The policy of positive discrimination has been adopted by the government of India as a constitutional safeguard to strengthen the social and economic status of the marginalized communities. The Constitution of India has taken special care to uplift certain marginalized communities in India, those who were oppressed for a long period. The policy of positive discrimination towards scheduled castes groups is one such measure.

The scheduled castes groups in India share a major portion of the marginalized section in India. The scheduled castes constitute about 16 percent of the population of India. The majority of the scheduled castes (80 percent) live in rural areas and are engaged primarily in agriculture and allied activities. Again, the majority of scheduled castes population are concentrated in states like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and in many other states of India. The smallest concentration of the scheduled castes population belongs to the North-eastern states. About 7 percent of the population of Assam belongs to scheduled castes.

Various government policies focusing on the upliftment of these marginalized communities and efforts being made are to improve the social, economic and political inequalities amongst the scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and the other backward classes. In spite of the policy of positive discrimination put in place for a long time, the conditions of the majority of the scheduled caste people have by, and largely remained the same. This ground reality raises some questions: What is the impact of the policy of positive discrimination in terms of employment, education and political empowerment? Do positive discriminations help in the elimination of social stigma? With the advent of globalization, does the policy of positive discrimination lose its relevance? For that matter, whose purpose or interest does the policy of positive discrimination serve? Again, given
the policy of reservation for the scheduled caste population in educational institutions, it appears that only the members of creamy layers are in a position to avail this benefit while backwardness looms large over others.

The State of Andhra Pradesh is no exception to this. A massive mobilisation of different sections of society, students and rural youths, in particular, marked a new phase in grassroots politics in the State. The organisation and political articulation of the rural poor took a more visible form and moved to the centre of political discourse. These articulations posed an ideological challenge to mainstream politics in general and the Congress Party, dominant in State politics since the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956, in particular. Although the Congress Party remained in power in AP, its gradual loss of support among the lower castes/classes was visible, despite the Party’s efforts to retain their support through special programmes and schemes, and by providing them with increased representation in the Party structure and electoral sphere. The emergence of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in State politics and its dramatic coming to power within less than a year of its formation is demonstrative of the weaknesses in the support base of the Congress Party. It is, therefore, important to study these ‘subaltern’ movements.

The agrarian and Dalit movements in Andhra Pradesh brought the following issues to both civil society and political agendas: land distribution; a proper wage increase for agricultural labour, farm servants, beedi workers and Tendu leaf collectors; and caste/class-based socio-economic oppression (of which vetti, or forced labour extraction, was an important dimension). However, the crucial question that remains is why these movements increasingly tended to display schisms, crises and decline.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes that constitute more than one-fourth of the population of India represent the most impoverished
and marginalized sections of the society. The problems faced by these two communities are manifold and varied; however, both of them suffer from discrimination, exclusion and economic deprivation and stand far away from the mainstream development. While the problems of discrimination and exclusion faced by SCs are centered on the caste in Indian society, most of the STs suffer from inaccessibility, geographical isolation and find themselves deprived, excluded socially and economically and, therefore, vulnerable. The other major issues confronting the populace are landlessness, dependence on wage labor leading towards impoverishment. A bulk of the population of these communities is engaged in agriculture as labour fraught with uncertainties and depends on vagaries of nature.

Indian society is characterized by social subordination, discrimination, social and economic inequalities, the key factors, which distinguish the marginalized communities such as SCs and STs from the dominant group. Gurung and Kollmair preferred to explain ‘marginalization’, in terms of socio-economic and political spheres, where the disadvantaged people struggle to gain access to resources and full participation in social life. It needs mention that marginalized communities are culturally distinctive and self-conscious social aggregates, with hereditary membership and a high degree of endogamy, which are subject to political, economic, or social discrimination by a dominant segment of an environing political society. All of the elements of this definition apply to the scheduled groups in India. While all members of the scheduled groups face disadvantages because of their status based on descent, women in these groups are particularly disadvantaged. For women that belong to scheduled group, caste or tribal disadvantage interacts with women's subordinate status to create 'double minority' status.

For this reason, statistical profiles of all Indian women often create a distorted image of the situation of the women belonging to these
disadvantaged groups. Poverty, landlessness and low health status are the major features of these groups. The Planning Commission noted that the percentage of households with less than one hectare of land was relatively more among SCs and STs, when compared to other social groups. According to it, the incidence of poverty is higher among STs, followed by SCs in rural and urban areas.

The framers of Indian Constitution led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, were conscious of the social and economic inequalities entrenched in deep-rooted structures of caste, religion and ethnicity. The Government addressed the interests of the oppressed social groups and their priorities by the initiation of planning process after independence. Article 341 of the Indian Constitution designates certain disadvantaged tribal and caste populations as Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The Constitution directs that “... the state shall promote with special care the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of people, and in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.” Notwithstanding the constitutional declarations and policy initiatives for the development of these communities, it is disheartening to mention that still the benefits envisaged has not reached the marginalized sections to the fuller extent. Several factors such as socio-economic barriers, inadequacies and gaps in the implementation of government policies detract these communities from reaping the benefits.

While this is the situation of the marginalized sections of the nation as a whole, today in the wake of bifurcation of the State of Andhra Pradesh, their position has become precarious. In this context, the Centre for Study of Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Andhra University proposes to organize a Two-day Workshop to provide a platform for the academicians, policy planners, NGOs and activists to deliberate on the
issues and challenges confronting SCs and STs in the State given the division of united Andhra Pradesh.

This shall be given the socio-economic problems faced by the marginalized communities in the residuary State of Andhra Pradesh and find out suitable measures for their inclusive development and also intended to discuss the predicaments of the marginalized sections particularly the opportunities, access to resources and other issues in a holistic manner.

**Social Protection to the Marginalized:**

It is unfortunate to be born poor, but worse to be poor, vulnerable and unprotected in a developing country. The poorest of the poor are most affected even by a slight temporary disruption or loss of income and assets. They are most vulnerable to external shocks-economic, environmental or political, and have poor resilience and limited capacity to overcome them. India has a population of 1.2 billion, and even with an average economic growth rate of 6-7 percent per annum, almost one-fourth of its population still lives in poverty. Seven out of every 10 Indians still live in rural areas. The social environment is complex. The economic condition of a poor is inextricably intertwined with the social dimensions of his well-being, equity and social rights.¹ The vulnerable and marginalized groups in India are not distinct and easily identifiable. The social fabric is ethnically diverse, socially stratified and heterogeneous in composition. With low literacy, abject poverty, complex social-ethnic environment, the poor and the vulnerable are mired with historical suppressions and subordinations over the generations.

Often, poor and certain vulnerable sections within the poor such as women, elderly, children, physically challenged, and socially-excluded groups are marginalized and discriminated against both overtly and in more subtle ways on the basis of gender, class, caste, religion or region. Gender
inequalities and discrimination are still pervasive in the rural workforce, with rural women occupying lower positions compared to their counterparts.\textsuperscript{2} Srivastava and Srivastava (2010) observed multiple forms of discrimination faced by rural women. Women, particularly belonging to lower caste groups, were at a greater disadvantage due to limited access to assets, lower levels of education and skill. On the basis of religion, Muslim women had the lowest employment rate in rural India.\textsuperscript{3} In India, rural women are often constrained by institutional, cultural, religious, social and demographic factors. Workforce participation rates reveal that while multiple factors such as compulsion for men to earn, cultural and social norms, lower wages for women, poor conditions of work lead to lower employment opportunities for women. Also, women, in general, are also marginalized from participation and excluded from social protection programs. Empirical evidence indicates that regional and rural-urban disparities are also widening during the last two decades.\textsuperscript{4}

Moreover, multiple identities of an individual tend to reinforce and accentuate inequalities and injustices. The traditional caste system, still prevalent in India determines the social position of an individual based on birth and heredity in the Hindu society, not allowing social mobility across the classes, denying and differentiating lower castes and classes from all forms of social life. Lower caste and tribal groups remained consequently at the bottom of the social-economic hierarchy in acute poverty. These lower castes and classes, often referred as the “Backward Castes and Classes”, are the poorest among the rural population and are still victims of discrimination despite prevailing laws in India. For instance, the Dalits, or the untouchables are the outcasts and the worst victims of this caste discrimination followed by the Adivasis, who are outside the caste hierarchy.\textsuperscript{5} The Adivasis are the tribal communities, mostly inhabiting in forest areas. These are categorized as the Scheduled Castes (SC) and
Scheduled Tribes (ST) as defined in the Constitution of India vide the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950, the Constitution Order (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950 and Other Backward Classes (OBC), a dynamic list of other socially and educationally backward classes as per Article 340 of the Indian Constitution. According to Census of India, Scheduled Castes constitute 16.2 percent of the total population in India, and an additional 8.2 percent comprise of Scheduled Tribes. The Constitution provides protective and preferential treatment to these groups, including the right to be treated equally and affirmative action in the form of reservations in educational institutions and public sector. It also prohibits any practice of Untouchability i.e. discriminating or excluding individuals from social interaction, public place or even physical contact with these groups. Still discrimination and marginalization persists. Even with the affirmative action in the reservation, elite captures and control by the “well-do-to” from those classes is not uncommon. Taboos perpetuated by tradition and beliefs impose social obligations and economic deprivation on these groups. Worst, discrimination is not always so subtle. Massacres like the Bathani Tola massacre in Bihar in 1996 or Kherlanji massacre of 2006 in Maharashtra and frequent media reports of lynching and killing Dalits and other lower castes across the country are gruesome reminders of discrimination and atrocities still committed still. In 2009, nearly 33,500 cases of crime against Scheduled Castes and another 5,000 cases of crime against Scheduled Tribe were officially reported across the country.

The oppression is such that even when the marginalized groups have an opportunity to assert themselves, they feel incapacitated. Their voices remain unheard and their needs, unaddressed. In cases of violence, the perpetrators are not always convicted. But even in the less violent spheres of economic and social lives, the participation of the marginalized groups
in Panchayati Raj System is dismal. Their access to political participation depends on their economic and political relations with the dominant social class. Women are either not informed or restricted to attend village meetings due to cultural prejudice or disinterested due to lack of time and because as social issues like crime against women or unemployment are taken up in villages. Pressures and restrictions on voting and political participation also persist. Even in leadership positions, lower caste and tribal people, particularly Dalit women representatives, face harassment and obstructions to work.

The analysis in this paper focuses on these three identities Backward Castes and Classes and women among the rural poor as the marginalized group. However, to qualify at the outset, this is neither an exhaustive grouping nor does it imply that no other group or an identity is not marginalized, both in the program and in the society, and this categorization is emphasized only with the context of the social protection program in this discussion.

For social programs to target marginalized groups, the programs should first have targeting strategies to focus and proactively select marginalized groups or strategies that allow them to self-select into the program for social protection programs to build their capacities and empower them. The objective of this analytical paper is to synthesize the literature and emerging theories on community empowerment to develop a theoretical framework relevant for social protection policy design and analysis. This empowerment framework is then applied to MGNREGA highlighting the potential for empowering the marginalized groups through the policy’s right-based features and collaborative monitoring. The evidence is drawn from secondary analysis of existing evaluative research and independent studies conducted on MGNREGA and policy position papers over the last seven years. This paper makes a case for implementing
the policy and the social audits, the collaborative governance in MGNREGA in letter and spirit to empower the marginalized sections.

The following section provides a contextual background about MGNREGA, the policy provisions for the marginalized groups and its performance outcomes over the last four years. This is followed by a brief outline of the theoretical proposition on how collaborative governance can lead to empowerment and evaluates social audits in this framework. Most governments and international agencies view social protection as an instrument for only economic and risk protection. However, social protection should be interpreted more broadly to aim at helping poor escape poverty but also enhance their social and political participation. It should be able to improve the livelihoods of poor through asset-building, infrastructure and human capital development, and citizenship and social justice. These potential developmental and transformative outcomes of social protection interventions and the conditions under which these can be achieved have been gaining wider recognition. Social protection programs can become transformative if they address the structural complexities and inequalities by enabling the vulnerable groups to claim their rights and seek social justice. Although there is no magic bullet to address social exclusion and structural inequalities that are not only stark but also overlapping and complex in India, policies can be designed to target effectively and reach out to the vulnerable sections in limited ways. Specifically, Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India is one such social protection program. MGNREGA has been much appreciated as a social protection program as it has the potential to reach out to the most “needy” economic and social groups in the country.

As a policy design for social protection, it is a significant departure from the earlier wage employment programs in India in design and
implementation. Specifically on one hand, the policy design and its implementation strategy has led to increased participation of the marginalized groups in the program, the participation rates for women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in MGNREGA have been higher than earlier employment programs like Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY). On the other hand, the collaborative monitoring mechanism of MGNREGA, the social audits has shown the potential to empower these groups.¹-six

Transformation of Marginalized:

After all considerations, discussed in the previous chapters on the mobilization of the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh, such as social deprivation, social mobilization and social transformation one can come to a conclusion that the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh are socially heterogeneous and stratified, economically iniquitous due to external and internal differences, politically marginalized; in terms of mobilization highly fragmented and have insufficient nature of state policy support.

In terms of social deprivation, the Backward Castes are given lower position, except untouchability, they are also facing as many problems as Dalits. Throughout the Indian history, the backward castes remained as either producers or service providers for the ruling groups in specific and people in general. Traditionally they are the practicing artisans, handicraftsmen and occupational groups such as weavers, fishermen, shepherds, buffalo rearers, bamboo workers, toddy tappers, washermen, barbers, etc. The occupational differentiation in the process of historical changes has led to the heterogeneous character and stratification. The social formations based on the heterogeneity and stratification has been characterized as the 'caste system'. Socially divided caste system and nature of caste-based exploitation were subjected to changes. Roots for the origin of caste system lies with the Indus valley civilization; at the time of Aryan
civilization the caste system is legalized through the Dharamsastras. During the phase of caste-feudalism, the backward castes were exploited in the name of jajmani. In response to the new ideas, the lower caste movements came up during the colonial period against the caste-feudalism. There is a similarity in social deprivation, against which the social movements took place all over the country during the colonial and the post-colonial periods. All these movements questioned the upper caste domination and demanded policy of affirmative action in educational institutions, employment and political institutions and realized some of the demands. Like any other state in India, the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh also suffered from the hierarchically ordered, socially restricted inter-dinning, interactions, lack of choice of occupation, segmentally divided caste system. In the traditional society, these communities had sources of livelihoods and interdependent life, which was destroyed during the colonial period. The colonial rulers followed the policy of exporting local raw material and importing machine based products from England. Therefore, the local products were unable to compete with the machine-based commodities of British. As a result of which the artisans and local producers suffered a lot.

In the post-independent period for those people who are still depending on the traditional occupations, the Government of Andhra Pradesh introduced the occupational cooperative societies in response to the pressure from the caste associations. Until the introduction of new economic policies in the 1990s, the occupational cooperative societies have economically strengthened the backward castes. When the globalization process was begun in the country the traditional occupational cooperatives started declining. As a result of which the dependents are forced to become a farm and non-farm labor, therefore, now there is an increase in the percentage of the labour force, which is more than the population growth
due to lack of alternative source of livelihoods. In terms of changing agrarian relations also the position of the backward castes is depressing due to the close relationship between caste and land. Some studies across the state revealed that higher the caste more quantity and quality of land and lower the caste lesser the land and chances of being small and marginal farmers and agricultural laborers. A few of the backward castes emerged as small and marginal farmers due to the occupational cooperative societies, which helped them for economic consolidation; Therefore, they have purchased small pieces of land but a lot of backward castes continue to be a part of the labouring class. Therefore, there is a clear-cut division of the backward castes that the landed BCs and landless BCs. These two types of BCs are subjected to deprivation of education and employment opportunities.

Concerning political representation, the backward castes are highly marginalized due to lack of either ownership of the physical property or Constitutional Guarantees. Therefore, since independence the dominant landed castes particularly Reddies and Kammas are in a position of power. The Congress, Communists and Telugu Desam are the political instruments for their rule. In their struggle for power, the faction-ridden Reddy and Kamma castes sabotaging the backward castes to protect their interests. As a result of which the backward castes are divided and so manipulated and unable to strike political unity.

As aware of the nature of deprivation such as social, economic, education, employment the backward castes, while being a part of ongoing grassroots movements, to overcome the contradictions they started mobilizing themselves through four instruments viz, caste associations, the federation of caste associations, political parties and non-party grass roots organizations.
Democracy and Economic Transformation in India:

With the changes in India over the past 25 years, there is now a new dynamic logic that ties the operations of “political society” (comprising the peasantry, artisans and petty producers in the informal sector) with the hegemonic role of the bourgeoisie in “civil society”. This logic is provided by the requirement of reversing the effects of the primitive accumulation of capital with activities like anti-poverty programmes. This is a necessary political condition for the continued rapid growth of corporate capital. The state, with its mechanisms of electoral democracy, becomes the field for the political negotiation of demands for the transfer of resources, through fiscal and other means, from the accumulation economy to programmes aimed at providing the livelihood needs of the poor. Electoral democracy makes it unacceptable for the government to leave the marginalised groups without the means of labour and to fend for themselves since this carries the risk of turning them into the “dangerous classes.”

Marginal Groups:

The underside of political society is the utter marginalisation of those groups that do not even have the strategic leverage of electoral mobilisation. In every region of India, there exist marginal groups of people who are unable to gain access to the mechanisms of political society. They are often marked by their exclusion from the peasant society, such as low-caste groups who do not participate in agriculture or tribal peoples who depend more on forest products or pastoral occupations than on agriculture. Political society and electoral democracy have not given these groups the means to make effective claims on the mentality of government. In this sense, these marginalised groups represent an outside beyond the boundaries of political society. The important difference represented by activities in political society, when compared to the movements of democratic mobilisation familiar to us from 20th century
Indian history, is its lack of a perspective of transition. While there is much passion aroused over ending the discriminations of caste or ethnicity or asserting the rightful claims of marginal groups, there is a little conscious effort to view these agitations as directed towards a fundamental transformation of the structures of political power, as they were in the days of nationalist and socialist mobilisations. On the contrary, if anything, it is the bourgeoisie, hegemonic in civil society and dominant within the state structure as a whole, which appears to have a narrative of transition – from stagnation to rapid growth, from backwardness and poverty to modernity and prosperity, from third world insignificance to major world power status. Perhaps this is not surprising if one remembers the class formation of the passive revolution: with the landed elites pushed to a subordinate position and the bureaucratic-managerial class won over by the bourgeoisie, it is the capitalist class that has now acquired a position to set the terms to which other political formations can only respond.  

The unity of the state system as a whole is now maintained by relating civil society to political society through the logic of reversal of the effects of primitive accumulation. Once the bourgeoisie recognises this logic as a necessary political condition for the continued rapid growth of corporate capital, the state, with its mechanisms of electoral democracy, becomes the field for the political negotiation of demands for the transfer of resources, through fiscal and other means, from the accumulation economy to governmental programmes aimed at providing the livelihood needs of the poor and the marginalised. The autonomy of the state and that of the bureaucracy now lies in their power to adjudicate the quantum and form of transfer of resources to the so-called “social sector of expenditure”. Ideological differences, such as those between the Right and the Left, for instance, are largely about the amount and modalities of social sector expenditure, such as poverty removal programmes. These differences do
not question the dynamic logic that binds civil society to political society under the dominance of capital.18

To summarise the above argument, with the continuing rapid growth of the Indian economy, the hegemonic hold of corporate capital over the domain of civil society is likely to continue. This will inevitably mean continued primitive accumulation. That is to say, there will be more and more primary producers, i.e., peasants, artisans and petty manufacturers, who will lose their means of production. But most of these victims of primitive accumulation are unlikely to be absorbed in the new growth sectors of the economy. They will be marginalised and rendered useless as far as the sectors dominated by corporate capital are concerned. But the passive revolution under conditions of electoral democracy makes it unacceptable and illegitimate for the government to leave these marginalised populations without the means of labour to simply fend for themselves. That carries the risk of turning them into the “dangerous classes”. Hence, a whole series of governmental policies are being, and will be, devised to reverse the effects of primitive accumulation. This is the field in which peasant societies have to redefine their relations with both the state and with capital. Thus far, it appears that whereas peasants have developed many new practices, using the mechanisms of democratic politics, to claim and negotiate benefits from the state, their ability to deal with the world of capital is still unsure and inadequate. This is where the further development of peasant activities as non-corporate capital, seeking to ensure the livelihood needs of peasants while operating within the circuits of capital, will define the future of peasant society in India. As far as concern can see, peasant society will certainly survive in India in the 21st century, but only by accommodating substantial non-agricultural component within the village. Further, that there will be major overlaps and continuities in emerging cultural practices between rural villages and
small towns and urban areas, with the urban elements gaining predominance.19

The distinction between corporate and non-corporate capital appears to be coinciding with the divide between civil society and political society, this could have some ominous consequences. We have seen in several Asian countries what may be called a revolt of “proper citizens” against the unruliness and corruption of systems of popular political representation. In Thailand, there was in 2006 an army-led coup that ousted a popularly elected government. The action seemed to draw support from the urban middle classes that expressed their disapproval of what they considered wasteful and corrupt populist expenditure aimed at gaining the support of the rural population. In 2007, there was a similar army-backed coup in Bangladesh where plans for parliamentary elections have been indefinitely postponed while an interim government takes emergency measures to clean the system of supposedly “corrupt” politicians. Reports suggest that the urban middle classes initially welcomed that move. In India, a significant feature in recent years has been the withdrawal of the urban middle classes from political activities altogether: There is widespread resentment in the cities of the populism and corruption of all political parties which, it is said, are driven principally by the motive of gaining votes at the cost of ensuring the conditions of rapid economic growth. There is no doubt that this reflects the hegemony of the logic of corporate capital among the urban middle classes. The fact, however, is that the bulk of the population in India lives outside the orderly zones of proper civil society. It is in the political society that they have to be fed and clothed and given work if only to ensure the long-term and relatively peaceful well-being of civil society. That is the difficult and innovative process of politics on which the future of the passive revolution under conditions of democracy depends on on.20
One important dimension of the notion of inclusive growth is that the benefits of growth should reach socially disadvantaged sections like the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Even before Independence, the National Planning Committee (NPC, 1937) under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru had made detailed recommendations on a whole range of social and economic issues relating not only to agriculture and industry but also to wider issues of distribution, social justice and social welfare. Dr. Ambedkar also had a vision for socially and economically disadvantaged sections. There have been several programmes, progressive legislations and constitutional safeguards to help SC and ST. But, the visions of Nehru and Ambedkar have not been realized even after 60 years of Independence. This is also true of Andhra Pradesh.

In this context, this chapter gives an outline of the status of SC and ST in Andhra Pradesh, their problems and prospects in the human development perspective. It presents the prevailing situation in respect of SC/ST and their level of backwardness with respect to parameters such as income, land ownership, health indicators, educational attainments, access to basic infrastructure and basic amenities like water supply, sanitation, electricity, etc.

**Growth of Population:**

Andhra Pradesh has a sizeable Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. The Scheduled Caste population in 1991 (Census) was 10.6 million constituting 15.9 percent Marginalised Sections in Andhra Pradesh. The Status of Scheduled Castes and Tribes There is the considerable progress of SC and ST communities in terms of many human development indicators. However, these communities still lag behind the rest of society. Social exclusion, poverty, landlessness, health and, education are serious concerns for these marginalized sections. More focused interventions are
needed to enhance the pace of development of these communities. Andhra Pradesh Human Development Report 2007 132 of the total population of the state. The Scheduled Tribe population was 4.2 million constituting 6.3 percent of the total population. While the Scheduled Castes are distributed throughout the state, the Scheduled Tribes are concentrated in the hilly and forest areas of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad districts and the Nallamala forest. The latest census (2001) figures indicate an increase both in number and percentage of SC and ST in Andhra Pradesh. In 2001, there were about 12.3 and 5 million SC and ST comprising 16.2 and 6.6 percent of the total population in Andhra Pradesh. The percentage of SC in the population was marginally lower while ST population was nearly two percentage points lower in Andhra Pradesh, as compared to all-India. The SC/ST population and their proportion in the total population have increased over time in the state as well all-India.

SC and ST categories are not homogeneous, and there are some sub-castes/groups within each category. There are about 59 Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh of which the important ones are Mala, Madiga, Relli, Adi Andhra and others. Within the Mala and Madiga castes, there are about 25 and 18 sub-caste groups. Similarly, there are about 33 Scheduled Tribes in Andhra Pradesh, and the important among them are Gonds, Koyas, Konda Reddies, Savara and others. As a matter of fact, the surge in the size of ST population in the state during the 1970s is attributed to the inclusion into ST in 1977 of a community called Lambada/sugali, which mostly lives in the plains.

When Lambadas in Andhra Pradesh were notified as ST, many Lambadas from the neighbouring states of Maharashtra and Karnataka migrated to Andhra Pradesh to claim ST status. The Lambadas are, in fact, the single largest tribal group and constitute about 40 per cent of the ST
population in Andhra Pradesh. Within the state, there is a wide variation in the percentage of SC and ST in total population across districts. The percentage of SC in the total population was highest in Nellore (22.5) followed by Prakasam (21 per cent) and Chittoor (18.7 per cent) districts in the state. Kadapa is the district with the lowest percentage of ST, (2.4 percent), and Khammam (26.5 percent) has the highest in the state. Of the total ST population in the state, the major proportion (about 55 percent) is located in Telangana.

Educational and Socio-Economic Marginalized:

The Constitution of India specifically refers to the socially- and educationally backward classes of citizens in respect of whom certain safeguards are to be ensured. Therefore, it is the educational backwardness of people that needs to be identified and "the same should be used as a criterion for determining the backwardness of OBCs. We know about the role played by the cognitive and affective domains of knowledge in the formation of concepts that are very important in the educational advancement of a person. Studies well establish that the so-called backward castor classes have been alienated from the mainstream literate learning for ages, which constitutes an important impediment to educational development. Further, the family and social environment, educated parents, language and all other factors that will be conducive for educational upliftment of the backward cures are found robe so poor that education in the family in about a generation does not bring any perceptible change in the education of either the present or immediate future generations. Economic status of the family has nothing to do with education though it may help to continue education if an opportunity is provided. But it is of no use if educational opportunities are denied. Further, economic status does not help to overcome the educational handicaps that have been imposed on castes for generations. Equality of
opportunity in education cannot be established overnight. This has to be pursued till the conditions of family, language and so on, are equated with the competing groups. This requires protective discrimination. Moreover, education has a close relationship with the economic status of a person as the positions of power as well as employment in a modern society is necessarily linked with the educational attainment of a person.\textsuperscript{22}

The policy of reservation in educational institutions is essential or the backward classes for at least two generations till the initial inertia is crossed. Here, the economic criterion does not help to solve the problem of educational backwardness. There is a misunderstanding even among the knowledgeable public that mere provision of admissions into colleges and universities to the backward classes will be sufficient to educationally uplift them. In the private costs of higher education by different caste backgrounds are provided from a sample survey.\textsuperscript{23} Its clearly show that a backward class parent needs to spend several thousand rupees per annum for getting his children educated in higher learning and professional institutions. Under these circumstances, the poor, backward class parent cannot afford to send his children to university and then benefit from it in public appointments. Therefore, at least for one or two generations, till the minimum base is created to take off the mission of higher education for the backward classes, the reservations policy should not discriminate on the basis of income or another economic criterion. Otherwise, the whole exercise of providing opportunities to the backward classes would waste.\textsuperscript{24}

All the backward classes’ commissions have drawn out lists of backward classes on the basis of die results of sound socio-economic surveys. (The recent controversy of the percentage of OBCs in employment in NSS 55th round has certain methodological problems) Therefore, it is now clear that in a majority of cases, caste and educational backwardness have converged. This does not mean that all low-status
castes are socially and educationally backward) It is precisely for this reason that Havanur Commission in Karnataka excluded some sections of Lingayats who are considered to have a low status but are economically and educationally advanced. It all depends upon the methodology of the Commission in devising criteria to select the real backward and leave the underserved. It is also argued that caste-based reservation was aimed at countering social injustice and reposting social justice, and not mere economic backwardness. Viewed in the historical perspective, we find that the constitutional provision of reservation is, in fact, the driving force of the process of social change. This provision was not only a means of removing backwardness, having identified historical inequalities; but it also has a step in the direction of resolving them. ‘Backwardness is directly related to the process of development and reservation to the question of human rights.’ Caste-based reservations, therefore, need to be understood now in the paradigm of human rights and social inclusion. Further; Indian society is stratified into social groups, heredity continuing to be an important basis for stratification. Among such groups, those at the top of the hierarchy had access to education early, bureaucracy and political power and such groups had cumulative advantages. Others at the bottom of the hierarchy, particularly the SCs, SD and service castes, among others, had poor access to commanding positions in society and suffered from cumulative disadvantages. As a consequence, the elite class in Indian society is drawn mainly from a few social groups, the Brahmins and upper caste Hindus. There is a marked imbalance in the formation of the elite class.

In a society which continues to be rigidly stratified on the basis of caste and heredity, such imbalances in the formation of the elite class have disadvantages about mobilisation of social groups from the bottom strata of society for development. Thanks to reservations, the imbalances, though
continuing to persist, are gradually being corrected. This is a healthy sign, and there is a case for reservations as long as stratification by caste and heredity continue. The conclusions arrived at by the Backward Classes Commissions are unanimous as far as educational backwardness is concerned. It is universally accepted that the socially backward classes or castes are those who are denied education or alienated from mainstream formal education. This is largely responsible for their low social status and stands in the way of their entering the mainstream of power and prestige despite their economic well-being. Therefore, it is argued that certain safeguards are still essential in educational institutions to remove the continued social and educational disadvantages.26

The Educational Status of Backward Classes:

The educational status of a group can be examined with reference to the rate of enrolment, retention, drop-outs, and pass-outs at a particular level of education and also in terms of the academic achievements of the group at different levels. Unfortunately; we do not have sufficient and reliable data on backward classes to examine their educational status. However, the Department of Education (Ministry of Human Resource Development) has been publishing the enrolment figures of SCs, STs and, occasionally, OBCs from time to time. But these enrolment figures are lumped together while presenting them in the annual report.27

Education: Literacy and Schooling:

It is claimed that education is a universal right and not a privilege meant for some classes of society. The Indian Constitution and many later policy resolutions have stressed universal access to education and enrolment of children in school-going age irrespective of class and caste. Nevertheless, there is no equal access to education across social groups. In the state as well as in India, the SC and ST are the most backward in terms of education. The literacy rate for STs in the state was below one–third of
the state average till 1991. Further disaggregated by gender and caste, it is seen that ST women are the most backward and the literacy rate of ST women was one-fourth of the state average.

There was a sign of improvement between 1991 and 2001. The gap between the literacy levels of SC/ST and the average increased till 1991, and after that it narrowed down to some extent. Also, the rate of achievement in terms of literacy levels is observed to be high for STs and SCs when compared to the state average during 1991-01. An analysis of 1991 and 2001 Census data with respect to the prevalence of non-literacy (rather than literacy) is very interesting. It is observed that the non-literacy rate among ST female adults was the highest in rural areas in 1991 as well as in 2001. The non-literacy rate among rural ST female adults was as high as 96.5 in 1991, and it declined to 86.5 by 2001. In the case of rural SC female adults, the non-literacy rates were 89.6 and 71.5 in 1991 and 2001 indicating a substantial improvement in one decade. In the case of rural female adults the non-literacy rates during 1991 and 2001 were 82.4 and 65.8. 64th Round, National Sample Survey Organization, New Delhi. The analysis based on NSS data with respect to the illiteracy among adults across different social groups (ST, SC and OBC) presents more recent trends. The level of illiteracy is very high among female adults belonging to ST, SC and OBC in rural Andhra Pradesh. In rural areas, the illiteracy rate ranged from 86.3 per cent for ST to 71.6 per cent for OBC in 2004-05. For ‘other’ (OTH) category female adults, the illiteracy rate in 2004-05 was about 40.6 percent. The decline in illiteracy and the improvement in literacy among ST and SC female adults between 1993-94 and 2004-05 (OBC during 1999-00 to 2004-05) in rural Andhra Pradesh were far from satisfactory as compared to the improvement among OTH female adults in rural Andhra Pradesh.
Though the level of literacy among male adults in rural Andhra Pradesh was better when compared to female adults, illiteracy was very high, particularly among ST and SC male adults, even in 2004-05. The progress in literacy among ST and SC male adults from 1993-94 to 2004-05 (OBC between 1999-00 and 2004-05) in rural Andhra Pradesh was also much less than the progress of OTH male adults in rural Andhra Pradesh. The literacy levels among urban adults are uniformly higher than in rural Andhra Pradesh among all the social categories.

The all-India level of adult literacy was uniformly higher than in Andhra Pradesh across all social categories in both rural and urban areas. The increase in literacy for all-India had also been uniformly higher than in Andhra Pradesh between 1993-94 and 2004-05 across all the social groups in both rural and urban areas except for ST in the urban areas. Moreover, the percentage of households without any literate adult member or any literate adult female member was much higher among the ST and SC as compared to the OBC or Other categories both in rural and urban A.P. in 2004-05. Between the two scheduled categories, the percentage of such households was much higher among the STs.  

These findings suggest that ST female adults could not avail of the desired benefit from literacy campaigns and from formal schooling facilities as compared to SC female adults in rural Andhra Pradesh. We find that SC male adults could benefit from literacy campaigns and formal schooling facilities to improve their literacy position between 1991 and 2001. Even though the literacy level among adults is much better in urban areas than in rural areas, about 64.7 percent of the ST female adults and about 47.6 percent of the SC female adults in urban areas are non-literate.

**Schooling and Educational Deprivation of Children:**

As in the case of literacy, there is also a significant disparity between social groups in respect of children at school. The percentage of children in
the 5-14 age group attending school was relatively lower among SC/ST than the ‘other’ communities. Many children belonging to these marginalized communities especially ST’s are out of school, and some are even engaged in economic activities. According to NSSO estimates, the percentage of children in the age group 5-14 years attending schools during 2004-05 in ST, SC, OBC and Others communities were 80.4, 86.6, 86.3 and 89.9 respectively in rural areas and 94.3, 90.0, 89.5 and 92.7 respectively in the urban areas of Andhra Pradesh. Gender disparities in school attendance rate across these communities were 22.6, 11.1 and 7.5 respectively for ST, SC and other communities.

The incidence of educational deprivation (i.e. the percentage of children who remained out of school) is higher among children belonging to ST and SC communities when compared to ‘others’. Between the SC and ST, the ST children are the most deprived. This is corroborated even by enrolment figures provided by the Education Department (usually suspected of being inflated) and poor enrolment, and high drop-out rates were highest among ST children followed by SC and ‘others’.  

The estimate based on NSS 61st (2004-05) round, indicates that the performance of the state among major Indian state in terms of the school attendance rate seems to be better. Its performance is better not only in terms of the average for all social groups but also across social groups. The percentage of children (5-14 age group) attending school is relatively higher in Andhra Pradesh across all social groups when compared to the all-India average.

Inter-district variations in attendance are much higher for girls than for boys among ST and SC communities. In the case of ST, the low attendance districts are Mahabubnagar, Medak, Guntur and Rangareddi. The gender disparity in attendance is also relatively higher in these districts except for Guntur. For SC and Others, the low attendance districts are
Mahabubnagar and Kurnool, where gender disparity in attendance is also higher.\textsuperscript{33}

Rural-urban differentials in the school attendance of children are higher for ST compared to other social categories. Further, the attendance of ST girls is pathetically low in the rural areas of Mahabubnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Rangareddi, Guntur and Nalgonda. For ST children, the low attendance (less than 20) districts are Nellore, Mahabubnagar and Prakasam. The inter-district variations in attendance are much higher for ST (also SC and Others) girls in the rural areas than for boys. We do not find any such difference in urban areas. For children of SC and Others communities, the low attendance districts in the rural areas are Mahabubnagar and Kurnool.\textsuperscript{34}

**Health:**

Health status is measured by indicators such as mortality, morbidity, immunization of children and pregnant women and their nutrition levels. The estimates for all these indicators indicate that ST and the SC lag behind other communities. Mortality, as measured by the crude death rate, is marginally higher among the SC and ST. Infant mortality rate (IMR), which is an important indicator of the human development perspective, is highest among the ST (104) followed by SC (97). The great difference between ST/SC and the others in terms of IMR indicates the difference in development between these communities.

The nutritional status of women is critical for their health as well as the health of children. There are different indicators to measure the nutritional status of women. For instance, the height of an adult woman also reflects the level of nutrition during childhood and adolescence. And the height of a woman often indicates the level of risk of difficulty in childbirth and delivering a baby with low birth weight. Current diet also influences nutritional status. Women from scheduled tribes/castes have a
relatively poor diet that is deficient in fruits and green, leafy vegetables. Although there is no significant difference in terms of the mean height of the women, the percentage of women below 145 cm is highest among women belonging to scheduled castes. The body mass index (BMI) which is a measure of weight to height is used to assess thinness or obesity. A BMI less than 18.5 indicates chronic energy deficiency in a woman. The mean BMI for SC/ST women is the lowest, and the percentage of women whose BMI is below 18.5 is the highest among SC and ST.35 Anaemia is another indicator of nutritional status, and it usually results from a deficiency of iron, vitamin B or other nutrients. Iron deficiency is the most widespread form of malnutrition in the world and India and Andhra Pradesh it affects about 50 percent of the population. Across social groups in the state, anaemia was highest among SC women (56 percent). The severe form of anaemia was highest among ST women (3.2 per cent) and SC women (2.6) in the state.

The nutrition status of children, an important aspect of their health and well-being, is expressed in standard deviation units from the median. Children who are under three years of age and below 2SD are considered to be undernourished, and those below 3SD are considered to be severely undernourished. While weight for age is a composite measure of both chronic and acute under-nutrition, height for age measures linear growth retardation. Across social groups in Andhra Pradesh, the percentage of children characterized as undernourished was higher among the ST community followed by SC when compared with the ‘other’ children. The severity of under-nutrition was higher among SC children. Chronic under-nutrition results from a failure to receive adequate nutrition over a long period or from chronic or recurrent diarrhea. Moreover, under-nutrition among children is strongly associated with their mothers’ nutritional status and is more common in children whose mothers’ height is less than 145 cm
and body mass index (BMI) is below 18.5. Ultimately it is strongly related to the living standards at the household level and children of households with a low standard of living are more likely to be undernourished than children of households with a high standard of living.

The other indicator of the health status of the population is access/utilisation of health care services; for this the indicators used are immunization of children and pregnant women and attention received at the time of delivery. For nearly 62 per cent of ST women and 33 per cent of SC women, child delivery took place at home.

The National Health Policy (1983) gives top priority to providing health services to people residing in tribal, hilly and backward areas as well as to the population affected by endemic diseases and vulnerable sections of society. Therefore, to provide better health care to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the norms for population coverage were relaxed. This is further supported by the implementation of programmes like the control of communicable and other diseases and especially undertaking research on diseases to which Scheduled Tribes/ Scheduled Castes are generally prone. Mobile dispensaries and camps organised wherever feasible are catering to their needs at their doorsteps.

Information on health care facilities is available by SC village, ST village and all villages, but not on whether these facilities are located in their settlements. This is important for most SC and ST typically live in separate settlements adjacent to the main villages dominantly inhabited by non-ST/SC population. The information available, however, indicates that the SC and ST are at a disadvantageous position in terms of health care facilities.

36

**Employment Structure:**

The Economic condition, in general, is an outcome of the occupational structure. Most SC and ST continue in their traditional
hereditary occupations, mostly agriculture, which is the principal source of livelihood for these communities. In rural Andhra Pradesh, for ST, the predominant occupation is agriculture. About 90 per cent of ST and 80 percent of ST are located in rural areas. For more than 80 and 70 per cent of the ST and SC, population agriculture is the principal source of livelihood (either as cultivators or as agricultural labour). About 35 percent of the STs is cultivators while for a majority of SC households the principal source of livelihood was agricultural labour. It seems that STs are better placed when compared to SC in terms of ownership of land. However, the position of the ST has deteriorated over the last decade (1994-2005). The decline in the percentage of ST households who are cultivators (45 to 35.4 percent) indicates loss of land resources and increasing dependency on agricultural labour (37 to 43.7 percent). It is to be noted that the percentage of the population depending on agricultural labour increased only in the case of ST, whereas it has declined for SC. Among cultivators, across all social groups including ST, the majority are marginal and small cultivator households.  

However these groups, especially ST, are unaware of modern methods of cultivation and use outmoded techniques. Besides, they get a low price for their output due to inadequate basic infrastructure coupled with limited access to the market. Work participation rates were nearly the same for OBC, SC and ST, in that order in 2004-05. Child labour (WPR of the 5 to 14 age group) was the highest among STs. There was a sharp decline in work participation during the last decade especially for the ST, which was primarily due to a great decline in child labour. WPR among ST children declined from 32.6 percent in 1993-94 to 10 percent in 2004-05. As mentioned above, agriculture is the main source of employment opportunity for SC and ST households. About 88 and 80 percent of the workforce belonging to ST and SC are engaged in agriculture-related
activities. Occupational diversification appeared to be negligible, especially among the ST community.

**Resource Ownership:**

**Land:** Access to land is one of the important indicators of better livelihoods in rural areas. In rural Andhra Pradesh, in terms of land owned and possessed, there is little difference across social groups and the SC are, in fact, better placed in terms of land owned. Landlessness (in terms of land possessed) became negligible between 1993-94 and 2004-05. However, land available for cultivation is more important in an agrarian economy. All the land owned or possessed may not be cultivated owing to various reasons. As a matter of fact, the land owned by about 45 per cent of the population in the state was used only for housing.

In terms of cultivated land, the SC and ST appear to be the most and the least disadvantaged when compared with the state average or the ‘other’ social group. The percentage of the population in households with cultivated land is 33 and 54.5 percent for SC and ST during 2004-5, and the state average is 46.2 percent. Between 1993-94 and 2004-05 the percentage of the population in households with cultivated land declined to a considerable extent across all social groups, but the decline was highest for ST followed by SC. In other words, landlessness, which is the lack of cultivated land, is increasing more among these socially disadvantaged groups. The question is whether increasing landlessness is due to land sales because of economic distress or due to better opportunities available in non-farm activities or for any other cause. As observed with respect to employment, the percentage of population especially ST depending on agricultural labour increased, which indicates the worsening situation for ST in Andhra Pradesh.38

Since Independence, the Indian state has considered that problems of land are of pressing urgency. The objective of poverty eradication
envisaged progress on two fronts simultaneously, high productivity and equitable distribution. Accordingly, land reforms were introduced to mitigate land-related problems like concentration, tenancy rights, and land for the landless. Because of the severe disadvantage suffered by the SC and ST, these communities were targeted while distributing surplus land in India and Andhra Pradesh so that they gained access to land. But land reform has to be more than the mere redistribution of land to the landless. It is equally important to ensure the availability of other inputs for cultivation to improve the productivity of the land. But to what extent have these disadvantaged groups gained access to these agricultural inputs? For instance, the access to irrigation, which is considered a leading input for cultivation, is inadequate for SC and ST. The percentage of the population in households with irrigated land is the lowest among SC (13.5 per cent) followed by ST (21.7 per cent) when compared with the ‘other’ community (30.6) and the state average (22.9 per cent). Availability of other necessary inputs would also be inadequate for SC and ST.39

We now turn to a further analysis of the data relating to the number of holdings and operated areas across social groups based on the Agricultural Census. It indicates that there has been an increase in the number of holdings and area operated by the SC and ST during the last decade (between 1995-96 and 2005-06). But this increase in the number of holdings and area operated for the ST and SC may not be due to land distribution as a part of land reforms. In the changing dynamics of the rural economy in Andhra Pradesh, land transfers have been taking place, horizontally (within a socio-economic class) and vertically (across social and economic classes). It is observed that land owned by the dominant cultivating castes has declined because they are moving out of rural areas and agricultural activities to urban areas and non-agricultural activities. There is a corresponding increase in the control of land by backward
communities. The ST and SC, therefore, might have acquired land through purchase.\textsuperscript{40}

However, the share of these marginalized communities, especially SC, in the total number of holdings or operated area is well below their share in the total population (around 16 percent). The share of SC in the total area operated is less than half their share of total population, and the average size of their landholding is much smaller than for any other social group. The situation seems relatively better for the ST as their share in operated area is the same as their share of total population (around 8 percent) The pattern of land distribution across social groups shows that the number of holdings and area operated has been increasing in the marginal and small size classes while declining in the medium and large holdings classes. For the SC, marginal and small holdings comprised 92 percent of the total number of holdings but the area under these holdings formed around 66 percent of the total area owned by them. The share of the ST in marginal and small holdings is nearly 80 percent of total holdings, and 50 percent of the area operated. Though the marginalisation (increasing share of small and marginal farmers) of the peasantry has been taking place across all social groups, it is more in the case of SC.

On the whole, it may be mentioned that access to land is still denied to many SCs. As a result, a majority of them continue to be landless agricultural labourers. Further, since most families who own land, especially SCs, are small and marginal farmers, their capacity to invest in agriculture is very inadequate, and their access to credit is negligible. Although STs are relatively better placed in terms of access to land, factors such as traditional cultivation techniques and lack of access to modern technology and inputs including credit, undermines their economic progress.
Income Poverty:

Income poverty is only one of the multiple deprivations that the SC and ST have continuously suffered, even after nearly six decades of development planning. Across social groups, the percentage of population living below the poverty line is the highest among the ST and SC communities.

The estimates of mean consumption expenditure using NSS Consumption Expenditure Survey data clearly indicate differences in the level of consumption expenditure across social groups, and how far behind the SC/STs are as compared to the ‘other’ group. Moreover, the gap in terms of consumption expenditure between these SC/STs and the ‘other’ communities has been increasing over a period of time, which indicates increasing economic inequalities across social groups. The head count ratio of poverty measured using NSS Consumption Expenditure Survey data also shows that the percentage of poor is much higher among the SC/STs community indicating wide disparities across social groups in the state. Moreover, the disparity, especially between STs and ‘others’, has been increasing. Although, the overall poverty ratio and the ratio among SCs and the other social groups shows a declining trend, the head count ratio of poverty among STs increased from 26 to 28.3 percent between 1993-94 and 2004-05. Most of the increase in the poverty ratio among STs was due to an increase in agricultural laborers among STs. It indicates the failure of state policy in targeting initiatives and programmes to marginalized sections like STs and SCs. Deprivation of Basic Amenities Access to basic infrastructures such as education and health services available at the village level and household amenities such as drinking water, sanitation, and electricity is quite poor for STs and SCs.41

Of the total twenty-six thousand villages in Andhra Pradesh, in 9 percent the entire population was STs. About 20 percent of the villages
were predominantly (i.e. 50 per cent or more) inhabited by STs and another 3 percent by the SCs. Together, these 23 percent villages account for about 7.2 percent of the total rural population in the state. About 5 percent of the total SCs and about 45 percent of STs Population in rural Andhra Pradesh were located in villages that were predominantly inhabited by SCs and STs.

In these villages, the availability of basic infrastructure and access to facilities is relatively poor when compared to the ‘other’ villages and the people living in these villages, mostly SCs and ST’s, are more deprived of basic infrastructure. Among SCs and STs, the latter is the worst affected. In ST villages, the situation is very bad. About 90 percent does not have tap water while 67 per cent does not have road connection and 73 percent do not have any transportation facility. People living in these STs villages are not connected to the outside world, as there is no a proper road or transportation. Medical services are not available for about 50 percent of ST villages in A.P. STs, and SCs are also disadvantaged in terms of household amenities. Though every village and town in the state is electrified, about 32.6 percent of facilities were equally bad. On the whole, deprivation in terms of not having access to basic household amenities is, in general, higher and more severe for ST and SC.\textsuperscript{42}

**Atrocities:**

The Parliamentary Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (2004-2005) mentioned that “even after more than five decades of Independence, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people representing over one-fourth of India’s population, endure social ostracization”. Atrocity is an expression commonly used to refer to crimes against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India. The roots of atrocity can be found in the caste system. Though untouchability households did not have electricity connection in 2001. The percentage of
households without electricity is highest among STs (64.6 per cent) followed by SCs (50.5 per cent) and is higher in rural areas than in urban areas across social groups.

More than 60 percent of the STs and SCs households live in a single room, and about 3 to 4 percent do not have even that single room. Access to safe drinking water is extremely important for better health and higher human development. But, 52 percent of the households in general and about 76 and 54 percent of STs and SCs households do not have tap water (which is considered safe drinking water). The situation concerning access to other basic was abolished and forbidden in any form under Article 17 of the Constitution of India, the practice of “untouchability” the imposition of social disabilities on persons by reason of birth into a particular caste – has continued in one form or the other. A Parliamentary Standing Committee noted that “generally SC/ST people avoided reporting crimes and fighting cases just to escape police harassment and fear of cases languishing in courts for long.” This Committee, since its inception in 1968, has presented to Parliament as many as 176 Original Reports and 169 Action Taken Reports till 2004. Also, 191 Reports on the Study Tours undertaken by different Study Groups of the Committee have also been laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament.

Among major Indian states, Andhra Pradesh is fourth in terms of crimes against SC and ST. In 2005, 31177 and 515 (total) incidents of crime against SC and ST were recorded in the state. The crime rate (i.e. number of crime incidents per lakh population) was 23.7 and 9.5 for SC and ST in Andhra Pradesh. The corresponding figure at all-India level was 14.5 and 6.2. The crime rate against SC/ST in the state is thus higher than the all-India average. While states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat had a higher crime rate against SC than Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were the leading states in case of crime rate
against ST. Scheduled Caste women suffer from many forms of discrimination and deprivation. Scheduled Caste women are victimized by upper castes because they lack the social position to stand up for their rights individually and because assaulting or raping them reinforces the subordination of the whole SC community to upper castes. Scheduled Caste women do not know their rights and are too powerless individually to hold the judiciary and the executive accountable for enforcing protective laws. The government of Andhra Pradesh has identified the following districts as sensitive from the point of view of crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Chittoor, East Godavari, Mahabubnagar, Nellore, Khammam and Warangal (6 districts).

A study conducted by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 1990 pointed out that various factors handled atrocities. These include economic causes such as land disputes, land alienation, bonded labour, indebtedness, non-payment of minimum wages as well as non-economic causes such as caste prejudice and practice of untouchability, deep-rooted social resentment, political factions on caste lines and refusal to perform (formerly traditional) services like digging burial pits, arranging cremations, removal of the carcasses of dead animals and beating of drum, etc. While the growing number of cases is attributed to growing awareness among the victims about legal recourse, it cannot be denied that even after so many years of planned development, atrocities continue and are probably increasing.

A primary survey in Andhra Pradesh revealed that these crimes take numerous forms. They include murder, rape, parading of a Dalit woman in the nude, social boycott, grievous hurt, beating, attacking Dalit basis, destruction of property, causing serious injuries, death in police custody, encroachment on Dalit lands, bonded labour, forceful eviction from house sites, harassment due to love relationship with caste Hindu, suicide due to
humiliation and excessive beating by the police; being beaten: for riding a
cycle, wearing nice clothes, for sitting in the bus; harassment of Dalits
Sarpanches and Panchayat members, and resentment and insult when a
Dalit wins an election. Attempts by the Dalits to assert their self-respect
and to break the taboos imposed by the high castes are viewed with
hostility and suspicion and met with the violence of various types.
Whenever Dalits have tried to organize themselves or assert their rights,
there has been a backlash from the high caste feudal lords resulting in mass
killings, gang rapes and arson.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{Political Participation:}

Scheduled Caste and Tribes constitute a significant portion of India’s
total population. They play an insignificant role in politics. A very few are
members of elected bodies like Gram Panchayat despite a policy of
reservation. Their participation is often controlled and is marked by the
lack of knowledge and resources. In terms of statutory representation of
SCs and STs in PRI bodies in A.P. there is no deviation from the official
quota which means SCs and STs are represented as per the constitutional
quota of 15, and 8 per cent in all the tiers of the PRIs in A.P. At gram
panchayat level the numbers of elected representatives of SCs are 31243
(15 percent) and that of STs are 16662 (8 per cent). At Mandal Parishad
level SCs representation is more than the statutory reservation (2586)
constituting 17.7 percent) and that of STs 7.5 percent (1093). At Zilla
Parishad level, the representation of SCs and STs is again higher than the
stipulated position, i.e., 17.9 and 7.9 percent respectively.

Although the statutory position of SCs and STs in local bodies is
satisfactory, they are unable to work effectively in these bodies due to the
social hierarchy and inequalities that exist in rural society. Studies have
clearly brought out how proxy leadership (upper castes in the villages)
controls the panchayats and their decision-making process on behalf of SCs
and STs. One such study supported by Ford Foundation in Kurnool district mentions that a large number of elected members, especially SC/ST and backward caste members, are not actively participating in the meetings of the panchayats.  

**Resource Allocations:**

Since the 1980s, there has been a steady decline in the allocation of government funds for SC and ST development and welfare projects. There has in general been an inherent lack of interest and seriousness on the part of the planning and implementing machinery to achieve the objectives of the Constitution the benefits secured by the SCs and STs do not appear commensurate with the funds spent so far. The strategy of a Special Component Plan (SCP) for the development of Scheduled Castes was adopted during the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Scheme of Special Central Assistance to SCP was initiated in 1980 and envisaged that the states would prepare Special Component Plans every financial year so as to ensure that a percentage of budgetary funds equal to the percentage of Scheduled Castes in the state would be set aside for their economic development and uplift. This strategy was adopted to ensure adequate flow of financial outlays from the state and central government plans in proportion to the Scheduled Caste population to the schemes and programmes for the development of the Scheduled Castes.

Efforts of the state governments were supplemented by Special Central Assistance for SCP by the government of India. Andhra Pradesh was one of the states which formulated Special Component Plans for the development of its Scheduled Caste population. Similarly is the case of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP). The allocation and expenditure of Special Component Plan (SCP) funds between 1992-93 and 2003-04 in Andhra Pradesh justify the remarks of Committee of Governors that these welfare concepts that were evolved 20 years ago, have not been satisfactory, and
there are numerous instances of lesser allocations, transfer of funds and shortfalls in expenditure. The SCP allocations have never exceeded 12 per cent as against the recommended allocation of 15 per cent and over a ten year period, the shortfall in allocation of SCP funds works out to Rs 4097.01 crores.47

On the same lines, in five years the shortfall in allocations of TSP funds works out to Rs.567.98 crores. Against an allocation of Rs.1082.75 crore for Social Welfare in 2003-04, the allocation in 2004-05 was only Rs.1197.64 crores. The allocation for the welfare of Backward Classes has of fact been reduced. The share of the budget for the 15 per cent SC population works out to only 1.5 per cent. A study by the Centre for Dalit Studies has also concluded on similar lines that the results of the Special Component Plan (SCP) have not been fully satisfactory and that there are numerous instances of lower allocations, transfer of funds and shortfalls in expenditure. Also, when the budget allocation in the state, especially under the heads of elementary education and child welfare, are examined, it shows that the allocations under SCP and TSP were negligible. At no point in time during the last seven years were the shares of SCP and TSP at the mandatory level i.e. in proportion to the share of SCs and STs in the total population.

**Protective Discrimination Policy and social change:**

It is unequivocally that the educated and employed SCs have come in close 'contact with and are interacting with the non-SCs at least in the place of work. This has become possible for them because of the PDP. The attitude of caste Hindus the general lot as well as the ones with whom the SCs interact in offices, colleges, etc. The statements presented here are mostly concerned with the caste Hindus' views towards the PDP, the changed status of SCs and the atrocities against the SCs. These are the views as perceived by the SCs about the caste Hindus' attitude. It is an
attempt to see the caste Hindus' views through the eyes of SCs. The responses to the statements show that the respondents are aware of the prevailing resentment among caste Hindus over the reservation especially in services and professional education. They felt that the caste Hindus have taken casteist approach towards these facilities provided by the government.

Further, they felt that caste Hindus do not tolerate the mobility of SCs, as they took it to be a threat to their higher position in society. The statements presented favouring of caste Hindus' views towards the policy shows that average value in respect of statement, which indicates the point of disagreement. The respondents perceived the feeling of superiority among the non-SCs who kept themselves aloof from SCs. Against this background, the efforts of SCs towards integrating themselves into the mainstream society become futile. The average attitude value against the each statement indicates the negative view of caste Hindus towards SCs favoured (close to the scale point of agreement and near about strongly agree) whereas positively worded statements were unfavourable (close to disagreeing and almost strongly disagree). It indicates that the respondents believed that caste Hindus' views are not encouraging in respect of policy as well as the ongoing progress of the SCs. The respondents could not trust the caste Hindus since there seemed to a difference between their words and their deeds.

The caste Hindus' public appearance and behaviour were contrary to their true intentions and feelings. This was the general feeling about the caste Hindus in society at large. It has been reported by almost all the (employees) respondents that it is difficult to guess the attitude and to feel from their outer behaviour. Nobody dares to talk openly against the SC but everybody (caste Hindus) has a feeling of superiority, and most of their actions are partial. The attitude of caste Hindus, as perceived by the
respondents are shown in the matter. It is expected that at least in bureaucratic set-up the treatment should be given without taking into consideration the caste background. The caste Hindu officers’ (superiors) attitude was perceived as indifferent and in some case jealous or full of hate. This indicates that their (SCs) entry in such offices is not welcomed wholeheartedly. This perception of the respondents were increased (except technical employees) with increasing responsibility in the office. More than 55 per cent respondents from professional group felt the indifferent attitude of their caste Hindu superiors. The jealous attitude perceived by the SC officers and professional groups of the employed category reveals that their (SC) entry, to some extent, in the lower category is tolerated but not above a certain level. One officer respondent said that the presence of only one officer from SC category in the organization made it easy CO victimize him and even ruin his career.48

Their improved status has not had any impact on the caste based attitude of caste Hindus. The students, generally, come in close contact with the teachers and the classmates. They do not have that much relation with the people who can be considered as their subordinates. Hence, their attitude of caste Hindus perceived by students with respect to the teachers and the classmates have been considered.

Compared with employee’s category the student’s category received sympathetic attitude both from their teachers as well as classmates. They do not receive the discriminatory treatment, especially from their teachers. The students perceived a relatively more favourable attitude from the classmates than the teachers. The indifferent attitude perceived by professional courses groups including education seem to be greater compared to other course groups.

It is not as if the caste Hindus are jealous of the SCs because ’ of the facilities they get. They even show tolerance towards the educational
facilities particularly the financial assistance in the form of GOI scholarships. But they are more concerned with reserved seats in professional and higher education field. Because the education and entry in the professional category may give greater impetus to mobility, sometimes leaving behind the caste Hindus. Hence, caste Hindu took for granted that the SCs' entry in professional jobs like medicine, engineering, etc., becomes easy simply because of the reservation facilities. The SCs' achievement becomes unimportant.

On the whole, the attitude perceived by SC respondents both student and employees category shows that they are still not completely free from the caste considerations. We would like to know what would happen if the situation was reversed if the SC was a caste Hindu's superior.

It would be seen from the table that despite the attitude of caste Hindus as perceived by respondents, the majority (73%) of the respondents, mostly from employee’s category, mentioned that there is no partiality in treatment. About 28 (14%) respondents all from student’s category said that their treatment would remain sympathetic towards their subordinates. This indicates their great desire for and faith on equality. One cannot find any Prejudiced or biased mind towards the caste Hindus. Only 4 per cent respondents were of the opinion that caste Hindu subordinate would be given the treatment that they (SCs) had received earlier from the caste Hindu superior. Further, they explained that, at least, they should realize about their past deeds. Merely 6 (3%) respondents all from students said that a caste Hindu subordinate would be given respectful treatment.

Thus, despite their personal experiences respondents are not vindictive. On the contrary, some have gone to the extent of giving respectful treatment. Many respondents said that nothing could be achieved by confrontation and conflict. They are of the opinion that all deserve
human treatment, i.e., everybody should be treated respectfully without hurting his dignity and self-respect.\textsuperscript{50}

It is a fact that given the sizeable population belonging to SC and ST communities-together comprising one-fifth of the total in Andhra Pradesh, the level of human development in these communities definitely influences the average level of human development of all social groups. It is not just that the backwardness of these communities is pulling down the overall development, but that there is a violation of the right of these communities to development equally on par with other communities.

The positive discrimination policy of the Indian government as well as of the state government in favour of these communities and subsequent special programmes for their development could have improved their levels of living. Though there has been progressed in terms of many development indicators across the SC and ST communities in the state, they still lag behind the ‘other’ social groups. In the case of education, the gaps between social groups are becoming narrower. However, the pace of progress among these communities has been below expectations. Health conditions among these communities have been improving at a very slow pace. The situation is alarming with respect to economic well-being as the poverty level among the STs has, in fact, increased during the last decade or so. Moreover, landlessness among these communities especially STs is increasing. These two facts may be caused by concern at the policy level. Land alienation and displacement are the serious problems for STs in the state.

The policy initiative of special assistance through SCP/TSP in terms of budget allocations for the welfare and development of these (SC/ST) communities is still not being fulfilled in implementation. Given the factual situation of these communities with respect to their human development
levels, more focused intervention is needed to enhance the pace of development among these communities.

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31. Ibid.

32. The Andhra Pradesh Human Development Report (APHDR) is probably the first in India covering the database up to 2005-06. Thus, the report covers the fifteen-year post-reform period that is sufficient for examining the impact of economic reforms on human development.


37. As per the estimations using unit level record data of NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey 61st round (2004-05). It is based on usual activity (both principal and subsidiary) status.

38. Ibid.

39. S. Radhakrishnan, University Education Commission Report. (Karlekar, 1983) : The ST community is not homogeneous, and there are variations among different ST groups.


42. Ibid.


44. Three states (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) accounted for an abnormally high number of cases of atrocities committed on Scheduled Castes /Scheduled Tribes, 63.5 per cent of the total atrocity cases in the country in 2000. Other states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu) accounted for 35.5 percent.


47. In 1995-96 Social Welfare Budget allocation was 8.4 percent of the total plan outlay and this declined to 2.4 percent in 2002-03. In 1999-00 and 2000-01, the percentage allocations were 0.7 and 1.5 per cent respectively.


50. Ibid, p. 49.