Chapter – II

IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES ON THE SCHEDULED CASTES: AN OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute the weakest sections of Indian society who were denied certain education and political rights and other benefits for centuries, having been negatively discriminated against. This unfortunate situation has been largely responsible for their abject poverty, illiteracy and overall backwardness. Due to social disabilities arising from the practice of untouchability against the Scheduled Castes and geographical isolation of Scheduled Tribes, have been alienated from the rest of the community as a result they have been forced to lead a life of economic and social subjugation. Therefore, these deprived sections of our society have to be positively discriminated so that they can improve their living conditions by taking benefits from the processes of developmental programmes and policies implemented by the Central and State governments for them since independence.

In this chapter therefore, attempt is made to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the welfare programmes on the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra implemented by the State and Central Governments in comparison to Scheduled Castes in the country as a whole.

According to the census of India, the Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra was 2.23 million in 1961, which increased to 8.76 million in 1991 accounting for 5.63 per cent and 11.09 per cent respectively. As per the 1991 census, they constitute 6 per cent of the total SC population in the country as a whole. The proportion of SCs at the national level was 16.48 per cent in 1991.

Despite the increased pace of urbanization, India continues to be predominantly rural, specially in the context of Scheduled Caste population. Of the total S.C. population in the country, 81.28 per cent lives in rural areas and in Maharashtra, it is 73 per cent (1991). Considering the fact that a majority of the Scheduled Caste population (SC) lives in rural areas where the incidence of poverty is more acute, the thrust of the planning for raising their standard of living should be towards the rural masses of this downtrodden segment of population.
Most of the Scheduled Castes are engaged in the agricultural sector particularly as agricultural labourers. In India, 77.11 per cent of S.C. workers were engaged in primary sector and in the State of Maharashtra, 64.07 per cent in 1991. Out of this 64.07 per cent, 48.08 per cent were agricultural labourers. Most of them are landless agricultural labourers. They are paid less than the prescribed wages suggested by the State/Central Governments. Those who posses land among them belong to the marginal and small landholders (up to 2.0 ha) category. The land they possess is mostly barren or un-irrigated and whatever is being produced from the land is not suffice for the family. Therefore, they are stricken with poverty. No doubt, there are people of non-Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (non SC/ST) also, who are economically poor. But it is highly pronounced in case of SC/ST population.

Eradication of poverty and raising the standard of living of SC and ST persons have been the most important objectives of the country's economic planning. In the initial years, it was thought that the economic growth to be realised through planned efforts would by itself ensure that benefits would reach the poorer sections of the population, which is commonly known as the 'trickling down' or percolation theory. This percolation theory has failed and from this experience, planners realised that unless some specific plan or programmes/schemes were formulated in respect of the poor sections of the society, especially the SCs and STs, the main objective of eradication of poverty through economic planning would not be achieved. Therefore, the mere economic growth need not lead to better standard of living for all sections of the population, especially SCs & STs, which constitute the bulk of the poor segments of population.

In terms of residence, housing and health conditions also, the condition of the Scheduled Castes is precarious. They still suffer from segregation with regard to the place of residence. They are forced to live on the outskirt of the main settlement of the village in view of the caste pollution. Many of them are too poor to own any property. Therefore, they have to live and build their dwellings on the land belonging to big landlords who engage them as agricultural labourers. This makes them difficult not only to change their dwelling place but also job. This continues for generations and they get trapped in conditions of forced poverty.

After independence, therefore, some specific and general statutory safeguards were provided to these weaker sections in the constitution of India. Apart from this, various poverty-alleviating programmes have been implemented to raise their overall standard of living.
From the First Five Year Plan, the welfare of backward classes sector was introduced with the intention that developmental programmes or schemes formulated under this sector would cater exclusively to the needs of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. The idea was to hasten the process of development of these communities with the help of these programmes and schemes, which would be in addition to the benefits that would accrue to them from the general developmental efforts. However, the expectations did not materialise to the desired extent and hence, the Tribal Sub-Plan for Scheduled Tribes (TSP) and Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes were introduced as fresh strategy during the Fifth and Sixth Five Year Plans respectively.¹

Now the discussion is made on the constitutional provisions extended to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with regard to their educational and employment and other developmental programmes implemented for improving their socio-economic conditions so as to bring them out from the shackles of ignorance, exploitation and poverty in Maharashtra state and elsewhere in India.

2.2 Constitutional Provisions and Public Policy

2.2.1 Political Provisions

The constitution of India contains a Directive Principles of the State Policy, laid down in article 46 which provides that the State shall promote with care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all form of exploitation. These specific provisions are outlined in articles 330, 334, 335, 164, 275 and 339 of the constitution of India. Articles 330, 332 and 334 provide for the representation of seats for Scheduled Castes in the States of Union and in Parliament.²

One of the purposes in providing such political reservations was to enable the SC/ST members to voice against the grievances of the oppressed sections in general and the SC/ST in particular; they were also expected to bring pressure on the government with a view to rectify the injustice done to their communities. It is generally observed the performance of the elected SC/ST members with context to the decision making be at the

village level, district, state or national level is marginal. More often than not, the party high command leaders to get votes in elections use them. They also use their (SC/ST) positions for their personal benefits. In Maharashtra, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has brought the political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes, particularly among Mahars, to fight for their rights and against injustice, of any sort, posed by the high Hindu caste people, otherwise, very little effort has been made. Despite all this the SC elected members in village panchayats in the state of Maharashtra are hardly allowed to have their say in the meetings. Their some times insulted, and compelled to resign.

2.2.2 Educational Provisions and Programmes

A provision for educational opportunities forms a very important part of the programmes for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes.

Education is the master key to their uplift. Article 15(4) empowers the states to make any special provision for the advancement of any socially and economically backward classes of citizens or for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This provision was added to the constitution through the constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951. It enabled the state to reserve seats for SCs and STs in educational institutions including technical, engineering and medical colleges. In Article 15(4) as well as in Article 16(4) the term 'backward classes' is used as generic term and comprises various categories of backward classes, viz; SCs/STs, other backward classes, Denotified communities (Vimukta Jatiyan) and Nomadic/Semi-nomadic communities.3

The educational programmes in the central sector constitute of the award of post matriculation scholarships, girls hostels, overseas scholarships, and pre-examination, training for SC & St candidates appearing in the IAS examinations. The scholarships are awarded to the poor students of weaker sections having the income less than the upper limit prescribed by the Government, which varies from time to time.

It is the state has to uplift these downtrodden communities; it should intensify its efforts to offer greater educational opportunities to them. Education is a basic source of strength and is essential for them to claim their place in the modern world. Without educational attainment, they cannot break the shackles of ignorance and poverty.

According to the report of the Commission for SC/ST 1969, that more than 60 per cent of the scholarships awarded to Scheduled Caste students have gone to 3 States -

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3 N.C for SC & ST, 1992-93, pp.22.
Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra though these states constitute only about 39 per cent of the total S C population in the country (1961). Whereas Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madras were having 30 per cent S C population in 1961, were awarded only 16 per cent of the total scholarships for S C students. The scheme of post-matric scholarships has shown that some castes of weaker sections are more benefited than others. For instance, in Maharashtra, the Mahars who constituted 35.12 per cent of S.C. population of the State (1961), received 82.83 per cent of the total scholarships awarded to SC students in the state in 1967-68, while the Mangs who constituted (32.65%) got 3.87 per cent only and Chambhars constituted (22.06%) received about 10 per cent of the scholarships.  

This large share scholarship benefits taken by the Mahars among SCs in Maharashtra state is due to their political and social consciousness after their conversion to Buddhism in 1956.

The post-matric scholarships scheme was launched in 1944-45, 114 scholarships were awarded to S C students during first year of its introduction and 89 scholarships to Tribal students during 1948-49. For both the categories together, the number of scholarship holders increased to 14,97,059 during 1991-92 and further to 16, 80, 178 during 1992-93. Ample funds are available with the Ministry of Welfare but are not being utilized for want of complete proposals from the State Government in time. For instance the Government of Maharashtra was one of the 7 states, which could not send its proposal for this grant in 1992-93 in time for which no explanation was given.

It is found that the SC literacy has been increasing steadily. But the difference between the SC and other communities is still large but inequality is on the declining trend in the state of Maharashtra.

It is imperative to note that the dropout rates among SCs & STs are declining but it is still much higher as compared to all communities.

According to the report of the commission for SC & ST 1992-93 it was found that the dropout rates among SCs and STs are declining, but it increases considerably from Primary to Secondary levels. It is also found that the literacy attainment among Scheduled Castes in some States has increased, it ranges between 19.49 per cent in Bihar and 79.66 per cent in Kerala as per 1991 Census. The State of Maharashtra occupies the tenth position in terms of SC literacy rate (56.66%). The enrollment ratio among SCs is

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4 Dubey and Mathur, op. cit, pp. 170.
somewhat satisfactory but the drop out rate after 8th standard needs to be controlled. The proportions in the total enrolment at undergraduate and P.G. levels in arts in 1979-80 in India were 9.84 per cent and 11.78 per cent and for SCs & STs, 2.72 per cent and 2.42 per cent respectively which is much less than their proportion of population in the total population. In sciences and vocational courses their representation is much less. Therefore, the overall impact of educational policy and programmes is not up to the expectations though their position is improving but at a very slow rate which needs to be augmented.

An important underlying implication of this policy was that education would be foremost avenue for providing improved and better life channels. Therefore they provided reservation to enter the portals of educational institutions at all levels. This understanding is based on the assumption that there was a direct relationship between education particularly higher education and employment opportunities and jobs in the expanding, executive and judicial set up. Since the drop-out rate continues to high among the SCs/STs, therefore the ameliorative effect of education on then is comparatively far less.

2.2.3 Job Reservations

Article 335 of the Constitution of India instructs the State to take into consideration the claim of the members of Scheduled Castes into appointment of various services and Article 16 enables the State to provide for reservation of seats in Public services in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. At all India level the percentages of reservations prescribed for SCs and STs i.e. 15 per cent and 7½ per cent respectively for open competition, and 16 per cent for SCs & and 7½ per cent for STs for otherwise than by open competition are applied while making direct recruitment to group A & B posts, whereas for group C & D posts local/regional percentages have been prescribed on the basis of their population share as per 1981 (or 1991) census in those areas. The qualifications for recruitment and promotions are also relaxed in their case. Though some progress has been made since independence, the scheduled casts and Scheduled Tribes have still a long way to go before they can occupy all the positions reserved for them at the upper echelons of administration. The positions of class I of the Central Government were occupied by SCs in 1959 were 1.18 per cent, which increased to 4.75 per cent in

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*Ibid, pp. 65*
1979. In case of STs, it increased from 0.16 per cent to 0.94 per cent during the same period.\(^7\)

Table 2.1 also very explicitly reveals that the representation of both SCs & STs is far less in case of class A & B categories but it is much higher in case of groups C & D than their prescribed percentage of reservation. It is generally found that despite the availability of qualified SC/ST candidates, they are ignored on the plea that the suitable candidates for the given posts were not available.

**Table No. 2.1**

**Representation of SCs/STs in Services as on 1-1-1992**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>65,456</td>
<td>6,331</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1,914</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>98,519</td>
<td>11,399</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>2,349</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>23,34,003</td>
<td>3,68,494</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>73,739</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>11,61,413</td>
<td>2,42,485</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>78,375</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Excluding Sweepers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1,90,926</td>
<td>12,772</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>3,161</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1,61,569</td>
<td>14,899</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>4,765</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12,56,636</td>
<td>2,11,392</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>1,02,108</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5,43,519</td>
<td>1,26,358</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>52,758</td>
<td>9.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Excluding Sweepers.

Source: NC for SCs & STs, 1992-93, P.77

The candidates from the privileged caste category are mostly appointed by making some manipulations by the employers. More often than not, it is because of the prejudices of the recruiting authority against SC and ST candidates that operate against their interests. It is generally seen in Maharashtra and other parts of India as well if a SC candidate applies for the higher rank open post, may be in teaching or administration, is hardly selected despite his/her better academic performances. Unless, they will be educationally, economically and politically empowered, this sort of practice will continue. Everything can be brought under law but cannot be put into actual practices until it comes from the mind of the upper caste people.

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Due to certain pressures from the Government and Social Organizations, the percentage of Scheduled Castes representation in higher rank of A & B class jobs is on the increasing trend. Their representation in Govt. services is given in Table 2.1.

### Table 2.2

Percentage of Seats in Government Services Filled by Scheduled Castes 1946-1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>8.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>13.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>16.36</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.37</td>
<td>19.32</td>
<td>19.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 2.3 Eradication of Untouchability and Socio-Economic Exploitation

The untouchability was the major hurdle for their progress. It was the foremost taste for the Govt. to eradicate untouchability after independence. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, thought over it very seriously that until the practice of untouchability is made an offence and punishable, it cannot be uprooted easily. Therefore, as the Article 17 of constitution, the provision is made, that untouchability and its practice in any form is forbidden and if any body will practice will be an offence and punishable in accordance with law. This practice in urban areas has declined considerably but in some backward rural areas untouchability is still practiced. It is one of the basic causes of their backwardness, which is still in practice in rural areas. But Mahars in Maharashtra have become very strong go against such caste based discrimination and victimization.

In order to make these constitutional provisions more effective the following enactments have been made:

(i) The Untouchability (offence) Act, 1955, later amended and retitled as the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955,

(ii) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and


Despite all these constitutional provisions and enactments, there are cases of economic and social exploitation and atrocities on the Scheduled Castes.
The atrocities committed on the Scheduled Castes have been increasing every year. For instance, in the State of Maharashtra, there were 363 cases of atrocities in 1989 increased to 489 in 1990 and to 573 in 1991. Similarly, at all India level such cases were 15,799, 17,667 and 17,646 respectively. So they are also proved as toothless enactments, which could not yield fruitful results.

2.3.1 Plan Efforts by State
From the First Five Year Plan, a policy of positive discrimination was adopted and emphasis was laid on growth with special justice. This was continued in all the successive Five Year Plans. Several developmental schemes were framed and implemented by the Central as well as the State Governments and other agencies. The Plan expenditure on the Welfare of SCs (Rs. 7.08 crore) and STs (Rs. 19.83 crore) was 26.91 crore in First Five Year Plan which reached to Rs. 296.19 crore (SCs Rs. 220.07 crore & STs Rs. 76.12 crore) during Fifth Five Year Plan. During these Five Year Plans along with other some financial outlays over the programmes for the upliftment of these downtrodden sections, have not yielded substantial changes in them due to extremely slow pace of development.

2.3.2 Special Component Plan For The Scheduled Castes
The special component plan (SCP) was designed to channelise the flow of funds primarily for raising the income levels of the Scheduled Castes who come from the poorest strata of the society. During the earlier plans the processes of their development was significantly slow and could not yield the expected results. Hence this strategy of Special Component Plan (SCP) for them was adopted. During the Sixth Plan an amount of Rs.3614.66 crore was earmarked under the SCP which was 7.66 per cent of the total state plan outlay of the states implementing the SCP is implemented in 21 states (including Maharashtra) and three Union Territories (Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry) which was continued in 1992-93 also. During the Annual Plan 1992-93, an amount of 3091.53 crores or 10 per cent of the total state plan outlay was earmarked and hardly 82.90 kper cent was spent.8

8 N.C for SC & ST, 1992-93.
2.3.3 Special Central Assistance

Apart from Special Component Plan (SCP), the provision of Special Central Assistance (SCA) was also made for the development of Scheduled Castes, which actually commenced in 1979-80 with a provision of Rs.5 crores. The SCA is allocated for implementing the SCP on the basis of percentage of SC population in the State/UT or the percentage of SC families covered by composite Economic Development Programmes in the plan to enable them to cross the poverty line. In 1992-93 an amount of Rs. 248.80 crore was allocated under SCA to various states and the total allocation during the Eighth Plan period was of the order of Rs. 1125 crore. In the state of Maharashtra, it was Rs. 16.98 crore out of the total 288.80 crore in 1992-93.9

2.3.4 Scheduled Caste Development Corporations

The Scheduled Castes Development Corporations in the States are envisaged to interface between the poor Scheduled Castes entrepreneurs and the financial institutions in respect of economic development. Such corporations have been set up in 19 states and four Union Territories. The main function of this sort of schemes is mobilisation of institution credit for economic development of Scheduled Castes entrepreneurs by functioning as catalyst promoters and guarantors.

The Government of India provides assistance to these corporative in the ratio of 49:51. During 1978-79, the amount released by the Govt. of India was Rs. 55 lakh, which increased to 1350 lakh in 1983-84 and the contribution made by the State Governments was Rs. 710.55 lakh and 1364.40 lakh during the same period.10 This is also called as National SC/ST Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC).

During 1992-93, 5.35 lakh families were covered by the schemes of corporations which were considerably higher than the previous year (4.52 lakhs). During 1993-94, an amount of Rs. 1.38 crore (4.70%) was released to the State of Maharashtra out of Rs. 29.35 crore for States/UTs as Central share. This National SC/ST Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) was set up in 1989 as a Govt. Company, and its authorised and paid up share capital was Rs. 125 crore in 1993-94. Since its inception in 1989 till 31-3-1994 the corporation has assisted as many as 1,68,826 SC and ST persons under various schemes costing Rs. 43,016 lakhs. The share of the NSFDC amounts to

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9 Ibid, p. 50.

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Rs.21,302.19 lakh, representing 49.52 per cent of the total cost of the schemes. A significant proportion of the funding by the NSFDC has been for the schemes to bring about a change in the occupational status of the SC & ST main workers which was unduly biased towards the primary sector. The overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries under the schemes funded by the NSFDC were belonged to the Scheduled Castes (86%) and the rest 14 per cent belong to Scheduled Tribes. The per capita expenditure in the State of Maharashtra from the NSFDC funds was Rs. 26000/- which is much higher than the average per capital investment at the national level (Rs. 13000) and between 1989 and 31-3-94 3441 Scheduled Caste and 662 Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries were covered in Maharashtra.11

2.3.5 Co-operatives
It is another programme for their (SCs) economic uplift, but the provision made for the co-operatives for the Scheduled Castes under the state sector were quite meager. The arrangement made for this purpose in the budget of Maharashtra State was praiseworthy but very little in other states. Out of the allocation of Rs. 1.97 crore made during the Third Five Year Plan under the State Sector, Rs. 1.86 crore were provided in Maharashtra State for financial assistance to the industrial co-operatives and co-operative housing societies for the Scheduled Castes. Thus only Rs. 10.81 lakh were provided in the remaining states for the same purpose.12 The important co-operative societies for Scheduled Castes are industrial co-operatives, co-operative housing societies, poultry co-operative societies, co-operative schemes for dairy schemes, co-operative farming societies, co-operative leather works, basket makers & co-operatives etc. The co-operative societies in rural Maharashtra are very common but the non-SC/ST persons manage mostly these and major part of its benefits goes to high Hindu caste people. Among the SC/ST persons benefited are those who are mostly comparatively well off and/or have good connections with politicians and managers of such schemes, otherwise the deserving families are left out.

The study MFAL conducted in ten districts of the country by RBI in 1973, found that till 1972 no agricultural labour of SC community was enrolled as member of primary Agricultural co-operative credit societies (PACSs) in six out of ten districts

through MFAL was started in 1969. In several projects agricultural labourers had absolutely no access to co-operative credit facilities.\textsuperscript{13}

2.4 Land Reforms

In India as a whole, the majority of population is rural based (74\%) but it is highly pronounced in case of Scheduled Castes (81\%) and 74.5 per cent of SCs working population is eking out their livelihood either as cultivators or agricultural labourers. In the State of Maharashtra, the percentage of rural population (61.31 \%) in general as well as among the Scheduled Castes (63.39\%) is comparatively less than what it is at the national level (1991). In this industrial state also, 62.47 per cent SC workers are dependent on agriculture. Out of which, 48.08 per cent are landless agricultural labourers (1991). Therefore the land reform policy was considered as a solution to raise the economic status of the poor peasantry class especially the Scheduled Castes by providing the surplus land to them and protection against exploitation by the rich landlords, the land on which they work. The objectives of the land reform policy like abolition of intermediary tenures, tenancy reforms, ceiling on ownership of agricultural holdings, consolidation of holdings, compilation and updating the land records and distribution of ceiling surplus and other types of land to the landless poor families, had been set during the Sixth Plan at all India level.

The percentage share holdings of Scheduled Castes was 11.3 per cent in 1980-81 and slightly increased to 12.4 per cent in 1985-86 and their percentage share in the area operated increased from 7.0 per cent to 7.7 per cent, which is much less than the percentage of SC population in both 1981 (15.47\%) and 1991 (16.48\%) in India. The non-SC/ST population constituted 76.68 per cent in 1981 and 75.64 per cent in 1981, but their share in the number of holdings (81\% in 1980-81 and 79.7\% in 1985-86) and land (82.8\% in 1980-81 and 81.8\% in 1985-86) was much higher than their proportion in the total population.\textsuperscript{14} It evidences that one of the major causes for this malaise is improper and half-hearted implementation of various land reform measures.

Not only this, the following Table 2.3 also concluded that the proportion of SC cultivators in India as a whole and in the State of Maharashtra under study, has declined


\textsuperscript{14} NC for SC & ST, Annual Report, 1993-94, p. 64.
and the percentage of agricultural labourers has increased. The average proportion of SC agricultural labourers in Maharashtra does not indicate any change but change in it has occurred in its rural areas.

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Country</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>18.55</td>
<td>14.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>37.76</td>
<td>25.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Agri. Labourers</td>
<td>48.31</td>
<td>48.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Agri. Labourers</td>
<td>34.48</td>
<td>49.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 1961 & 1991

It shows that the Scheduled Castes who depend heavily on agriculture sector for their livelihood have been losing their land whatever they had over the years. From the status of cultivators even though as marginal or small landholders are becoming landless agricultural labourers. It means there is hardly upward mobility or diversification in their occupational structure.

The land for distribution is available generally from three sources.
(1) reclamation of cultivable waste lands.
(2) surplus lands released through ceilings on agricultural holdings, and
(3) lands made available through the Bhoomi movement, allotment of cultivable wastelands after proper reclamation.\(^\text{15}\)

There are certain lacunas in the ceiling laws and Acts. For instance, in some states it allowed to be applied to individual members of the family. It also provided exemptions for tea, coffee, rubber plantations and other orchards. Consequently, most of the land-owning families managed to retain almost all their lands.

The limit of land ceiling also varies from State to State. There is no uniformity in it, e.g. in the State of Maharashtra, the land ceiling is 18 acres (7.2 ha) in case of land irrigated with two crops, 27 acres (10.8 ha) irrigated with one crop and 54 acres (21.6 ha) for dry land. While in West Bengal, it is 12 acres (4.8 ha), 12 acres (4.8 ha) and 17 acres

(6.8 ha) respectively. 16 The Government under land ceiling Act is taking whatever the
land is found beyond this limit with the landowner.

2.4.1 Distribution of Surplus Land

As per the Land Reforms Section of Ministry of Rural Development, 29.41 lakh hectares
of land had been declared surplus in various states by the end of March, 1994. As against
this, more than 87 per cent (25.712 lakh ha) had taken under its possession. Out of
25.712 lakh ha of land taken under possession, 78.22 per cent (or 20.232 lakh ha) was
distributed to about 4 million beneficiaries. The area distributed to Scheduled Castes,
Scheduled Tribes and others contributed 35 per cent (7.016 lakh ha), 14 per cent (2.824
lakh ha) and 51 per cent (10.392 lakh ha) respectively. It is important to note that land
distributed to scheduled cates in Maharasra under land reform policy was above 65
thousand hectares in 1996. About 42 thousand SCs were benefited from this. Of the total
areas distributed 222 thousand ha. SCs got about 29 per cent. Of the total beneficiaries in
the state (140.4 thousand) about 30 per cent were from SC community more than 53%
land went to non-SC/STs. Of the total beneficiaries (140.4 thousand belonging to the
non-SC/ST categories in Maharasra. At national level also the percentages of land and
beneficiaries of SC communities constituted about 35 per cent and 36 per cent
respectively. For non-SC/STs the figures were 51 per cent and 50 per cent respectively in
1996 as per NC’s report for SC & ST 1996-97 & 1997-98. Since the persons involved in
distribution of surplus land mostly come from privileged family and they manipulate the
benefits in favour of their own people. Some time the land given to the SC families is
taken back or transferred to non-SC/ST persons. Being socially and economically weak,
SC persons are unable to raise their voice against high Caste landlords. If they do so,
their survival is put at stake. Ground reality is that down-troddens are hardly benefited
from such schemes though such programmes are made in view of raising their economics
status. And whatever the land is being provided to SC families mostly unproductive. A
large proportion of land was also under litigation and unfit for cultivation.17

Out of the total area not available for distribution, 1.42 lakh hectares have been
classified as unfit for cultivation. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal
Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal have reported high area under this category.

16 N.C. for SC & ST, 1993-94, p. 69
In the State of Maharashtra as per point 5A of the 20 point programme, the target of surplus land was 1,19,92 hectares but the achievement was 6.86 ha or 5.72 per cent during 1993-94.¹⁸

2.4.2 Effectiveness of Land Reform Policy

In reality, it is found that land reform policy has not made much impact as the land in respect of which ownership rights have been given to the tenants constitutes little more than 4 per cent of the total estimated land with the tenants. However, notable success has been made in recording of tenancies and in securing rights in some states like Assam, Kerala and West Bengal and in other States, the tenancy legislation, wherever it exists, it does not provide security to them. Even where it had been, the landlords had managed to circumvent the law under the grab of personal cultivation.

In West Bengal, the land reform programme has been criticised on the ground that it perpetuates the institution of tenancy. The Kerala model received the wrath of the critics because in conferring ownership rights on tenants, no distinction was made between those who only supervised cultivation and those who contributed their labour in cultivation. This naturally meant that the benefits of the reform could accrue also to the upper strata of tenants operating their holdings with hired labour.¹⁹

As per the tenancy legislation the rent should not be more than 1/5th or 1/4th of the gross produce after confirmation of ownership rights to the tenant, but it is hardly followed. Therefore, the tenancy reforms have not been successful.

The land reform was in the air before the enactment of laws particularly before 1972. The laws enacted before 1972 contained many loopholes which enabled the big landlords to circumvent them and retain possession of much bigger chunks of agricultural holdings than was permissible.

The Planning Commission Panel on Land Reforms indicated the magnitude of eviction. In Bombay between 1948 and 1951, the number of protected tenants declined from 1.7 million to 1.3 million (or by 20%). In Hyderabad (Now Andhra Pradesh),

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 72
between 1951 and 1955, the number declined by 57 per cent and the area held by them by 59 per cent\textsuperscript{20}.

It is further estimated that between 1951 and 1954, 10 percent tenants purchased their land, 2.4 per cent legally evicted, 22 per cent illegally evicted and 17 per cent had voluntarily surrendered their claims to land. In some cases tenants were unable to pay the enhanced rents. In most of the cases force has been used for eviction.\textsuperscript{21}

Incorrect and incomplete land records help the landowners in evading ceiling laws. The malafide transfers reduced the quantities of surplus of land. For instance, in Bihar, it is estimated that over a period of 10 years ending with 1962, nearly 5 lakh acres were transferred over the normal rate of transfers i.e. 68 thousand hectares of land annually.\textsuperscript{22}

How the land reform failed? It is because of the fact that landowners surrendered inferior and uncultivable land while they kept superior land with them. Not only this, in many cases surplus land surrendered, was in unauthorised occupation of landlords. In other cases, the tenants were compelled to surrender the land to the landlords as the poors, particularly the Scheduled Castes, unable to go against them.

Even out of 18.36 lakh hectares donated under the Bhoodan Scheme, only 9.31 lakh ha have been distributed till April 22, 1994 and the balance (50%) still remains for distribution because of number of complications.\textsuperscript{23} The main reason for the poor implementation of land reforms has been the lack of political will.

2.5 Anti-Poverty Programmes

Most of the anti-poverty programmes aim at generation of employment and income of rural people, specially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes so that their standard of living can be raised. This is the responsibility of both the Central and State Governments to develop their skills which may enable them, specially the youth, to break away from traditional occupation.

Some of the important developmental programmes and their effectiveness on the poor people in general and on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in particular, are discussed here.

\textsuperscript{20} Govt. of India (1988): Occasional Papers (first series), Dept. of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, p. 6
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p. 78
2.5.1 Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

A massive Integrated Rural Development (IRDP) was launched on 2nd October, 1980 (during the 6th Five Year Plan) throughout the country and it envisaged the coverage of the poorest of the poor in rural population.

The concept of IRDP based on the knowledge of the local needs, the Finance Minister introduced resource endowment and potentialities in the budget speech in 1976. The programme was initially commenced in 20 selected districts in the country. Thereafter, it was reviewed in 1978-79 to integrate in methodology and approach the major on-going Special Programmes of Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA), Command Area Development (CAD) Programme, and Drought-Prone Area Programme (DPAP). All these principal components of these three programmes were integrated in a new programme of IRD which was taken up in 2300 blocks in 1978-79 and finally, in 1980 it was implemented throughout the country. Each IRD block was given an allocation of Rs.5 lakh per year over and above in allocation available under programmes.24

The main objective of IRDP is to raise the families identified poorest of the poor of target groups above the poverty line in rural areas by providing productive assets and inputs and additional employment opportunities.

The target of the coverage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe families which was 30 per cent in Seventh Plan has been raised to 50 per cent from April 1990. The target groups consist of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans and craftsmen.

Up to 1978-79, the IRDP was a Central Scheme and 100 percent funds were released by the Central Government and during 1979-80 the funding was shared 50:50 bases between Centre and States. In case of Union Territories, it was 100 per cent. "Now the pattern of subsidy is 25 per cent for small farmers, 33.33 per cent for marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are extended 50 per cent subsidy.25

During 1978-79, 6,24,288 and 1979-80, 14,75,448 families were assisted to cross the poverty line and out of which, 30 per cent were SC/ST families. During Sixth Plan (1980-86) the target was 30 per cent but actual achievement in case of SCs/STs, it was

\[\text{References:}\]
39.02 per cent. About 56 per cent SC families were below poverty live in rural Maharashtra in 1983-84 and about 45 per cent in urban areas\textsuperscript{26}. Still a large proportion of SCs in rural areas are stricken with poverty.

The following Table 2.4 reveals that out of the total 18.75 lakh families assisted under IRDP, the coverage of SC and ST families were 36.73 per cent and 14.69 per cent respectively during 1992-93.

Table 2.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>22.52</td>
<td>25.37</td>
<td>112.66</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>36.08</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>15.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>20.69</td>
<td>110.33</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>36.73</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>14.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A scheme entitled "Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas" (DWCRA) was launched in September, 1982, as a sub-scheme of IRDP, with the objective of focussing attention on women below the poverty line so as to improve their economic status by creating opportunities for income generation activities. It also considered improving the survival of young children (0-6 years) and women (14-45 years) and the quality of their lives within the context of the family, aiming at those below poverty line in selected backward areas.

It is observed that in the whole process of implementation of IRDP, women were, by and large, overlooked. The participation of women in this programme has been significantly low. Women beneficiaries constituted only 7 per cent of the total persons assisted during the 6th plan (1980-85). Therefore, launching a specific and special programme (DWCRD) for the improvement of their living condition, was strongly felt and accordingly intended to implement. Initially, it was implemented in two districts (Osmanabad and Bhandara) of Maharashtra State, later on, it was extended to other areas also. The scheme (DWCRA) was designed to operate through groups, since individual ventures may not be effective due to the existing socio-economic constraints operating in regard to rural women. Hence, the homogeneous groups, each with a membership of 10 - 15 are being formed and advised to undergo for training depending upon their interest and convenience. Each group of women was being paid Rs. 15,000/- but now it is increased to Rs. 25,000/- to run the small scale business such as papad making, carpet

\textsuperscript{26} N.C. for SC & ST 1995-96.
making etc. The information available for Kolhapur district revealed that 100 groups of such poverty stricken women were assisted and they were distributed Rs. 25 lakh. For this purpose, Rs. 10 lakh each contributed by Central and State Governments and 5 lakh by UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund).

There are frequent reports about the existence of widespread mal practices in the implementation of various poverty alleviating programmes. It has been found that ineligible families were selected for assistance. The PEO (Planning Evaluation Organisation), Planning Commission found 26 per cent families were ineligible, the corresponding figures in NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and RBI (Reserve Bank of India) surveys were 15 and 18 per cent respectively. In 1985-86, the selection of ineligible families was 9 per cent.27 Such a type of mal practice must be there in the subsequent periods also, but the trend is coming down.

The instructions issued by RBI that no collateral security should be insisted for loans up to Rs. 10,000, but there are instances that the Bank managers insisting on mortgaging of fixed assets owned by a beneficiary. So some sort of tactics and pressures are being brought on the poor beneficiaries to squeeze them out of their eligible assistance.

There are cases of collusive lending in case of cattle loans also. The same cattle heads are taken round and shown as being given to different beneficiaries under this IRD programme. Such leakages amounted to Rs. 25-30 per cent of the total loan given to cattle purchase as estimated by the Audit Reports.28 This is a serious case of corruption where the block and bank officials in collusion with beneficiaries share the subsidy and concessional loans, provided under this IRDP. All this proves that there is a mal practice and misuse of funds and therefore, the rate of impact of such programmes on SCs & STs and others are very slow.

2.5.2 Training of Rural Youth For Self Employment (TRYSEM)
The training of rural youth for self-Employment (TRYSEM) at national level was started as a centrally sponsored scheme in August 1979 as a facilitating component of the IRD Programme to equip the rural youth (18-35 years) in technical and entrepreneurial skills. They are selected from the families Below Poverty Line (BPL). Priority is given to rural

28 Ibid, p. 22
Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and their minimum coverage has been at 30 per cent of the total youths selected for training and women - 33.33%.

Against the target of 10.05 lakh youths to be trained during the Sixth Plan, 9.4 lakhs (93.53%) were actually trained. Of the 9.4 lakh youths trained, 4.64 lakh youths (49.36%) were self-employed. The members of SCs & STs accounted for 31.5 per cent of the total persons trained and women constituted 34.8 per cent. Since then there has been a continuous increase in their coverage 42 per cent in Seventh Plan and 44 per cent and 45 per cent in the Annual Plans of 1990-91 and 1991-92 respectively. In 1992-93, out of 2.76 lakh youths trained under the programme, 1.16 lakhs were from SCs & STs.

The information available for Kolhapur district (1993-94) shows that out of the total trained youths (785), 227 were from Scheduled Caste community which constituted less than 30 per cent.

Under TRYSEM Scheme also, many of the rural youths trained, could not set up independent self-employment ventures because of lack of confidence and paucity of raw material supply.

2.5.3 Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)

The Government of Maharashtra initiated the EGS in 1972-73 to provide gainful employment in approved works to all unskilled persons in the state who needed work and were prepared to work in rural areas. This was involved from the relief works programmes that were under taken when famine conditions prevailed in the state. In the initial stages, Canal excavation works, contour bunding and minor irrigation projects for a major proportion of expenditure under the EGS and thereafter, road works and nalla bunding works gained importance. But minor irrigation projects, specially percolation tanks continued the major exponent under EGS for generating employment. Out of 385 percolation tanks started since the inception of the scheme, only 98 were completed till March 1983. A sum of Rs. 216 crore had been used between 1972-73 and 1979 resulting in 5627 lakh man days of employment.

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The findings of the PEO revealed that EGS has catered more to cultivators of larger holdings than to the requirements of the landless agriculture labour and smaller cultivator households (up to 2 ha holdings) would seem to be strange. On the other hand, Dandekar has concluded that the EGS has made an appreciable impact on the employment problem of the weaker sections, defined as landless households and 10 percent of the smallest cultivators. The PEO study has confirmed that the benefits of EGS have gone more to the non-target groups than to the target groups when their respective requirements for employment were taken into consideration. In view of this, the finding of the PEO study seems to have basis.

Whereas Dandekar has only considered of workers on the project without considering how many workers were actually requiring or available for usage employment under EGS, which could not bring the reality.\(^3^4\)

**2.5.4 National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)/Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)**

Both these programmes were started in October 1980 and August 15, 1983 respectively to improve and expand employment opportunities to the unemployed under-employed persons in rural areas specially the rural landless with a view to providing guarantee of employment to at least one person of every landless labour household up to 100 days in a year. Apart from this, other things like creation of durable community assets, for strengthening the rural infrastructure for the rapid growth of rural economy and for improvement of nutritional status and living standard of the rural poor, particularly the landless SC & St persons.

Public Account Committee in its 94th Report (1986-87) on NREP/RLEGP has reported that more than Rs. 37.9 crore\(^3^5\) out of 492 crore\(^3^6\) were utilized on scheme and purposes outside the scope of this programme during 1983-84. It proves that such diversion of funds must also be taking place in other areas also.

There are also cases of infliction of muster rolls and misappropriation of funds. Low wages are being paid them prescribed ones and sub-standard materials are procured in the construction works from the generation of employment under these schemes.

2.5.5 The Food For Works Programme

It was launched in 1977, gained momentum in 1978 with the objective to improve the income and nutritional levels, was redesigned as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) from 1980-81. It is found that food grains under the rural employment are being misutilized. There are instances where the entire quantity of food intended to be distributed as part of the wages in kind were diverted to flour mills or sold in the open market at higher prices.

2.5.6 Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY)

The Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) was launched in 1989 by merging the above discussed (NREP & RLEGP) programmes. This programme aims to provide employment at least 90 to 100 days of wage employment per person in backward districts of the country. In 1993-94, this programme underwent some modification and was implemented in three combinations. In the first stream two schemes viz. Indira Awas Yojana and Million Wells Scheme, are being implemented. Under the second stream, an intensified JRY is being implemented in 120 identified backward districts.

Under the third stream, special and innovative projects are taken up.

The financial requirements are shared between the Central and the State Government in ratio of 80:20. Funds are made available to the Gram Panchayat through Zilla Parishads (District Rural Development Agencies for the implementation of this programme in which preference has to be given to SCs and STs and freed bonded labourers. It is also mentioned that at the village panchayat level, 15 per cent of the annual allocation must be spent on works which directly benefit SCs and STs. Out of the total resources under the programme 10 per cent and 30 per cent are earmarked for Indira Awas Yojana and the Million Wells Scheme respectively.

Under the period 1989-90 to 1993-94 the target was to generate 43,323.84 lakh man-days and the actual generation (under JRY) was of the order of 42,825.94 lakh man days (98.54%). The share of SCs and STs was 37.46 per cent and 18.12 per cent respectively. The Million Wells Scheme and Indira Awas Yojana programmes were meant exclusively for SCs & STs and freed bonded labourers but since 1993-94 Small Marginal Farmers from non-SC/ST groups are also being covered under the Million Wells Scheme. 1,49,335 wells were constructed during 1993-94 against 1,80,995 in 1992-93, a decline was 17.5 percent in terms of physical achievement. Under the Indira
Awas Yojana, 1,92,585 houses were constructed in 1992-93 and 3,59,933 in 1993-94. The increase in the constructed houses was 87 per cent in India as a whole.\textsuperscript{37}

In the State of Maharashtra, 15000 houses were constructed in 1985-86 and only 8000 in 1986-87\textsuperscript{38}. Further, the target was set up to construct 19, 827 houses in 1994-95 and the provision was Rs. 29.54 crore. As against this, 22,812 (15\%) of the target houses were constructed in 1994-95 in the State in 1994-95. \textsuperscript{39}

In Kolhapur district, 370 out of the 378 target houses were constructed by March end, 1993 and the total expenditure occurred was Rs.39.43 lakhs which means Rs. 10,656 were spent on one house.\textsuperscript{40} The numbers of houses constructed for weaker sections up to March 1996 were 1305.\textsuperscript{41}

\section*{2.6 Conclusion}
In the preceding discussion an attempt is made to assess the impact of developmental programmes and schemes implemented by the central / State Governments after independence to raise the social and economic status of the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra in comparison to India, based on the reports and the work done by various agencies, and scholars in the recent past.

It is reported that the programmes and policies pertaining to raising the literacy and educational status has had some bearing on them but still a lot has to be done. Pre-matric and post-matric scholarships have been awarded to Scheduled Caste students though the students of Mahar community in the state of Maharashtra received a major proportion of these scholarships. Due to such provisions the literacy rate among them is increasing steadily. It is reported that absolute gap in literacy attainment between SCs and non-SC/STs is increasing. But in reality, in relative terms, the gap has mitigated.

The provision of job reservation for SC/STs is not generally whole-heartedly implemented. It is found that the representation of SCs in the ‘A’ and ‘B’ class services is still much less than their proportion in the total population. Whereas these representation in the low cadre and low paid jobs is generally much higher than their

\textsuperscript{38} GOI (1988): Indira Awas Yojna, Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{41} District Rural Development Dept – Kolhapur 1995-96, p. 25.
population proportion. The reservation quota for the higher posts is generally not fulfilled for the simple reason to adjust the non-SC/ST persons against the reserve posts in Maharashtra and elsewhere in India also by declaring non-suitability of the SC/ST candidates despite their good academic record and better performances.

The untouchability offence Act 1955 or Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 has made some dent on urban areas but in rural areas directly or indirectly the untouchability is still in practice in one form or the other. It is one of the reasons, which kept them so backward in their own country.

Among the various poverty eradicating programmes, for instance, IRDP, TRYSEM, EGS, JRY etc. have shown relatively better performance, but the statistics they give, show highly exaggerated results. Funds are misused and a lot of corruption is involved.

Under the land reform scheme, which is most important to reduce the rural poverty. About 42000 SCs have been benefited under this scheme in Maharashtra. But still the proportion and the quality of land they own do not solve their livelihood problem. Therefore, about 48 per cent of the 62 per cent SC workers in agricultural sector, work as landless agricultural labourers some times the land provided to them is taken back by the landlord by putting some social pressure on him.

In each and every developmental programme for weaker sections and other poor families from non-SC/ST population, there is corruption and misuse of funds. In some cases, the separate statistics for SC/ST beneficiaries are not given just to hush up the reality. The impact of developmental programmes has shown that the progress is going on, no doubt, but at a very slow rate and that is also not up to the mark what it is expected. The method of identification of families below poverty line is every time changed so as to show the number of poor families is brought down rather than by improving their actual condition through these programmes.

It is a common practice that large number of other than target families assisted, fake roll registers are prepared, cheap and sub-standard material used for projects under construction. In order to minimize this sort of malpractice in the implementation of developmental schemes and programmes, very strict action should be taken against the officers involved in such cases.

Even after land reforms, the caste based feudal structure in the villages has remained more or less intact and the share of the weaker sections in the local Govt., let it
be Panchayat, the Block or the District, has been much less than their proportion in the population.

It is felt that the employment generation programmes are of utmost importance for the economic development of the weaker sections and it should be seen that the benefits are reaching the most needy people.