Chapter – III

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION AND GROWTH OF SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION

3.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The term “Scheduled Castes” appeared for the first time in the Government of India Act 1935. Prior to this date they were generally known as “Depressed Castes”, which were systematically categorised by Hutton, the Census Commissioner of India in 1931. The list of Scheduled Castes is included in the schedule by the president of India by public notification under the article of 341 of Indian Constitution.

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the spatial distribution and growth of Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra State between 1961 and 1991. The spatial patterns of distribution and growth of the Scheduled Castes would be necessary to understanding causes of poverty and discrimination. The SCs are mostly concentrated in the alluvial plains and live by working on the land, which belongs to others. Gosal and Mukerjee (1972) in their all India study have mentioned that people belonging to Scheduled Caste community are mostly concentrated in those areas where feudal system has persisted over a long period of time and where cash crop farming has gained importance. In such a system Scheduled Caste persons cultivate the land either as tenants or agricultural labours apart from doing their traditional vocations. The most potent factor of spatial distribution and concentration of Scheduled Castes in different areas are the service they provide to upper castes. Their distribution pattern is also determined by socio-economic attributes of agriculture, religious conversion and the presence of other population groups such as Scheduled Tribes.

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3.2 AN OVERVIEW

The proportion of Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra was 5.63 per cent (2.23 million) in 1961, which surprisingly increased to 11.09 per cent (8.8 million) in 1991. At the national level their share in the total population augmented to 16.48 per cent (1991) from 14.67 per cent (1961). It explicates that there has been a very significant change in the proportion as well as the growth of Scheduled Caste population in the state under study than at the national level. Apart from their natural growth, the in-migration of persons belonging to this downtrodden section also contributed to their growth.

Out of 59 Scheduled Caste communities in Maharashtra the first three viz. Mahars (36.79%), Mangs (27.47%), Chambhars (19.32%) are numerically important which in totality constitute 83.58 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra (1981). All the 59 castes of this weaker section are generally disseminated all over Maharashtra but they have some specific concentrations. For instance, Mahars of the total Scheduled Caste population are concentrated in the northeastern, northwestern and southern parts of Maharashtra varying from 45 to 60 and above 60 per cent. In the dry region of Marathwada, their proportion is very low ranging from less than 15 to 30 per cent. But in this region the share of Mangs among all Scheduled Castes is comparatively high that varies between 45 and 60 per cent. The Chambhar community is more inclined towards the coastal region where they are between 30 and 45 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population.

Of the total Mahar population in the state, Mahars are highly concentrated in Kolhapur district (11.17%) and followed by Solapur (9.44%), Ahmadnagar (8.74%), Bhandara (8.12%), Osmanabad (7.54%) and Nashik (6.39%). In these 6 districts they constitute more than 51 per cent. Similarly, Mangs, the second most dominating caste, are highly concentrated in Osmanabad (11.04%), Pune (10.37%), Nanded (9.06%) and Solapur (7.50%). Chambar is highly clustered in Greater Bombay (17.94%) followed by Solapur (8.50%), Pune (6.71%) and Ahmadnagar district (5.26%).

Mahars having no specific skill as the other two castes, therefore, they are mostly engaged in the agriculture sector as agriculture labourers in southern Maharashtra, sugarcane belt and northeastern, rice and cotton regions. The hereditary occupation of Mahar community was village service and skinning dead animals. Apart from their assistance to Patil, the village chief, they also acted as guides and messengers to public officers travelling on duty. Chambhars tan hides and work in leather and Mangs are a
rope and basket making community. Mahars in return for their service were given ‘Watan’ usually a piece of land, which they used to cultivate for their living. In two caste hierarchy, the Chambhar is at the top (most skilled), since he manufactures only finished goods, the Mahar comes next in rank, being extractor of leather, while Mang occupies the lowest rank in the Scheduled Caste hierarchy.

3.3 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

The number of persons belonging to Scheduled Caste population increased from 5.63 per cent to 11.09 per cent between 1961 and 91. Over the period of 30 years, there has been a significant change not only in their share in total population but also in their distribution pattern in Maharashtra state. This change is evident from the fact that in 1961 the minimum proportion of Scheduled Caste population was 1.31 per cent in Raigarh district in Konkan region and the maximum was 13.51 per cent in Bid district of Marathwada region of the state. In 1991 the minimum proportion was 2.79 per cent in Raigarh and maximum 18.84 per cent in Nagpur. The Figures 3.1 and 3.2 clarify the regional variations and changes in their distribution pattern from 1961 to 1991. In 1961, the Scheduled Caste population was highly concentrated in 5 districts with varying proportion of 10 to 15 per cent respectively. These 5 districts viz. Nanded (11.01%), Kolhapur (11.39%), Solapur (12.84%), Osmanabad (13.39%) and Bid (13.51%) are disseminated in parts of southern Maharashtra of sugarcane growing belt and dry Marathwada cotton region. Adjoining the pockets of high proportion of this downtrodden section is the region with moderate share varying between 5 and 10 per cent in which 6 districts viz. Sangli, Satara, Ahmadanagar, Aurangabad, Parbhani and Buldana are included. In the large part of the state, the distribution of this weaker section in 15 districts was very scanty ranged from 1 to 5 per cent respectively. It covers entire coastal

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MAHARASHTRA
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION
SCHEDULED CASTES AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION
1961

Fig. 3.1
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MAHARASHTRA
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION
SCHEDULED CASTES AS PERCENTAGE OF
TOTAL POPULATION
1991

Fig. 3.2
strip, north eastern (Vidarbha region) and northwestern parts. This distribution pattern (Fig.3.1) indicates their proportion in total population was low in less fertile, hilly and tribal areas and where the process of conversion of this section has taken place.

In 1991, the pattern of distribution to a large extent has been altered (Fig.3.2). Not only the percentage range has increased but also the intensity of concentration, which extended from southeastern part to northeastern part of the state (See Figures 3.1 to 3.4). The regions in which, very high share of Scheduled Caste population (15-20 %) covers as many as 7 districts i.e. Solapur, Osmanabad, Nanded, Chandrapur, Bhandara, Nagpur and Amravati. But in the category of low proportion (less than 5%) are two districts, viz. Ratnagiri and Raigarh. Of the rest 17 districts, 6 are in medium (5-10 %) and 11 in the high percentage group (10 to 15%). The Figure 3.2 proves that change in the distribution pattern has occurred all over Maharashtra but the southern Konkan region and tribal areas particularly in north-western part of the state are still showing sparse distribution of Scheduled Caste population (1991). In parts of Vidarbha and Marathwada regions the share of Scheduled Caste population was comparatively less in 1961 but the Buddhist population was quite high, varied between 9 and 17 per cent of the total population respectively. If we add the Scheduled Caste and the Buddhist population together it will exceed 15 per cent of the total population in many of the districts of above-mentioned two regions. The high proportion of Buddhist population in Vidarbha and insignificant share of Scheduled Castes is because of their conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism at Nagpur in 1956. The dot maps (Figs.3.3 and 3.4) reveal that the high denseness of Scheduled Caste was confined to southeastern part of the state but in 1991, it extended towards central and a new patch of high density (which includes Nagpur and Bhandara) developed in northeastern part. The cluster in Bombay is because of its economic importance. But the southern Konkan and tribal areas are having low density of Scheduled Caste population.

The density of Scheduled Caste population in the state increased from 7 in 1961 to 23 persons per sq. km in 1991. Greater Bombay, the economic hub of the country, registered the increase near about four times (282 to 1073). This is because of immigration of people not only from southern Konkan and other parts of the state but also from other states of the country. In 1961, besides Bombay, the relatively high density was in Kolhapur (22), followed by Solapur (16), Osmanabad (14), Bid, Nanded and Sangli (12 each).
MAHARASHTRA
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTE
POPULATION
1961

Fig. 3.3

ONE DOT REPRESENTS
5000 PERSONS
MAHARASTRA
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION
1991

ONE DOT REPRESENTS 5000 PERSONS

Fig. 3.4
In 1991, the density increased all over Maharashtra but Ratnagiri (3) and Raigarh (7) remained with lowest density of Scheduled Caste population. Tribal areas for instance Dhule (10) and Chandrapur districts (15) were also having low density. Barring Bombay, Ratnagiri and Raigarh, the density of Scheduled Caste persons per sq. km. Varied between 10 and 63. The districts with high density (in 1991) were Solapur (33), Osmanabad (36), Bhandara (38), Pune, Nanded (40 each), Kolhapur (50) and Nagpur (63).

3.3.1 Relative Concentration (Location Quotient)
When the proportion of any characteristic in an area is studied in relation to its proportion in the region, the ratio used is known as the ‘Location quotient’.

Table 3.2 reveals that out of 26 districts of the state 17 were having the location quotient values less than one, and in the rest 9 districts the value was above unity in 1961. Districts of Aurangabad and Parbhani were more or less close to the state average (5.63%). In as many as 7 districts viz. Sangli, Ahmadnagar, Nanded, Kolhapur, Solapur, Osmanabad and Bid the concentration of Scheduled Caste population was relatively high.

The number of districts with location quotient less than one has been reduced from 17 to 10 (1961-91) and in the rest of 16 districts of Maharashtra state, the percentage distribution of Scheduled Caste population was above the state average (11.09%) in 1991. The change in the range of minimum and maximum values of location quotient in 1961 (0.23-2.40) and 1991 (0.25-1.70) indicates the dispersion and re-distribution of population and their migration towards Vidarbha region.

3.3.2 Concentration Of Scheduled Caste Population
When the share of numerical strength of a community in an area is computed from the total population of the same community, it gives the index of absolute concentration. To make it more explicit, the proportion of Scheduled Caste population in a district to the total Scheduled Caste population in the state has been calculated to assess the degree of their concentration. As per this index (Table 3.2), the highest proportion of the total Scheduled Caste population was found in Solapur (10.73%) in 1961 and in 1991, the first

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Table 3.2
Maharashtra: Concentration and Relative Concentration of Schedule Caste Population

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rank shifted from Solapur to Greater Bombay (7.39%), which is most industrialised and urbanised district of Maharashtra. In about 8 districts, for instance, Nanded, Pune, G. Bombay, Bid, Ahmadnagar, Kolhapur, Osmanabad and Solapur the percentage share of the total Scheduled Caste population was 57 per cent. In each of these districts, their share was above 5 per cent. In 1991, there were as many as 6 districts viz. Aurangabad, Solapur, Osmanabad, Nagpur, Pune and G. Bombay in which all-together, it constituted about 39 per cent of its total population in the state. Out of these 8 and 6 districts, 4 remained common with the percentage share of 5 per cent in each district in 1961 and 91.
In 1961 two districts of Raigarh (0.62%) and Wardha (0.68%) and in 1991, Raigarh (0.58%) and Ratnagiri (0.80%), the percentage share of Scheduled Caste population in the state was below one per cent. The change in the absolute concentration has occurred all-over Maharashtra, but it is imperative to note the change in Wardha from 0.68 per cent to 1.71 per cent, in Thane from 1.02 per cent to 3.11 per cent in Greater Bombay from 5.55 per cent to 7.39 per cent from 1961 to 1991. District of Greater Bombay was holding 6th rank in 1961 and shifted to first position in terms of percentage share of Scheduled Caste population to total Scheduled Caste population in the state. It clarified not only tremendous growth that has taken place, but also the change in the percentage share and concentration of Scheduled Castes over the 30 years period.

It proves that along with the non-Scheduled Caste population the Scheduled Castes have also been migrating to Greater Bombay, which offers wide range of employment opportunities to the people. It appears that the space problem in Bombay diverted the migration of people to Thane district, which is also a big industrial centre in the state. About half of the power looms of the state are located in Bombay and Thane districts. Nagpur, Solapur and Ahmadnagar are also important handloom centres. Machines are mainly manufactured in Bombay, Thane and Pune; and Satara, Kolhapur, Nagpur and Nashik are its secondary centres. Such types of factors are attracting the population from different corners to these major industrial centres.

3.3.3 Rural-Urban Distribution

Majority of population lives in villages, nevertheless the Scheduled Castes are highly ruralized than their counterpart non-Scheduled Castes in the country as a whole and it also holds true in the state under study. It is evidenced from the fact that in rural areas of Maharashtra state the share of Scheduled Castes (6.13%) in the total population was much higher than in urban areas (4.35%). In 1991, their proportion has increased both in rural (11.47%) and urban areas (10.56%). This decline in the rural urban disparity is because of the processes of modernisation and Babasaheb Ambedkar's slogan for Scheduled Castes to migrate to urban centres to get rid of caste prejudices in rural areas.

In rural areas, they were highly concentrated in Kolhapur, Solapur, Osmanabad and Bid districts, their share varied between 12 and 16 per cent in 1961. Most of the

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northeastern, northwestern and coastal areas displayed insignificant distribution of Scheduled Caste population (Table 3.1).

The percentage distribution range has increased in 1991 and therefore, in five districts viz. Bhandara, Nagpur, Osmanabad, Nanded and Amravati the proportion of Scheduled Castes in rural population was very high, it varied between 16 and 20 per cent. There was not a single district in this category in 1961. In the category of high percentage (12 to 16%), the number of districts increased from 4 in 1961 to 9 in 1991. Even in 1991, the south-Konkan and northwestern parts of the state were relatively less dense.

In urban areas also a significant change was noticed in the distribution of Scheduled Castes within urban population. The percentage distribution range changed from 1.60 to 8.51 per cent (1961) and 3.17 to 20.56 per cent (1991). This has happened due to their migration to urban centres for better educational and employment opportunities in non-agricultural sectors of economy. The significant change has occurred in central and northeastern parts, both in rural and urban areas in 1991. The south-Konkan region and the districts with high tribal concentration in northwestern part of Maharashtra State did not exhibit much change.

In general, very high rural density is found in southern part of Krishna Valley in Maharashtra state i.e. Panchganga and the Warana are the best agro-industrial parts of the state. The black soil and assured rainfall in these parts made agriculture very productive which supports the large rural population. Solapur district, which ranked first in the percentage of Scheduled Castes in total rural population, was mostly concentrated in Bhima-Sinha interfluves, which covers Mohol, South Solapur, Madha and Karmala Talukas in which their percentage was above the district average.

### 3.3.4 Rural-Urban Differentials

The proportion of Scheduled Caste persons in rural and urban areas out of total Scheduled Caste population further proves that they were highly ruralised (78.20%) in 1961 than in 1991 (63.39%). During the same period the percentage of urban Scheduled Castes increased from 21.80 to 36.61 per cent. It is slightly less than the over-all

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population of Maharashtra in urban areas (38.69%) in 1991. In the country as a whole more than 4/5ths of Scheduled Caste population (81.28%) was living in rural and the rest (18.72%) in urban areas. The position of Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra is better than what is in the country as a whole. According to the 1991 census, the proportion of urban Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra (36.61%) was higher than the urban population in the country as a whole (25.71%).

There are as many as 5 districts in which the share of rural Scheduled Caste population was more than 90 per cent in 1961. These districts are Ahmadnagar (91.48%), Nanded (92.08%), Ratnagiri (93.77%), Bid (93.80) and Osmanabad (93.89%). In the category of 80 to 90 per cent, there were 10 districts and 5 districts between 70 and 80 per cent group. But in Nagpur, Pune, Thane, Wardha and Amravati, the position of this community was relatively better where their share in rural areas was below 70 per cent. The minimum proportion of rural Scheduled Castes was (42.60%) in Nagpur and maximum (93.89%) in Osmanabad in 1961.

The position of the Scheduled Caste population has improved in 1991. The minimum percentage of this section in rural areas was in Thane district (17.94%) and maximum in Ratnagiri (90.88%). Ratnagiri was the only district (in 1991) with more than 90 per cent Scheduled Castes in rural sector. The number of districts grouped in 80 to 90 per cent category has also reduced from 10 in 1961 to 8 in 1991.

The pockets of high and very high urban Scheduled Caste population are in northeastern and western parts of the state-both in 1961 and 1991. Barring Greater Bombay, which is 100 per cent urban, Pune (47.87%) and Nagpur (57.40%) were the other two districts with very high percentage of urban Scheduled Castes. In 1991, Nashik (45.24%) and Nagpur (64.43%), Pune (64.50%) and Thane (82.06%) were with very high and extremely high proportion of urban Scheduled Castes. Barring these patches of urban Scheduled Castes, most of the Maharashtra State is having predominance of rural Scheduled Caste population. High agricultural productivity of land is one of the major factors associated with their high percentage in Vidarbha tract, which bears high carrying capacity of land with rice as the principal crop, which requires cheap labour, and the Scheduled Caste population utilises this vast agricultural employment potential\textsuperscript{11}. The cotton cultivation also requires large labour force specially for picking cotton. The low

proportion of Scheduled Caste population in north eastern part, especially in 1961 was due to their mass conversion particularly of the Mahars to Buddhism known as Neobuddhists. About 3 lakh Scheduled Castes changed their religion from Hinduism to Buddhism along with their leader Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at Nagpur in October 1956. The proportion of urban Scheduled Caste population which increased in 1991 over 1961, is because of industrialisation and those who were not absorbed in agriculture, might have migrated to towns and cities which offer more opportunities for gainful employment to Scheduled Caste persons. A very low concentration in Konkan and very high share in Marathwada because of level of agricultural productivity and probably, the administrative history of the region. Could it be, that the depressed classes found less harsh and the society less discriminating in the neighbouring Nizam ruled territory than in other parts of the state dominated by the Marathas and Brahmins. The high concentration in Marathwada, Solapur and even Kolhapur region reflects greater demand for agricultural labour for picking cotton and crushing sugarcane both labour intensive agriculture; the Scheduled Castes work as agricultural labourers.

3.4 CASTE BASED RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

The spatial arrangement of caste-based residences in the villages of India is very peculiar. The most dominant social morphological expression in Indian villages is best seen in most cases in the formation of twin settlements of caste Hindus and the outcastes, and even the Muslims and Christians habitations do not spatially show themselves separately from those of Hindus as do those of out castes. The geographical distribution pattern of houses of high and low caste people in the villages of Maharashtra provides some clues to how and why it has been done so. During survey in Southern Maharashtra and parts of its Konkan region in 1995-96, it is observed that the Scheduled Castes such as Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars etc. live in isolated wadies (i.e. small settlements), located on the out-skirts of the villages separated from the main settlement of high Hindu caste by a natural barrier which might be small stream or nala or a ridge. It can also be a man-made barrier. In some cases, direction of wind, flow of water in the stream/river etc.
are considered important for allotting space to them for residences. Mostly their settlements are located in the low lying or depressed areas. In Matwan village (in Dapoli taluka of Ratnagiri), it is observed that Buddhwadi is segregated from the high caste Mahadik and Morewadies by locating it at some distance in the southeastern direction of the main settlement.

In Kavathe Ekand (Tal. Tasgaon, Dist. Sangli), Maharwada of Mahars, is kept apart by a street. It is also located in the southeastern part of the village settlement area. The Brahmin and Maratha houses are located on a relatively elevated area and the houses of the low caste people are clustered in the low-lying area on the edge of the village.

Sarnobatwadi (Tal. Karvir, Dist. Kolhapur) is located near Kolhapur city at a distance of four kilometres along the Pune-Bangalore highway, the houses of Scheduled Caste category people are clustered in a separate street towards the north-west end of the village. It is generally observed that the low caste inhabited area is on the lower and high caste on the higher side of the villages.

It is inferred here that the site of the low-caste residences e.g. Mahars, Mangs, Chambars etc, as it shows, is in relation to the wind direction, slope etc. and give the shape to the arrangement of the settlements of high and low caste people. This segregation is primarily to maintain the socio-spatial distance between untouchable and high caste people in order to get rid of caste pollution. But this caste based spatial isolation in future may not remain that rigid as it is today, because of shortage and high cost of land due to high growth of population. The processes of modernisation may also have its impact in bringing down the geographical gap but the psychosocial distance will not be reduced so quickly.

3.5 GROWTH OF SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION (1961-1991)

The process of growth of any section of the population varies with time and space. When the population increases between two given points of time in a region or territory is known as growth. It brings change in its overall composition and structure. “Population change is the result of the interaction of three processes: births, deaths and migration. These are the dynamic components of population change. Populations will increase in number when births exceed deaths and in-migrants exceed out-migrants. Similarly population numbers will fall when deaths exceed births and out-migration exceed in-
MAHARASHTRA
GROWTH OF SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION
1961-91

INDEX
GROWTH RATE %

- > 800
- 600 - 800
- 400 - 600
- 200 - 400
- < 200

Fig. 3.5
The different segments of population experience different rates of growth of population depending upon their social and economic standard of living. It is commonly believed that those sections of a society that are socially and economically backward display comparatively a high growth rate.

In this section of the chapter, it is intended to assess the spatial patterns of growth of Scheduled Caste population between 1961 and 1991 in Maharashtra. It is generally believed that the growth of Scheduled Caste population is more than that of their non-Scheduled Caste population. This belief appears quite reasonable in the light of their illiteracy, poverty and poor health conditions. It is evidenced from the 1961 and 1991 census data that the growth of Scheduled Caste population (29.32%) in Maharashtra was much higher than not only of the average growth rate (91.05%) for the country as a whole but also than the Scheduled Caste (114.57%) and non-Scheduled Caste populations (87.00%) in India. It was also found that the growth rate of Scheduled Caste population (29.32%) was three times higher than the growth rate (88.01%) for the non-Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra during the same period. This pattern of growth rate of downtrodden section also holds true in both rural and urban areas. This is due to the fact that for the first time, besides Hindus and Sikhs Buddhists were also brought under the realm of Scheduled Castes by the constitution orders (Amendment) Act, 1990. This was done prior to the conduct of 1991 Census. The SCs particularly, Mahars who were converted to Buddhism got the status of SCs as per 1991 Census. Looking into the details of their growth between 1961 and 1991, it is further noticed that the highest growth rate (95.50%) of Scheduled Caste population was during 1981-91 and lowest was during 1961-71. But in 1971-81, it was 48.05 per cent. The very low growth rate between 1961 and 1971 was because of large number of Scheduled Castes especially Mahars converted to Buddhism. The 1961 census estimated that more than 55 per cent of Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra must have changed their religion to Buddhism. The impact of this religious conversion can also be seen in 1961 and 71. But there after their growth rate increased tremendously. This rapid growth might be due to their high birth rate as compared to the non-Scheduled Caste population, but it could be augmented

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because of in-migration of members of Scheduled Caste community from other states to the industrial pockets of the Maharashtra State.

The district level pattern explicitly shows that the growth in the industrial and urbanised areas is relatively high. The range of growth varied from a minimum of 80.59 per cent in Bid district to a maximum of 1096.81 per cent in Thane district. There are as many as 5 districts viz. Thane (1096.18%) adjoining Greater Bombay in the western part, and Bhandara (1043.99%), Nagpur (1038.53%), Wardha (890.39%) and Chandrapur (827.54%) in the north-eastern part of the state where the growth rate was more than 800 per cent. The very low growth (of less than 200 per cent) was observed in parts of Konkan, Marathwada and southeastern parts of the state (Fig.3.5 and Table 3.3). These are nine districts i.e. Bid (80.59%), Ratnagiri (84.03%), Solapur (108.45%), Kolhapur (109.61%), Ahmadnagar (165.70%), Osmanabad (166.90%), Sangli (171.80%), Parbhani (177.60%) and Dhule (179.60%) in which the growth of the Scheduled Caste population was very low (below 200%). There are 7 districts in the category of low (200-400%) and 4 in the medium (400-600%). But in high growth (600-800%) category there was only Amravati district, adjoining the very high growth region. The comparative study of Figures 3.1 and 3.5 indicated that where the proportion of Scheduled Caste population was high or very high particularly in southern and east-central parts, the growth was low or very low. Barring Thane district, most of Konkan region, northwestern tribal area and large part of central Maharashtra are exhibiting low and very low growth. The medium growth (400-600%) is observed in Bombay, Pune, Aurangabad and Yavatmal districts.

The overall growth pattern of Scheduled Caste population across the state indicated that eastern Vidarbha has attracted the large number of Scheduled Caste labourers for cotton picking and cotton textile industries. Apart from this, in eastern Vidarbha loamy soils and adequate rainfall strengthened by tank irrigation have promoted rice cultivation\(^{18}\) which needs cheap labour has also attributed to the growth of this depressed class. The commercial importance of Nagpur having, its surrounding cotton-producing areas as favourable factor for attracting labour from the south\(^{19}\). The Konkan is a region of not much promising and is the source area of migration to the Bombay metropolitan area. Where there are ample opportunities for male migrants. A high cost of living and acute housing problem in the metropolis discourage migrants from taking their families

\(^{19}\) Ibid, p.128.
with them. Because of housing problem in Bombay, people have started migrating in large number to Thane district and therefore, the growth of Scheduled Caste population in Thane is highest in the state. The high sex ratio in Raigarh (1001), Ratnagiri (1121), Satara (1000) and Bhandara (1012) districts in comparison to its state average (941) in 1991, very explicitly proves the Scheduled Caste male migration from these districts to Bombay, Thane, Pune, Nagpur etc. It holds true for non-Scheduled Caste category also.

Table 3.3

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<td>218.81</td>
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3.5.1 Rural-Urban Growth Pattern

On an average, the growth of Scheduled Caste population in urban Maharashtra was more than twice (560-38%) than in rural (218.81%), between 1961 and 1991. The power looms, textile and other industrial centres have attracted the population including the members of weaker sections who have not been absorbed in the agricultural sector. Because of industrial importance, the urban growth of Scheduled Caste population in Thane was highest (2419.71%) and followed by Chandrapur (1710.32%), Aurangabad (1211.85%) and Nagpur (1178.01%). The six districts viz. Wardha, Bhandara, Nanded, Osmanabad, Pune and Nashik are grouped in the high growth category (600-800%) but do not vary widely (Table 2.3). Bombay is one of the 9 districts in medium category (400-600%). The six districts with low growth (200-400%) spread over in southern, central and northwestern parts of the state. District of Ratnagiri was noticed with lowest growth (169.53%) where from the net out-migration takes place. From south Konkan, people migrate to Bombay-Thane Industrial Centres, from south-Maharashtra to Pune, from Marathwada to Aurangabad and to Nagpur from its surrounding Vidarbha region as it appears from the map.

In rural Maharashtra, the growth is far less than the urban, but in its northeastern part particularly in Nagpur, Wardha and Bhandara it was very high (i.e. above 800%), and in Amravati and Chandrapur districts high growth rate of Scheduled Castes varied between 600 and 800 per cent. All these 5 districts formed a contiguous region of high and very high growth. Being 100 per cent urban, Bombay is excluded from this. The rest of the 19 districts of the state are categorised in low (10) and very low (9) growth rate categories. It suggests that high and very high growth in rural eastern Vidarbha is because of the high birth rate and labour migration to cotton and rice cultivating areas. In urban Maharashtra, the high growth is confined to major urban and industrial centres.

3.5.2 Annual Compound Growth Rate

The significance of compound or geometric growth rate is that if it is applied to the initial population (Pt1) for the corresponding period (t2-t1), it gives the final population as it mimics the principal of compounding interest rate. It assumes the rate of growth operating annually, year by year21.

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ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION
1961-91

INDEX
COMPOUND GROWTH RATE %

- - - 8
- - - 8
- - - 5
- - - 4
- - - 2

Fig. 3.6
The overall annual compound growth rate of Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra state was 4.67 per cent between 1961 and 1991 (Fig. 3.6). In the villages the growth was low (3.94%) in comparison to that of the urban (6.49%).

The annual growth rate of Scheduled Caste population has also depicted more or less, the similar pattern as it is observed in the crude growth rate. The lowest growth rate was observed in Bid district (1.99%) and the highest in Thane (8.62%). Besides Thane, the other districts with very high growth rates are Nagpur (8.45%) and Bhandara (8.46%). The districts of Wardha (7.94%), Chandrapur (7.71%) and Amravati (7.13%) are with high annual growth rate. All these five districts with very high (above 8%) and high growth rates (6 to 8%) are in the northeastern part of the state. On the other end of the scale, the very low annual growth rate of this downtrodden community as mentioned above was in Bid district and the low growth rate (2 to 4%) was found in as many as 9 districts. One of these 9 districts is the Ratnagiri district where from the young adult work force migrate to Bombay and Thane districts, which provide variety of social and economic opportunities to them. Dhule is a district with more than 40 per cent tribes within it, does not have much pull force. The rest of the 7 districts with low annual growth are Solapur, Kolhapur, Ahmadnagar, Osmanabad, Sangli, Parbhani and Satara. All these exhibited comparatively high concentration of Scheduled Caste population. It is generally observed that where their concentration is high, the growth rate is low.

In urban Maharashtra, district of Thane was with very high annual growth rate of Scheduled Castes (11.25%) and followed by Aurangabad (8.96%) and Nagpur (8.86%), while in rural areas, the high growth rate was displayed by the districts of Bhandara (8.78%), Wardha (8.58%), Nagpur (7.79%) and Chandrapur (7.05%) in Vidarbha region.

The annual compound growth rate also confirms that the large number of Scheduled Castes has migrated to urban and industrial centres where they found better educational facilities and employment opportunities with better social conditions than in the villages. The rapid growth of population in cities is because of the capital investment is mainly made in the selected cities which produces variety of employment opportunities. Three major urban centres have emerged, for instance, Thane in Konkan, Nagpur in Vidarbha and Aurangabad in Marathwada region, where they have preferred to migrate and augmented the growth rate. The growth rate for both the sexes in the large urban centres is quite high and the sex ratio (women per 1000 of men) is very low.
CONCLUSION

The distribution and concentration of Scheduled Caste population in different regions of Maharashtra State depends upon varied socio-economic factors. The different areas of the state are having different functional specialisations. For instance, towards Thane-Bombay, Pune, Aurangabad, Nagpur etc., they are fascinated by better educational and gainful employment opportunities in urban and industrial sectors. In rural Maharashtra, their concentration is confined to sugarcane, cotton and rice growing areas. The south Konkan, which is not economically promising, having least concentration of Scheduled Caste population. They are highly concentrated in those pockets where they have better scope to earn their livelihood especially in agriculture sector both as cultivators and agricultural labourers. The percentage distribution of Scheduled Castes and workers in agriculture sector of the same segment of population are strongly correlated ($r = 0.447$) and significant at 5 per cent level.

In eastern Vidarbha, not only the share of Scheduled Caste population in the total population increased significantly, their growth was also amazingly high during 1961-91. The low proportion of this weaker section in Northeastern part of the state in 1961 was due to their conversion to Buddhism in 1956. Its impact was felt across the state. The proportion of Buddhist population declined from 7.05 per cent in 1961 to 6.39 per cent in 1991, but the share of Scheduled Castes in the total population increased to 11.09 per cent from 5.63 per cent. The high growth rate and percentage share of SC population increased between 1961 and 1991 was also due to the inclusion of population as Scheduled Castes from the Buddhism in 1990 before the commencement of 1991 Census.

The change in their spatial distribution and growth is no doubt, due to their high natural growth and in-migration factors. But, it is also plausible that many of the neo-Buddhists, particularly Mahars, re-registered themselves as Hindu-Mahar, only for getting the reservation facility, which they lost after conversion. It is being done without discontinuing the Buddhist culture.

The coefficient of correlation ($r = -0.372$) between Scheduled Caste population and Buddhists in 1961 was negative and significant at 10 per cent level, but in 1991, the same relationship changed to positive ($r = 0.445$) which was significant at 5 per cent level. It explicates that at the time of conversion the entire Maharashtra state was effected and from 12 per cent Scheduled Caste population declined to about 6 per cent. The
Northeastern part of the state was influenced to a greater extent as the conversion process was initiated at Nagpur on 14th October 1956. This change in their relationship was due to significant decrease and increase of Scheduled Caste population in the state in relation to the Buddhist population.

The overall high growth of Scheduled Caste population was confined to Nagpur, Bhandara and Akola in Northeastern and Thane in western-Maharashtra. In the countryside, it is Northeastern part only. In urban areas, the very high growth occurred mainly in Thane, Aurangabad, Nagpur and Chandrapur. The growth of Scheduled Caste population due to migration is positively and strongly related to its urban population and industrial workers.

It is also inferred here on the basis of field work observations that the Scheduled Caste residences are kept apart from the main settlement of high caste Hindu and located on the out-skirts of the villages in Maharashtra so as to minimise the caste pollution.