these castes were generally known as the depressed classes. The depressed classes were systematically categorized in 1931 by Hutton, the Census Commissioner of India. The list of scheduled castes issued in 1936 was a continuation of the earlier list of depressed classes. The list drawn in 1950 was a revised version of the list of scheduled castes. Under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) order 1936, the test applied was the social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the historical custom of untouchability. After the constitution came into force, the list of scheduled castes was notified by the President of India, and thus we see that scheduled castes were administratively created and not socially, in accordance with the provisions of article 341 of the constitution. Meanwhile, the term 'Harijan' continued in vogue for non-official purpose. Although 1086 scheduled castes have been specified all over the country, some of the large scheduled castes are the Chamar (consisting of about one-fourth of the total scheduled castes of the
country), Bhangi, Adidravida, Pasi, Madiga, Mala, Dhobi, Mahar, Rajibansi, Namasudra, Mazhab, Adikarnataka, Dom, Bbalnikis, Mehtars etc. The total scheduled castes population in the country accounted for 16.48 per cent (1991 census) of the total population in the country. Of all the sub-types of scheduled castes, Chamar is the most significant one and largely confined to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Haryana and constitute 27 per cent of the total scheduled castes in India. For instance in Andhra Pradesh 59 scheduled castes have been specified, of which, three scheduled castes namely, Madiga, Mala and Adi-Andhra constitute 91 per cent of the scheduled caste population in the State.

**Definition and Classification of Scheduled Tribes.**

What is a tribe: What exactly are the criteria for considering a human group a tribe. Interesting, but sadly the anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, administrators, and such other people who have been involved with the tribes and their problems either on theoretical plans, or on practical grounds, are still not on the same wave length, regarding the concept and the definition of their subject matter. For instance, in the nomenclature referring to tribes underwent successive modifications involving primary changes in descriptive adjectives such as “aboriginal” or
"depressed classes". In the 1941 Census these qualifying adjectives were dropped. A practice continued after Independence with the adoption of the notion of the 'scheduled tribes' or as they are commonly called Adivasis. Such standardization did not however remove all ambiguity. Hence, the tribe has been defined in different connotations as mentioned hereunder:

1. A tribe is a social group with a territorial affiliation, endogenous with no specialisation of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognising social distance with other tribes or castes without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs illiberal of naturalisation of ideas, from alien sources above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration. (Majumdar and Madan, 1957).

2. Ideally tribal societies are small in scale and restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations and possess a mortality, a religion and a world view of corresponding dimensions: Characteristically too tribal languages
are unwritten and hence the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow (Lewis, year 1952)

3. A tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture. (Lucy Mair year 1952)

4. A tribe is a group united by a common name in which the members take pride by a common language, by a common territory, and by a feeling that all who do not share this name are outsiders, 'enemies' in fact. (Huttingford year 1952)

5. A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogenous though originally it might have been so. (Imperial Gazetteer of India)

6. In its simplest form, the tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in culture, frequent contacts, and a certain communality of interest. Ralph Linton year 1952 P.256. It is opined that when one looks into the definitions given by various anthropologists one is bound to be impressed by the
dissimilarity of their views as regards what constitutes a tribe—kinship ties, common territory, one language, joint ownership, one political organisation, absence of internecine, strife, have all been referred to as the main characteristics of a tribe. A tribe was a homogenous and self-contained limit without any hierarchical discrimination.

7. A tribe is a group of people on a primitive, or barbarous state of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor. (Oxford Dictionary).

India has the largest concentration of tribal population. The tribes are the aboriginal people of the land who are believed to be the earliest settlers in the Indian peninsula. They are generally called the adivasis, implying the original inhabitants. The ancient and medieval sources of the information including the Vedic and the Epic literature mention various tribes like the Bharatas, the Bhils, the kollas, the Kirtars, the Kinnars, the Kiris, the Matsyas, the Nisadas and the Banars.
Even today, there are a number of regions which owe their names to the tribes inhabiting them. In north-east India, the states of Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura are named after the Mizo, Naga and Tripuri tribes respectively. Similarly, Santhal Parganas in Bihar Gondwana land covering parts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and Lahaul, Swangla and Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh are named after their tribal inhabitants namely the Santhals, The Gonds the Lahualas and the Kinnaras respectively.

At present, the term tribe, according to western writers, generally means an ethnic group, geographically isolated or semi-isolated, identified with one particular territory and having distinct social, economic and cultural traditions and practices. In the Indian context the term has undergone further change, particularly in the post-Independence period.

There is no religious bar for specifying a person as member of a scheduled tribe. However in case of scheduled castes the position is different. No person professing a religion other than Hinduism or Sikhism can be deemed to be a member of the scheduled caste.
The main criteria adopted for specifying communities as the scheduled tribe include (I) traditional occupation of a definite geographical area, (ii) distinctive culture which includes whole spectrum of tribal way of life i.e., language, customs, traditions, religious beliefs, arts and crafts etc., and (iii) primitive traits depicting occupational pattern, economy etc., and techno-economic development.

**Problems of Scheduled Castes and Tribes**

Since the very creation of the scheduled castes and tribes is the product of highly discriminatory and some time in human nature of the functioning of the caste system one cannot understand the problems being faced by the scheduled castes and tribes and suggest the remedial measures required without having a sound understanding of the caste system. The idea of ritual purity pollution manifested through untouchability is the cornerstone of the highly discriminating nature of the caste system. An entire segment of the population was assigned "unclean" occupations like scavenging, flaying, tanning etc., and converted into untouchables. To be untouchable did not mean only that this physical touch was to be shunned or avoided due to ritual reasons, it was to enter a fatal and futile universe totally impervious to hope. For example if a section of the society is barred from entering a sacred place like a temple and in the traditional setup if the
formal education is imparted within the temple premises this section of the society shall definitely be deprived of education.

Among the main social and economic disabilities, the bulk of the scheduled caste and tribe population has been generally suffering from (1) lack of freedom and opportunity to choose occupation, (2) landlessness, (3) subsistence agriculture, (4) lack of irrigation facilities and lack of sufficient agriculture employment, (5) chronic independence, (6) lack of access to education, (7) lack of minimum wages, (8) lack of awareness about family planning, (9) lack of housing sanction and health care system, (10) under-nutrition (11) mal-nutrition (12) child labour etc., hence the scheduled castes and tribes present a picture of considerable complexity, diversity and magnitude in their problems.

In the Pre-Independence period the welfare of the scheduled castes and tribes was not attended to in a planned manner. After the Independence, in the successive Five-Year Plans, various steps have been taken to tackle their problems and improve their social and economic conditions.

The efforts have been to ensure, and advocate attention on the needs of schedule castes from all the relevant sectors, including the
agricultural sector. The education of scheduled caste children has received a definite impetus but the literacy levels in them are still quite low. But generally the socio-economic position of the scheduled caste families under 20 point programme or the poverty alleviation efforts does not seem to have made much of a change in their overall conditions. An overwhelming majority of them are agricultural labourers or are engaged in low wage arduous and obnoxious occupations like rickshaw pulling, scavenging and flaying, tanning and several others. The social problem of untouchability haunts them and remains a major impediment in improving their socio-economic condition.

Significance of the Study:

The social system in India has for centuries deprived the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes of a chance to share equally the opportunities and fruits of the larger society because of deep-rooted oppressions and discriminatory practices in social relations. Such deprivations and oppressions have rendered down trodden these weaker sections relatively the worst sufferers from the points of food, shelter and clothing. As well these people are the centres of all developmental processes and if the society in which they live is unstable due to disharmony, there could be no overall development of either a society or a region. The simple
words ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ with clear meanings have been misinterpreted and distorted by vested and sectarian interests down the ages in our country as a result of which an unequal social and economic progress took place.

The scheduled castes and tribes are relatively more disadvantaged groups than the rest of the Indian population. The backwardness of these people is attributed largely to their long isolation from the nature’s resource-use, exploitation and enjoyment as well as from the material development. After Independence, the Government, which was primarily, concerned with the general development of agriculture, industry and infrastructure as well as maintenance of law and order, did not show any of serious concern for the welfare of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In general observation, the establishment of British rule in India did a great deal of harm to the economic position of these weaker sections “through ignorance and neglect of their rights and customs”.

During the British regime, the socially advanced classes got the advantage of the traditionally inherited skills, education and employment opportunities. The advanced classes took advantage of the facilities offered by the British administration in education and employment. They were also fortunate in getting into the Government Service in good number. Lower
sections of the society, among whom were those who suffered from untouchability, on account of their socio-economic and cultural backwardness could not avail themselves of the educational facilities, health programmes, agricultural development programmes and consequently suffered in relation to employment opportunities.

Majority of the scheduled tribes live in isolated or partially isolated regions of hills and forests and in many ways their style of life is distinct from that of the general society. The Harijans on the other hand are scattered on the agricultural plains and are part of societies owing to their constant interact as with the dominant castes of the respective villages. Demographically, while the scheduled tribes are concentrated in certain regions of the State while the scheduled castes are largely scattered in the upper caste dominated villages.

In India one fifth of the population comprises scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and most of them are below the poverty line. They continue to pursue traditional occupations. Inspite of employment opportunities generated through various economic activities, they are unable to secure employment due to low educational levels and lack of skills, information and finance. The majority of tribal population inhabit the
isolated hilly areas which are often inaccessible. The problem of scheduled castes is rendered more difficult since this group is subjected to untouchability. There are constitutional directives to remove their disabilities and inconsonance with these directives, a number of legislative and executive measures have been taken by the Central, and State Governments. Apart from this, special programmes were formulated for their socio-economic development in the successive Five-Year Plans. The programmes initiated and implemented for these backward classes are conceived as a supplement to the all-round development for promoting social and economic well-being of these weaker sections. Scheduled castes and tribes are especially in the rural areas still identified with extreme poverty, illiteracy, under-nutrition and mal-nutrition, forced migration due to lack of employment particularly in agricultural sector.

The constitution had originally laid down a time frame of ten years to bring these people at par with the general population. The period has been extended thrice by amendment of the constitution. But that has not helped to improve the lot of the tribes. About 85 per cent of the tribal families are still victims of various exploitative methods. The gap between the targets and the physical achievements of various tribal development schemes is widening beyond control. The tribal feels that he is being
blackmailed in the name of welfare. The achievements are generally assessed in terms of financial investment rather than the goods delivered.

There has been no effective participation of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in decision making and developmental process affecting them and administration of their own affairs. The policies and programmes have been formulated without consulting them. It has resulted in fixation of wrong priorities and failures in achieving the desired results. This is one of the important causes of discontentment among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Participation of these sections in both formulation and implementation of policies and programmes affecting them imperative to ensure that interest of these people are properly safeguarded.

The main socio-economic problems affecting the bulk of the scheduled castes and tribes are:

1. Chronic indebtedness
2. Landlessness
3. Lack of education
4. Forced labour
5. Lack of employment and low wages

6. Child labour etc

Because of the traditional landlessness, chronic indebtedness has been a concomitant problem with the scheduled castes. Those who got some land after Independence as a result of zamindari abolition and the ensuring land reforms have to part with the land as a result of land alienation. Whether landless or marginal farmer of an average scheduled caste person in the rural areas has been pitiable because his existence is characterized by all sorts of deprivations and exploitation. Education takes a back seat in such a scenario.

In rural India where agriculture is the predominant occupation of the people, the modernization of agriculture has brought about a revolutionary change in the progress of economy. But the fruits of modernization of agriculture through Green Revolution has not been shared not only by the crops and regions but also the farming communities. Particularly the scheduled caste community and who primarily rests upon agriculture, is virtually deprived from the enjoyment of the fruits of the Green Revolution. As a result, the gulf is widened in the process of agricultural development between the rich farmers with large size of land holdings and the poverty ridden scheduled castes with very small size of
land holdings. Several programmes have been initiated especially for the development of agriculture in the case of scheduled caste farmers. But the success of these programmes to improve the living standards of the scheduled castes and tribes can not be totally underlined. It is imperative at this stage to examine and to assess the impact of the various socio-economic development programmes on the improvement of the living standards of the scheduled castes and tribes. Finally, the strengthening of the socio-economic base of the scheduled castes and tribes through substantial transfer of resources to them is of paramount importance for achieving sustainable development and for reducing social tensions. It is in this perspective, an attempt is made to study on "Demographic and Agro-Geographic Aspects of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in the Drought Prone Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh".

It is hoped that this diagnostic study will help to evolve both prophylactic and curative measures and ultimately to improve the living standards of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Anantapur district.

The Study Region

The present study region, Anantapur district is one of the chronically drought-prone districts in the country. It is located in the south-
western part of Andhra Pradesh. In terms of geographical area, it is the largest district in Andhra Pradesh State, but in terms of population size, it accounts seventh rank among the districts of Andhra Pradesh. About 74 per cent of the total working population in the district depends upon agriculture for their livelihood. Hence the economy of Anantapur district is agricultural and essentially the economic development of the district lies in the development of agricultural economy. But the frequent occurrences of drought, prolonged dry spells and crop failures have had a debilitating and devastating affect on agricultural economy of the district.

In terms of the size of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population Anantapur district occupies 13th rank among the districts of Andhra Pradesh. The scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population as per the 1991 Census, accounted for 17.68 per cent of the total population of the district. It is very significant to state that about 88 per cent of the total scheduled caste and scheduled tribe working population depends upon agriculture for their livelihood. Hence it is necessary to state that the development of agriculture is crucial and forms the basis for the economic development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. After the success of the Green Revolution, the modernization of agriculture and irrigation development have brought about revolutionary changes in the levels of
agricultural development. But all the positive and prosperous changes which achieved in agriculture through Green Revolution are not uniformly benefited especially by all the farming communities. In this regard, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are the worst sufferers in enjoying the fruits of agricultural revolution. Hence it is very appropriate to make an examination, identification, classification, description and delineation of the problems and prospects of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in agricultural development. Since Anantapur district is a backward region and known for droughts and crop failures, it provides an appropriate setting for the study of "Demographic and Agro-Geographic Aspects of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population".

Objectives:

The present study broadly seeks to spell out the demographic aspects of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Anantapur district. Since agriculture is the predominant occupation of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes the study also aims to assess the nature of agriculture and the level of agricultural development among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It is very essential to understand the various socio-economic problems which constrains and hinder the social and economic upliftment of these weaker sections. A critical examination and evaluation of
both demographic and agrarian structure of the down trodden scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the district helps to gain insights into the problem and provides the necessary information for planning and development of the scheduled castes and tribes.

To be more specifically, the present study aims,

1. to study the growth, density and distributional pattern of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population in comparison with other districts of the State and the overall general population,

2. to assess the educational status of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and examine the decadal variations in the literacy rate,

3. to study the changing pattern of occupational structure,

4. to examine the size and distribution of land holdings among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes,

5. to study the various Governmental programmes initiated and implemented for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes,

6. to discern and describe the various socio-economic factors of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe farmers and their problems in
the processes of agricultural development based upon micro-level investigation, and

7. to assess the problems and prospects of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe farming community and suggestions for their poverty alleviation.

Data Base

The present study is based upon both primary and secondary data about various aspects of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population. The secondary data is collected from different sources namely, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Census Hand Books, NIRD, DRDA, and other Governmental Records and Monographs. The secondary data pertaining to demographic aspects of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is collected in two ways. Firstly, the decadal wise demographic data for the Census years 1971, 1981 and 1991 is collected at old taluka unit level in order to examine the decadal variations in various demographic aspects of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Secondly, since Mandal Administrative Unit is the latest areal unit in the State secondary data is collected and analysed at Mandal areal unit level in order to understand the spatial distributional patterns and areal differences
in various socio-economic aspects of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population for the Census year 1991.

The Primary data is generated at house hold level from the sample villages. House hold level is basic and real operational unit for micro-geographic investigation for understanding the realities about various socio-economic aspects of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. There are six sample villages are chosen for the purpose of analysis. The selection of sample villages is done on the basis of stratified random sampling procedure after carefully examining all agro-geographic parameters like terrain, rainfall, soil, irrigation and cropping. From all the six sample villages, 315 house holds were taken for the analysis. A questionnaire is prepared and filled up through interview method from each respondent to acquire first hand information on various socio-economic aspects of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Methodology

In the present study, both cartographic and quantitative techniques are employed to make the analysis of both primary and secondary data. Most of the secondary data is represented by thematic mapping methods.
Common Factor Analysis (CFA) probably the most widely used multi variated technique in human geography is employed in the present study in order to examine and/or assess the structural as well as developmental characteristics of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes especially in the field of the agricultural development.

The Plan and Design of the Thesis

The present study has been carried out with an objective to examine the demographic characteristics of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as well as to assess their level of development in the field of agricultural sector which is dominant source of their livelihood. To accomplish this objective, the present thesis is planned and designed as given hereunder: Chapter -I deals with the introductory appraisal on the research theme and also deals with the significance of the study, objectives, data collection and the methodology of the study. Chapter - II Provides the geographical background of the study area which includes the locational setting, physiography and socio-economic aspects of the region. Chapter -III deals with the growth trends and distribution of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the district. Chapter -IV analyses the educational status of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Chapter -V provides a detailed account of occupational structure of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe
population. Chapter - VI seeks to examine the distribution of land holdings of scheduled castes and tribes. Chapter - VII presents the various developmental programmes initiated and implemented by the Government for the development of scheduled castes and tribes in the field of agricultural sector. Chapter - VIII explains various socio-economic attributes of scheduled castes and schedule tribes at profound level based upon micro-level sample study. Chapter - IX is an analytical one which explains the structural characteristics of agriculture of scheduled castes and tribes by using Common Factor Analysis. Lastly, Chapter - X provides summary and conclusion.