The Indian society is highly stratified and hierarchical in nature while set institutional processes that economically and socially exclude, discriminate, isolate, and deprive some groups on the basis of characteristics like caste, ethnicity or religious background. These groups form a vast section of India’s population and include low caste untouchables, tribals, nomadic, semi-nomadic, and denotified tribes. Low caste untouchables and adivasi are prominent among these social and religious minority groups and they together account for one fourth of India’s population.

The biggest challenge before Independent India is to address these issues in building a faire and equitable society. These issues were of major concern since the days of freedom movement. One of the early initiatives was taken by Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the anti-caste philosopher. The Poona Pact between Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar on 16th August 1932 provided for equitable representation of the ‘Depressed Classes’ in governance and for improvement in their socio-economic conditions (Sukhadeo Thorat, 2009). The Pact became significant as this was the base for consequent constitutional safeguards and other measures for the social integration of the Scheduled Castes (SCs). Several legislations have been enacted and various measures were initiated for inclusive development of the SCs even before the Constitution of India came into force. Precisely, it can be said that the government measures towards the upliftment of the SCs are two fold: anti-discriminator or protective measure and development and empowering measures.

1.1 Ambedkar’s Fight against Untouchability

Between 1927 and 1932, Ambedkar mobilized his followers and lead a non-violent campaign to assert the rights of the Scheduled Caste to enter public places like temples and to draw water from public tanks and wells etc. Two of these campaigns were of special importance: the campaigns against the exclusion of Untouchables from the Kalaram Temple in Nasik and from the Chowdar Tank in Mahad. Thousands of
Untouchable ‘satyagrahis’ or non-violent resisters were mobilized to fight against this discrimination. The response of caste Hindus was violent. The Chowdar Tank campaign, after years of litigation, ended in a legal victory for the low caste activists. The Chowdar Tank campaign also experienced with the ceremonial burning of the Manusmriti, the ancient Hindu law book that Ambedkar believed responsible for the cruel treatment that the Untouchables suffering and Human Rights violation. This resulted that all Ambedkar's followers intended to demonstrate that equality among castes was an issue that could not be ignored to achieve.

By 1932 he became most unpopular in the minds Hindu communities by his activities in India. The cause of the trouble was Ambedkar's continued insistence on the necessity of separate electorates for the depressed classes and campaign against how Hindu culture has been degrading depressed classes. Mohandas K. Gandhi and the Congress Party opposed to separate electorates for the depressed classes. Ambedkar and Gandhi confronted on the subject at the Second Round Table Conference, when Gandhi went so far as to challenge Ambedkar's claim to speak for the Untouchables. Ambedkar's arguments succeeded in convincing the British government, and when Ramsay MacDonald published his Communal Award the following year the depressed classes were given the separate electorates for which they had asked. Resulting Gandhi decided to go on a fast to the death for the abolition of separate electorates for the depressed classes. Since he was the prominent leader of the independence movement his fast unto death created disturbances and Ambedkar was despicable as a conspirator and threats were made against his life. The pressure that was brought to bear on him Ambedkar was not ready to negotiate and finally agreed to replace separate electorates with joint electorates, with increased number of reserved seats. This agreement was embodied in a document that became known as the Poona Pact, which by Ambedkar identified as the most influential leader of the Untouchables.

Because of the opposition he had encountered over the question of separate electorates and rigid Hindu principles. Ambedkar started encouraging his followers to concentrate on raising their standard of living and gaining political power. He also began to think there was no future for the Untouchables within Hinduism and that they should
change their religion. Ambedkar was appointed principal of the Government Law College, Bombay.

1.2 Ambedkar’s Perception of Economic Development

B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) is renowned for many qualities. He had many degrees to his credit which made him a versatile genius. He has been accepted as a true reformer, learned professor, brilliant lawyer, reputed author, great political leader and a great parliamentarian. However, by virtue of his hard work, he rose not only to national but also to international eminence and showed a new path to his community for breaking the shackles of thousands of years old bondage. He began his life as an untouchable and was treated in his boyhood as a social leper.

B.R. Ambedkar was trained as an economist first at Columbia University where he obtained Doctorate in 1917 in economics and later had D. Sc degree from London School of Economics in 1921. His thinking as an economist has two dimensions. First, as the economist his contributions relating to “The Evaluation of Provincial Finance in British India” and “The Problem of the Rupee” are professional in nature. Second, his contribution to land reforms, socialism, and fiscal system of India, employment, industrialization, capital formation, taxation, food position and nationalization are the reflections of a statesman. Ambedkar’s economic ideology can be called State Socialism. His scheme of State Socialism consists of radical measure viz. nationalization of land, industry and insurance. Above all the land philosophy as advocated by Ambedkar in the early 50’s appears to be correct even today.

He devoted his life to liberating crores of downtrodden people in India from their age long bondage and ushering a new era in their lives. His life, ideas as well as his writings were not only thought provoking but also provocative. He called up on the Hindu Society to eradicate its caste system that hinders its social solidarity and set up a new democratic social order based on the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Ambedkar dealt with more the problems of landless labourers, small holdings, khoti system, mahar watan, collective farming, and abolition of landlordism and land revenue on different occasions. He expressed his views on nationalization of industries, food problem, socialism and social equality. He discussed taxation problems in his budget speeches. He further continued to contribute economic thinking through number
of books such as ‘Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies’, Federation versus Freedom’, ‘State and Minorities’ etc. More so, his economic thoughts are relevant in the present context of Indian situation.

1.2.1 Agriculture Structure and Rural Development

Agriculture is the major occupation in Indian economy. More than two thirds of Indian population depends on agriculture sector for their livelihood and this sector alone generates nearly half of the national income to the country. The problems that hinder agricultural progress identified by Ambedkar 90 years ago still exist in India. He laid stress on consolidation, irrigation, state farming and utilization of various resources so as to boost the production and improve the economic condition of the farmers’ community. In an article on “Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies” in 1918, he argued that the evils of subdivision and fragmentation would be avoided with the consolidation of land holdings. Moreover, he strongly supported the principles like government land ownership and collective farming. In another book he asserted that Indian agriculture should be a ‘State Industry’. Therefore, after his ‘State Socialism’ only the economic structure was designed.

Intermediates were created by the Britishers who called Zamindars. They sucked the very blood from the rural poor. The lion’s share of the produce was taken away by the Zamindar parasitic class and the actual cultivator was left only with subsistence income. As a result, the cultivators had neither the resources nor the incentives to reinvest in agriculture in the subsequent year. Therefore, in the pre-independence period the Indian agriculture can be described as a subsistence occupation which yielded too little to live on and too much to die on. Moreover, on the pretext of settlement of debts taken by cultivators, the Zamindars and money lenders have taken a large part of land wrongfully. Thus a number of cultivators become and suffered with landlessness. Eventually the Zamindari class has given rise to create another class called landless labourers or agricultural workers. Landless labourers were after working on the other land for wages which were too meager to keep the body and soul together. A majority of farmers were just able to manage a level of subsistence from agricultural activities.
1.2.2 Land Reforms

Indian agriculture encounters the problem of small holdings and fragmentation of land which caused a great set back for the agricultural development in India. It has rightly been pointed out by Ambedkar that the diminutive size of the holdings is said to be greatly harmful to Indian agriculture. Moreover, this results in inefficient use of resources, through which cost of production increases and agricultural productivity declines. Thus, these small and scattered holdings have given a real cause for anxiety about the great national industry. Further, he expressed tow very important facts regarding economic like in India: (1) that it is largely an agrarian country and (2) that its agricultural productivity is the lowest. Looking at all these problems, Ambedkar dealt with the problem of fragmentation of holdings in his paper on ‘Small holdings in India and Their Remedies’ in 1918. The same problems still exist even after 60 years of independent India. In the light of this problem, Ambedkar raised three important questions, they are:

a) Why do the agricultural holdings get fragmented despite the fact that fragmentation results in inefficient use of resource?

b) Are large holdings necessarily efficient and small one inefficient? In other words, what is an economic holding?

c) What is the ultimate remedy for solving India’s problem of small and scattered holdings?

Ambedkar argued that the subdivision of land mainly due to high pressure of population on land but not to the law of inheritance. He also pointed out that “when farming was the only occupation, to get a small piece of land was better than to have none” ¹ He argued that “a large agricultural population with the lowest proportion of land in actual cultivation meant that a large part of the agricultural population was superfluous and idle” ² He argued that “the grievance of small holdings lies in the circumstances which put a premium on these small pieces of land. The premium is no doubt, due to the large population depending solely on agriculture to eke out it’s living….It is not therefore

² Ibid, p.473
the law of inheritance that is the evil, but it is the high pressure of population on land which brings it into operation. People cultivate small piece not because their standard of living is low, but because it is the only profitable thing for them to do at present. If they had something more profitable to do they would never prefer the small piece”\(^3\).

Obviously Ambedkar did not oppose enlarged and consolidated holdings. What he emphasizes is that, large population is dependent on agriculture due to lack of alternative means of subsistence which made sustenance of enlarged and consolidated holdings at a particular size.

Regarding the second question, he explained the economic holding from the standpoint of production. He pointed out that “there could be no such thing as a large or small holding. To a farmer a holding is too small or too large in relation to the other factors of production at his disposal necessary for carrying on the cultivation of his holding as an economic enterprise. Mere size of land is empty of all economic implication. Consequently, it is not possible for the economic science to say that a large holding is economic which a small holding is uneconomic. Thus, a small farmer may be economic as well as a large farm; for economic or uneconomic does not depend upon the size of land but upon the due proportion among all factors including land”\(^4\).

In the opinion of Ambedkar an economic holding consists of optimum combination of land, capital and labour etc. Thus, “an economic holding is not a matter of the size of land but a matter of the adjustment of a piece of land to the necessary equipment for its efficient cultivation”\(^5\). Therefore, Ambedkar pointed out that, “the remedy for the ills of agriculture in India did not lie primarily in the matter of enlarging holdings but in the matter of increasing capital and capital goods”\(^6\).

In a given land agriculture production can be increased by using more capital. But it may cause of increasing unemployment and idle labour. Ambedkar was aware of this constraint and pointed out that “even if we enlarge the existing holding and procured capital and capital goods to make them economic, it will not be the proper remedy but will end in aggravating the evils by adding to stock idle labour, for capitalistic agriculture

\(^3\) Ibid, p.474
\(^4\) Ibid, P.468
\(^5\) Ibid, P.470
\(^6\) Ibid, P.472
will not need as many hands as are now required by our present day methods of cultivation”\(^7\). Therefore, “industrialization of India was the soundest remedy for the agriculture problems of India”\(^8\).

Further he advocates that “the evils of fragmentation are very great and must be met by a comprehensive scheme of consolidation”\(^9\). In this context, it can be said that the whole argument of large scale economics and maximizing production is theoretical. It is revealed by some of the management studies that gross output per acre is greater on small farms than on large farms. According to Lewis, the size of farm is not very material in securing high yields. A country like Japan which has small farms proves that labour intensive methods can work out of higher productivity. On the contrary, the large size collective farms in U.S.S.R have not been able to produce considerable yields rates compare to those of Japan. As a result, the historical evidence suggests, under the auspices of the imposition of ceiling because such policy can enlarge employment.

### 1.2.3 Collective Farming

Ambedkar emphasized the significance of social justice and economic equality with this view he strongly argued of collective farming. He felt that state socialism was necessary for rapid industrialization and his book on ‘State and Minorities’ published in 1947 also mainly focused on it. He felt that neither consolidation of holdings nor tenancy legislation contributes for agriculture productive. Moreover, they can not help in solving the persistent problems of landless labourers and small farmer. He suggested that nationalization of entire agricultural land with collective farming is the sole panacea for the ills of economic development of these people. Finally, he proposed that state should have a commitment to plan the economic life of people on the ground which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise and to offer for equitable distribution of wealth\(^10\). He recommend state ownership of agriculture through collectivized mode of cultivation and modified form of state socialism in the filed of industry. It should be the state obligation to supply capital necessary for

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\(^7\) Ibid, P. 475  
\(^8\) Ibid, P.477  
agriculture as well as industry. Ambedkar articulates the scheme of nationalization of agricultural land with collective farming shall be organized in India as follows:(Clause 4)

1. “Agriculture shall be the state Industry.
2. Agriculture industry shall be organized on the following basis.

(i) The State should divide the land acquired into farms of standard size and let out the farms for cultivation to residents of the village as tenants (made up of group of families). These tenants may cultivate the land on the following conditions.
   (a) The farm should be cultivated as a collective farm.
   (b) The farm should be cultivated in accordance with rules and directions issued by the government.
   (c) The tenants should share among themselves in the manner prescribed, the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges leviable on the farm.

(ii) The land should be let out to villages without any distinction of caste or creed and in such a manner that there should be no landlord, no tenant, and no landless labourer.

(iii) It should be the obligation of the State to finance the cultivation of the collective farms by way of supply of water, draught animals, manure, seeds etc., in order to increase the agricultural output.

(iv) The State should be entitled;
   (a) to levy the following charges on the produce of the farm
      (i) a portion for land revenue, (ii) a portion to pay the debenture holders; (iii) a portion to pay for the use of capital goods supplied, and
   (b) to prescribe penalties against tenants, who break the conditions of tenancy of willfully neglect to make the best use of the means of cultivation, offered by the State or otherwise work prejudicially to the scheme of the collective farming.
3. The Scheme should be brought into operation as early as possible but in no case shall the period extend beyond the tenth year from the date of the constitution coming into operation.”

Ambedkar’s scheme of collective farming was very revolutionary. Besides, nationalization of agriculture is required, if once it is accepted. Instead of collective farming, land reforms were initiated, which is more soft measure, by the government of India. In fact, collective farms under the state control had been adopted in USSR and China and this alone can solve the problems of small and scattered holdings and agricultural labour problems. Above all, it will help bridge the gap of inequality in the distribution of wealth and income which ultimately resolve the basic problem of rural poverty as well.

Ambedkar was very particular about emancipation of weaker sections in general and Dalits in particular. He emphasized the eradication of poverty, elimination of inequalities and ending exploitation of the masses and these are main approaches he chosen for economic development of India. He asserted land reforms to increase agricultural production and preferred industrialization for absorbing surplus labour which lessens the persisting problem of unemployment. Thus, his strategies particularly on the development of agriculture and industry are quite relevant even today for economic progress in India and justice to the downtrodden in general and Dalits in particular.

Ambedkar observations on the strategy for economic development are quite useful in the eradication of poverty and upliftment of weaker sections, particularly Dalits. One may not agree with all his views, but his scientific approach, in-depth analysis of the problems studied, rational and objective treatment of the subject, broad presentation of the topic and practical suggestions to answer the problems studied have to be accepted by any rational thinker and economist. He has reiterated his belief in socialism once again in the Constituent Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1948. Therefore, any evaluation of the progress of the economic status of Dalits is to be examined within the parameters of the programmes initiated by the government. The following parameters were considered for the evaluation of Dalits economic development.

1. Performance of Land Distribution through Land Reforms
2. Employment Opportunities
3. Incidence of Poverty
4. Educational Development
5. Performance of Budgetary Allocation to SCSP
6. Atrocities and Offences on Dalits.
7. Performance of Poverty Alleviation Programmes

1.3 Constitutional Safeguards: Dalits

According to B.R. Ambedkar, the directive principles set before the state ideals of social and economic democracy since political freedom bereft of social and economic content is meaningless (Ghosh, S.K., 1996). For this purpose, various provisions relating to SCs are contained in parts III, IV, VI, XIV, XVI and XIX of the Constitution. The Constitution of India contains obligations of the state for the socio-economic development of the backward classes, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The rights are guaranteed under fundamental rights contained in Part III of the Constitution and the duties of the state are visualized by the directive principles of state policy under Part IV of the Constitution. To achieve the objectives enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution and to step up the progress of the weaker sections of society, certain safeguards and protective measures have been provided in the Constitution so as to bring SC and ST communities at par with the mainstream.

The following are the various constitutional safeguards for SCs:

1.3.1 Part III- Fundamental Rights

i. Article 14: Equality Before the Law

The State shall not deny any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

A tangible distinction was made by the Supreme Court between the two phases ‘equality before the law’ and ‘equal protection of the laws’:

All persons are equal before the law is fundamental of every civilized Constitution. Equality before the law is a negative concept; equal protection of laws is a positive one. The former declare that everyone is equal before law, that
no one can claim privileges and all classes are equally subjected to the ordinary law of the land; the latter postulates an equal protection of all alike in the same situation and under like circumstances.

ii. Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination on Grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex or Place of Birth

1. The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
2. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to (a) access to shop, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.
3. Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.
4. Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

iii. Article 16: Equality of Opportunity in Matters of Public Employment

1. There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.
2. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.
3. Nothing in this article shall prevent Parliament from making any law prescribing, in regard to a class or classes of employment or appointment to an office under the Government of, or any local or other authority within, a State or Union Territory, any requirement as to residence within that State or Union Territory prior to such employment or appointment.

4. Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointment or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

4A Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, which, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

4B Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from considering any unfilled vacancies of a year which are reserved for being filled up on that year in accordance with any provision for reservation made under clause (4) or clause (4A) as a separate class of vacancies to be filled up in any succeeding year or years and such class of vacancies shall not be considered together with the vacancies of the year in which they are being filled up for determining the ceiling of fifty per cent reservation on total number of vacancies of that year.

5. Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any law which provides that the incumbent of an office in connection with the affairs of any religious or denominational institution or any member of the governing body thereof shall be a person professing a particular religion or belonging to a particular denomination.
iv. Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability

“Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability rising out of “untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

1.3.2 Part IV- Directive Principles of State Policy

i. Article 38: State to Secure a Social Order for the Promotion of Welfare of the People

1. The State shall strive to promote of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life.

2. The State shall, in particular, strive to minimize the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

ii. Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Weaker Sections.

“The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social justice and all forms of exploitation”.

“Part XIV, Services under the Union and the States, Public Service Commissions

i. Article 320A: Functions of Public Service Commissions
Consultation with Public Service Commission not necessary as regard the manner of giving effect to safeguards for Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes as referred to clause (4) of article 16”.

“Part XVI, Special Provisions relating to Certain Classes

i. Article 330: Reservation of Seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People

1. Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for
   (a) the Scheduled Castes…

2. The number of seats reserved in any State (or Union Territory) for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes under clause (1) shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State (or Union Territory) in the House of the People as the Populations of the Scheduled Castes in the State (or Union Territory) or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State (or Union Territory) as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State (or Union Territory)

   Explanation: In this article and in article 332, the expression ‘population’ means the population as ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published:

   Provided that the reference in this Explanation to the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published shall, until the relevant digress for the first census taken after the year 2000 have been published be construed as a reference to the 1971 census.

ii. Article 332: Reservation of Seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States

1. Seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam, in the Legislative Assembly of every State.
2. Seats shall be reserved also for the autonomous districts in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam.

3. The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any State under clause (1) shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or part of the State, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State.

iii. Article 334: Reservation of Seats and Special Representation to Cease after (sixty years, at present the reservations have been extended up to 2010)

Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part, the provisions of this Constitution relating to
(a) the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States….. shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of (sixty years) from the commencement of this Constitution.

Provided that nothing in this article shall affect any representation in the House of the People or in the Legislative Assembly of a State until the dissolution of the then existing House or Assembly, as the case may be.

iv. Article 335: Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to Services and Posts

The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

Provided that nothing in this article shall prevent in making of any provision in favour of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for relaxation in qualifying marks in any examination or lowering the standards of evaluation, for
reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of services or posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

v. Article 338: National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

1. There shall be a Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be known as the National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

2. Subject to the provisions of any law made in this behalf by Parliament, the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and five other Members and the conditions of service and tenure of office of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and other Members so appointed shall be such as the President may by rule determinate.

3. The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and other Members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.

4. The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.

5. It shall be the duty of the Commission
   (a) to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;
   (b) to inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
   (c) to participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of theScheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State;
   (d) to present to the President, annually and at such other times as the commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards.
   (e) to make in such reports recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for the effective implementation
of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; and

(f) to discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

6. The President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament along with a memorandum explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations relating to the Union and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations.

7. Where any such report, or any part thereof, relates to any matter with which any State Government is concerned, a copy of such report shall be forwarded to the Governor of the State who shall cause it to be laid before the Legislature of the State along with memorandum explaining the action taken on the recommendations relating to the State and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations.

8. The Commission shall, while investigating any matter referred to in sub-clause (a) or inquiring into any complaint referred to in sub-clause (b) of clause (5), have all the powers of a civil court trying a suit and in particular in respect of the following matters, namely –

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath;
(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;
(c) receiving evidence on affidavits;
(d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court of office;
(e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents;
(f) any other matter which the President may, by rule, determine.
9. The Union and every State Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

10. In this article, references to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be construed as including references to such other backward classes as the President may, on receipt of the report of a Commission appointed under clause (1) of article 340, by order specify and also to the Anglo-Indian Community” (Sukhadeo Thorat, 2009).

In addition, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 came into effect on 11th September 1989 which prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and to provide Special Courts for the trail of such offence. Besides all these Constitution safeguards, Ambedkar’s perception of economic development go a long way for the upliftment of scheduled castes even today.

1.4 Liberalization: Dalits

More than 75 per cent of the Dalit workers are still connected with land; 25 per cent being the marginal and small farmers and balance over 50 per cent are the landless labourers. In urban areas, they work mainly in unorganised sector. Out of the total Dalit population of 138 million, the number of Dalits in services falling in the domain of reservations does not exceed 1.1 million; a mere 0.8 per cent (Anand Teltumbde, 1996). However, particularly, the last two decades have spelt the decline of the Welfare State under the powerful impact of global economic forces and neo-liberal economic policies. The egalitarian ethic underlying planned change and development is being rapidly destroyed. The ideology of the Indian State’s New Economic Policy emphasizes the pre-eminence of markets and profits. In the context of an elite directed consensus on the inevitability of liberalisation and structural adjustment, the predominant problems and debates of education have undergone major shifts. Structural adjustment have provided the legitimacy and impetus for a number of educational reforms that pose a direct threat to the mission of universalizing elementary education and equalizing educational opportunity for SC/ST, especially those left behind. The state is withdrawing from social
sectors of education and health and delegating its social commitments and responsibilities to private agencies and non-governmental organizations. There is already enough indication that basic educational needs of the SC and ST are getting seriously undermined. Importantly, under the post 90s impact of global processes the poorest SC have been most adversely affected and become more poverty stricken. Studies have pointed out to growing incidence of poverty, rising levels of rural unemployment, wage squeeze, rising levels of mortality and illness as well as declining levels of consumption shares, real wages and consumer monthly per capita expenditure among the SC (Teltumbde, 1996, 2000; Thorat, 2001, 2002; Nancharaiah, 2002).

Similarly, market economy is geared to meet the consumerists ambitions of the business and other classes, however, the poor get marginalized more and more. The new Policy Framework for reforms in education, drafted by a committee convened by Mukesh Ambani with Kumarmangalam Birla as members, seeks to drive privatization and introduce widespread commercialization of higher education. It visualizes foreign direct investment in education, progressive reduction of government funding for universities. It also emphasizes the private finance to meet the cost of higher education. Thus, higher education is to be entirely market-oriented and it clearly not available for common Dalits. The increasing opportunity cost of schooling is discouraging many Dalits from education resulting in increasing numbers of dropouts. Since the private sector has not maintained reservation policy in the job opportunities that had been available to Dalits during the past three decades will now entirely dry up. In addition, the government has been systematically reduce the expenditure on the people’s welfare at the behest of the World Bank / IMF and also cut its expenditure on SCs/STs. Similarly, expenditure for SC, ST, and OBC welfare has also declined dramatically (Rashmi Akhoury, 2008).

State wise estimates of rural poverty for the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1992 showed that increase in poverty is substantial for first 18 months of reform. At all India level, there is evidence that rural poverty increased significantly during the first 18 months of reform period. According to Tendulkar and Jain (1995), rural areas in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan experienced reasonably sharp reduction in real average per capita total expenditure. Rural poverty in these states increased sharply during the reform period. Main reasons of increase in poverty during the early part
of reforms are: sharp increase in prices (food grain prices in particular) due to increase in input prices (fertilizer) and rise in issue prices of rice and wheat; and decline in real rural per capita expenditure on poverty alleviation programmes.

Rural poverty in India is spread over across all the occupation groups. However, there are large inter-state variations in distribution of rural poor across occupation groups, in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu, agricultural labourers have major share of poor as compared to self employed in agriculture. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and North-eastern region has high proportion of poor from self employed in non-agriculture group. Relative incidence of poverty\textsuperscript{12} across occupation groups reveals that poverty is more severe among agricultural labourers followed by non-agricultural labourers; self employed in non-agriculture; self employed in agriculture and allied activities; others; and salaried. Except for Andhra Pradesh and Kerala relative incidence of poverty is highest among agricultural labourers, in Andhra Pradesh it is highest among self-employed in non-agriculture. Relative incidence of poverty among salaried earners is lowest in all the states, except for Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab relative incidence of poverty among non-agriculture is higher than agriculture (Devendra Kumar Pant and Kakali Patra, 1996).

In rural areas, the proportion of households depending upon wage employment, both farm and non-farm, was 48 per cent for the STs, about 60 per cent for the SCs, and 38 per cent for the non-Dalits. For the rural area as a whole, it was 38 per cent. In urban areas, the proportion of households depending upon regular wage/salaried and casual employment was about 64 per cent for the STs, 67 per cent for the SCs and 54 per cent for the non-Dalits. In the case of all urban households, it was about 56 per cent. According the information available by the Planning Commission, the employment elasticities with respect to growth in almost all the nine sectors of the economy during the period from 1983 to 1993-94 fell below their levels during the period from 1977-78 to 1983, and there is further deterioration in these elasticities during the period from 1993-94 to 1999-2000 (B. Mungekar, 2004)

\textsuperscript{12} Defined as ratio of proportion of poor corresponding to a particular occupation group to proportion of population for that particular occupation group.
Wages are the most important channel affecting poverty both in rural or urban areas. Average real wage (nominal wage deflated by state specific Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers CPIAL) of male agricultural labourer (ploughman or field labour) during first year of reform (agricultural year 1991-92) declined in almost all the states. Decline was severe in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra (decline of more than 11 per cent). Effect of rural inflation on real wage of agricultural labourers was so severe in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Rajasthan that real wages even in 1993-94 are less than 1990-91 level in these states (Devendra Kumar Pant and Kakali Patra, 1996). Thus the fall in real agricultural wages in different states at different points of time must have worsened the economic conditions of the SCs and STs further. Above all the new economic policy was introduced to restrict the reservation. Therefore, in this process, hundreds of government and semi government, public sector undertakings were privatized by the congress government and lacks of jobs meant for SC/ST/OBCs were snatched from their hands (Chunnu Prasad and Karakoti Sudhakara, 2007).

1.5 Statement of the Problem

India is confronted social and economic backwardness of some sections since its independence. Dalits known as scheduled castes are one of the groups under Indian constitution and they are most backward. Since ages Dalits lead their lives with poor economic conditions, low educational status and powerless political life. Various public measures have widened to improve the economic conditions of dalits, in which reservations; anti-untouchability, abolition of caste system, acquisition of land, extent of political participation; education and employment have attained significant importance. Finally, the Constitution provides for the establishment of a permanent body to investigate and monitor the social and economic progress of Dalits on annual basis. Therefore, economic status of dalits probably became more prominent factor among all other factors in the Constitution.

As far as educational status of Dalits is concerned illiteracy and discontinuation rates among SCs in rural areas are significantly high. In addition, the goals of universal elementary education remained distant as less than 45 per cent of SC female children and one-third of SC male children aged 5-14 continued to remain out of school in the rural
areas. Consequently the quality of educational level among Dalits population was relatively poor. Higher attainment rates for Dalits up to the primary education level and a gradual drop thereafter indicate that a majority of Dalits children terminate their school education on or before the primary classes. Majority of Dalits students receive primary education in schools managed or aided by government department. However, only five percent of the students belong to SCs are enrolled in private managed schools whereas in Andhra Pradesh this proportion is just 4.7 per cent. Poverty among Dalits households is the first and foremost responsible for the poor educational enrolment of Dalit Children. Studies have amply emphasized that among the main reasons of the high magnitude of never-enrolled, out-of-school children and the high rate of school dropout are poverty and discrimination.

With regard to health, Dalits are quite poor and they are more deprived than the other sections of the population. This is particularly true in terms of childhood survival, nutritional status, child healthcare and maternal health care. Though there is a development in survival levels, infant and childhood mortality among Dalits is unacceptably high. Moreover, more than one-third of Dalits women suffer from chronic energy deficiency, as seen from their body mass index (BMI). Similarly, 67.6 per cent of Dalits children are born at home in rural areas.

The access of rural households to civil amenities like housing, water and electricity especially in the case of Dalits is very poor. A significant higher proportion of Dalits households still inhabit in dilapidated houses. The building materials used in the construction of houses are far from satisfactory. The size of Dalits houses was also much smaller; nearly four-fifths of the Dalit households live in houses which have two or fewer rooms. The quality of drinking water particularly available in Dalits living areas is worse in rural areas. Access to electricity was also poor, despite achieving 80 per cent electrification of the villages.

Furthermore, most of the Dalits are still working as agricultural labourers who completely rely on selling their labour power for their survival as traditionally, Dalits have been discriminated against possessing permanent assets like land. Importantly, few households particularly in this group are still limited to landless household category though land reforms initiated nearly 37 years back. The proportion of rural workforce in
the household industry has remained more or less same, however, other workers increased far more sharply among Dalits than non-Dalits. Few studies showed that the labour force displaced from the agriculture sector was not absorbed in the rural household industry but was engaged as other workers with limited access to capital. Evidences showed that considerable decline in respect of farm servants take place in recent years as increase in money wages of casual labour compared to that of paleru. In addition, to that increased mechanization, decline in cattle population and also increased contract labour system are various main reasons to decline attached labour system at rural level. Moreover, the proportion of regular wage / salaried Dalits households declined from 44.4 per cent in 1993-94 to 37.6 per cent in 1999-2000; while the corresponding declined was only 2.8 percentage points fro non-Dalits households. It indicated that the impact of slackening public employment in the economic reforms period was borne more heavily by Dalits. Nearly, 70 per cent of Dalits households either do not own land or have very small landholdings of less than 0.4 ha. Few studies showed that a marginal decline of nearly three percentage points in the proportion of landless Dalits households. Farm size categories are indicative of the fact that the incidence of landless and near-landless households is more articulated in Dalits than in other social groups. In spite of few Dalits farmers come under small and medium farmers’ category, they have no adequate access for bank loans to improve their economic status through agriculture. As a result, Dalits farmers still encounter exorbitant rate of interest from money lenders and many studies revealed that public financial institutions have failed to liberate the Dalits from the clutches of money lenders.

Above all various special developmental programmes initiated and implemented since first five year plan to improve the economic status of Dalits. However, there was no considerable progress in living standards of dalits. Studies showed that some improvement has been taken place in terms of their access to education, non-farming employment, consumption levels, reduction in poverty levels etc. importantly, land reforms could not make Dalits to become cultivators, in stead, most of them are still remained as agricultural labourers. As a result, there is substantive gap in the levels of development between Dalits and non-Dalits. This is mostly because of iniquitous agrarian structure and failure of land reforms. In addition, the welfare outlay set apart for SC/ST
As proportion of total five year plan outlay was also found to be low pertaining to their respective population.

As elected representatives majority of the Dalits entered into the new stream of political structure at the gross-root level institutions. However, participation of women elected leaders under new PRIs seems to be plausible low. Obviously, Politics are not understood properly by the Dalits because on the one hand lack of experience in politics and on the other they are largely either less educated or nil educated. Therefore, providing proper training is needed for newly elected representatives and gets them to administrate their own Panchayats on their own. Various studies emphasized that importance of 73rd Constitution Amendment Act needs to be taught as it enables to participate the downtrodden SC/ST in local bodies and will thus the process of empowerment. Therefore, the elected Dalit politicians should have adequate access to the training programme meant for them.

Atrocities are largely taken place over Dalits. Official statistics reveals that, about 3000-3500 cases are registered on an average under the Anti-Untouchability Act (Civil Right Act) every year (National Crime Records Bureau, 2000). Similarly, about 15000 cases are registered on an average under the Prevention of Atrocities (POA) Act every year. Based on field surveys many studies show the continuation of the practice of a high degree of untouchability and discrimination. The main root for atrocities on the Dalits is the caste system. Therefore, caste is the bane of Indian society and the worst enemy of the Dalits. Among various atrocities, land related atrocities are more in which many Dalits lost their lives as well. But experiences showed that land reform laws have not been implemented effectively and vigorously. Therefore, the SCs and STs are too weak to take advantage of such laws because the enforcement machinery is dominated by upper caste which has lacked the will to pursue it. Importantly, the police are the premier law enforcement machinery, but in all most all cases they adopt hostile attitude towards poor Dalit complaints.
1.6 Objectives

The following are the specific objectives.

- To understand the Ambedkar’s perspective of economic development and to study the process of rural development in the context of Dalits from the Ambedkar perspective.

- To study the socio-economic transformation of Dalits in rural Andhra Pradesh on the basis of case studies of three villages, one from each of the three regions.

- To analyse changes in the land, occupational structure, and asset position of Dalits and Non-Dalits at State level as well as the village level.

- To study the role of the state and the impact of rural development programmes on the conditions of living of Dalits

- To identify factors facilitating and hindering the socio-economic status of rural poor in general and Dalit community in particular.

1.7 Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to analyse the process of rural development and its impact on the disadvantaged sections specifically the Dalits from Ambedkar’s perspective of economic development. For the measure of economic development specific indicators have been taken which again tested with ground reality. Education, occupation, housing, landholdings, assets and non-farming economic activities are the major indicators used in this study. Along with these the state initiated welfare programmes have been assessed. To take the overall picture of the economic development of Dalits, case study method has been adopted.

For this case study method three samples have been selected from three different regions namely Telengana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema of Andhra Pradesh. Of the three villages, one village, Antharam of Medak District was selected from Telangana region. Antharam was selected by School of Social Sciences of the University of Hyderabad as one of the village that could be representative of the region. This background helped the choice of Antharam as one the villages for the present study as well. The remaining two villages namely Panchalamarri village of Chittoor District and
Unagatla of West Godavari District were selected based on 1961 Census. As a part of the 1961 census, certain villages were selected for a comprehensive socio-economic study and separate village monographs were brought out by the Census of India. Unagatla, a village in West Godavari district and Panchalamarri village in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh are two such villages on which separate monographs were brought out based on 1961 Census study. For the present study, Unagatla, and Panchalamarri have been chosen for the survey and 50 per cent of the households have been covered out of total Dalits households from each village. In addition to this, 30 house households were selected from non-dalits based on land categorization from each village for comparative purpose. Primary survey conducted in the three selected villages. Structured questionnaire has been prepared for collecting the information as well as data. Thus, the present survey have provided considerable data, which are used for the analysis of Ambedkar’s perspective of economic development.

1.8 Data Collection

In this study, to substantiate the above methodology the macro level data has been collected through secondary source at the State level. The secondary sources include data pertaining to landholdings, occupations, poverty level, atrocities and financial and physical progress of scheduled caste sub plan (SCSP). And micro level data has also been collected from the selected villages namely Antharam in Medak district of Telengana, Unagatla in West Godavari district of Coastal Andhra, and Panchalamarri in Chittoor district of Rayalaseema of Andhra Pradesh. Data has been collected through structured questionnaire and relevant information was also elicited through open ended questionnaire. The researcher undertook field study in all these villages and collected some of the detailed information which added to enrich the analysis.

1.9 Research Questions

In the light of above objectives, the present study would like to pose certain pertinent questions:

- What are the rural development programmes initiated by the Post-Independence State under the Constitution of India. What is the impact of the programmes on the socio-economic development of the rural poor particularly the weaker section.
How far able/unable to bring the intended social transformation?

What was Ambedkar’s proposition of ‘State Socialism’? And what was his idea of ‘Nationalisation of Agriculture’ and ‘Collective Farming’?

What are essential components of Ambedkar’s economic ideology?

Why the state initiated development programmes failed to address the dalits socio-economic problems in rural society?

What are the major bottle-necks for their upliftment

1.10 Chapterization

Thesis is divided into seven chapters, first chapter deals with Ambedkar’s perspective of economic development, constitutional safeguards, the problem of the study, objectives and methodology. Second chapter discusses the literature on government policies and programmes for SCs, governmental participation, socio-economic conditions of SCs, education, health and housing – SCs, economic reforms and SCs, land and SCs. The third chapter reviews various rural development programmes. Fourth chapter focused on land, occupational structure, poverty, atrocities and Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) at state level. Fifth, Sixth and Seventh chapters provides village studies. The eighth chapter brings conclusions.