

Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers

Selected papers presented at the Workshop organised jointly with
the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra,
at Pune during March 16-17, 2001.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
(Deemed to be a University)
Pune – 411 004

Artha Vijnana Reprint Series No. 17

**Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes
with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers**

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(Deemed to be a University)
Pune 411 004 (India)
2000

Reprinted from Artha Vijnana
Vol. XLIII, Nos. 1-2, March-June 2001

Rs. 250/-

PRINTED IN INDIA

by Ankush Kakade at Maharashtra Sahakari Mudranalaya, 915/2, Shivajinagar,
Pune 411 004, edited and published by V S Chitre at the Gokhale Institute of
Politics and Economics (Deemed to be a University) Pune 411 004 (India).

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Foreword

The Scheduled Castes account for nearly 17 percent of India's population. Over 45 percent of working population of this group are agricultural labourers. Nearly 33 percent of agricultural labourers belong to the Scheduled Castes. Due to their weak assets position and unassured employment opportunities in rural areas, the incidence of poverty is still over 48 percent among this group. Systematic welfare measures have been introduced ever since the inception of the planning era to improve their socio-economic conditions. However, most surveys and studies have shown that they hardly brought any appreciable improvement in the standard of living of agricultural labourers belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Therefore, there is a need to review and re-address the socio-economic issues that are connected with the development of this group. Keeping this in view, a two days workshop on "*Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes with special reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers*" was organised jointly with the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, during March 16-17, 2001, at the Institute.

While the main objective of the workshop was to bring out the current socio-economic status of landless agricultural labourers belonging to the Scheduled Castes, it specifically addressed ten major themes that are related to their employment, wages, migration, credit and labour linkages, anti-poverty programmes, special component plan and its impact, micro finance and its relevance, etc. A total of 17 papers were presented in the workshop focusing on various current issues pertaining to agricultural labourers belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Besides, Prof. N. Rath gave an inaugural address, while Prof. V. M. Rao and Prof. B. S. Baviskar presented respectively a keynote paper and the valedictory address. Out of the 17 papers presented at the workshop, 13 papers are included in the present volume, after going through a reviewing process by referees. While we intended to include all papers which were presented at the workshop, we could not publish all of them in the volume.

I am grateful to all the participants who presented the papers at the workshop in response to our invitation and also revised them in accordance with the referees' comments. I am also thankful to Dr. Sanjay Chahande, Director of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, for his initiative and encouragement for organising the above-mentioned workshop and in actively participating in it and Shri Umesh Chandra Sarangi, Divisional Commissioner, Pune, for making insightful observations on the theme of the workshop at the inaugural session. I am thankful to the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, for providing financial support for organising the workshop and for the publication of the present volume. Dr. A. Narayanamoorthy of our Institute acted as the overall coordinator for the publication of this volume.

The papers included in this volume clearly bring out the current socio-economic status of agricultural labourers belonging to the Scheduled Castes besides suggesting a number of issues for further research. It is hoped that the papers published in this volume would be useful not only to the researchers working in this area but also to the policy makers concerned with the welfare of the weaker sections of our society, particularly the agricultural labourers from the Scheduled Castes.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
(Deemed to be a University)
Pune - 411 004.

V. S. Chitre
Director

June 2003

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Inaugural Address*

Nilakantha Rath**

Professor Rao, Professor Chitre, Mr. Sarangi, Dr. Chahande and friends. I feel a little embarrassed standing here to inaugurate this seminar. I have said this to Professor Chitre and I do not mind and, I trust, he would not mind my telling it to you. I wonder what could have led Professor Chitre to ask me, who has to my mind no particular qualification, to inaugurate the seminar. There are more knowledgeable and informed scholars on the subject present here who would have been more appropriate for the purpose. My major qualification is that I am an old student and employee of this Institute; but I do not know if that is an adequate ground for this invitation. I have of late been editing a journal that has recently brought out a very special number on Scheduled Castes in the states. But, I was not the editor of this particular issue of that journal. We had a very distinguished sociologist of our country who was the guest editor.

I have nothing very profound to suggest and, therefore, I shall not take much of your time. Fortunately for me, what little I had thought of has already been said. Therefore, I shall be brief. I shall indulge in certain generalities that, I believe, at some stage or the other of your deliberations will come up for discussion and comment.

The first thing that strikes me is that the Scheduled Castes constitute a rural population rather than an urban population. In 1991, some 23% of the Indians lived in the urban areas but only 18% of the Scheduled Castes lived there. Thus, it is predominantly a rural problem. Although there are regional differences, there are broad similarities among the Schedule Castes in the country as a whole.

Moreover, they are essentially a landless group. Sixty per cent of the rural SC households are either landless or owned only small area of house site. Only thirty per cent owned more than one acre of land each. And, only twenty per cent reported themselves to be cultivators in the main. This is a broad picture; there are regional variations. In Maharashtra, for example, the landless households as well as those with only small house sites constituted about 46 per cent and those with more than one acre of land constituted about forty per cent of rural SC households. The situation in Maharashtra is worse than in states, like Madhya Pradesh or Karnataka, where near about fifty five per cent of the rural SC households owned more than one acre of land. These regional differences are relevant in understanding the situation.

We often hear talks about giving land to the landless. Because the Scheduled Castes constitute a large landless population, one thinks that land reform should help in giving some resource in the form of cultivable land to the SC households. But, look at a state like West Bengal where land reform is claimed to have benefited the scheduled castes the most. It is true that the purely landless SC households in this state constituted (in 1992) only 11 per cent of the SC households, much smaller than in Maharashtra. But, nearly half the SC households had less than half an acre of land. And, the average land holding of these fifty per cent households was only 5 decimals of land (one-twentieth of an acre, or 2 *gunthas* by the ordinary measure in Maharashtra). It means, the land of these households was essentially a house site. Surely, this was an improvement over the pre-

* Delivered at the National Workshop on "Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers", jointly organised by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune and Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, March 16-17, 2001.

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land reform period. But, it also underlines the severe limitation of land reform in giving a productive asset in form of cultivable land to the scheduled caste households. West Bengal is much richer in ground water than a state like Maharashtra or non-coastal Karnataka or Telangana, and many other places. Despite the *Barga* (tenancy protection) legislation, seasonal tenancy (in the *rabi* season) is the order of the day in most tube-well irrigated parts of West Bengal. And, the seasonal tenants are mostly landless Scheduled Castes who cultivate about half an acre of leased in land in order to reap summer paddy. There is no security of tenure for them!

I remember working on a government committee some thirty years ago. At that time, the committee was reviewing the implementation of the land reform legislations in Maharashtra. We had the *vatans*, *mahar-vatans*, etc., and all that had been abolished. The *vatandars* were to be given ownership right by paying a nominal compensation equal to twenty times the land revenue (which was only Re.1 to Rs1.5 an acre).. The Committee was informed by the Revenue Department that for 15 years it had been sending notices to all the *mahar-vatandars* in the villages to pay the compensation and become peasant proprietors. However, most of the SC *vatandars* had not cared to do so. Therefore, a final decision was taken to vest ownership in the ex-*watandars* and recover the compensation as arrears of land revenue in small installments over a number of years. The question arose: why were the Mahars not interested? Officers of the Revenue department at the ground level thought that since the *vatan* lands had, over long period, been sub-divided among growing numbers of succeeding right holders, no one was interested in the tiny bits of this land. Many families had migrated to urban areas, and had lost interest in land. Professor Sakharam Deshpande, who is present here, has made an excellent study of the famous cooperative farm of the Mahars near Sangli. His story is very sad. The organiser of the co-operative farm spent not only all his life but also all his financial resources, in trying to put up this co-operative farm of Mahars on their *vatan* land. The final story is very depressing. Distinguished Scheduled Caste leaders who, without being in political power, had influence in the society, tried to organize such co-operative farms on Mahar *watan* lands and finally gave up..

When it comes to the problem of the Scheduled Castes in our state, every activist and scholar swears by Phule and Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar had asked his caste people to get out of the village and go to towns. He had contempt for the village society in so far as the Scheduled Castes were concerned. In Maharashtra, about 35 % of the Scheduled Caste population was urban in 1991. One may think this to be the impact of his advocacy. But, as per the 1991 Census, nearly 38 per cent of the SCs in Gujarat were living in urban areas. The reason may be something different from mere advocacy. After all, together with the total population, the Scheduled Caste population is also increasing in the urban areas. But, in 1991, the percentage of the Scheduled Caste population in urban areas was much higher than the percentage of the total population in the urban areas of Gujarat as well as Maharashtra. This deserves to be looked into carefully.

Let us also consider the problem of education in the urban areas. The percentage of the Scheduled Castes who were literate in the urban areas of Maharashtra was 67 in 1991. There are states, like Gujarat and Kerala, where this percentage was more than 70. The drop out rate for the Scheduled Castes at the primary level in urban area was much lower in neighbouring Gujarat and Karnataka than in Maharashtra. In rural Maharashtra it was worse than in rural Gujarat. One must ask, why.

The Sixth Educational Survey shows a suprising success. In every state of the union (except Rajasthan), the percentage of enrollment in primary schools, i.e., classes 1-

4, of students belonging to Scheduled Castes is higher than the percentage of the Scheduled Caste population in the state, both in rural and urban areas. This is something that should make us happy because we want the students to come to school in larger proportions. All the same, one has to go deeper. What are the other non-Scheduled Caste children doing? Are the Scheduled Tribe children making slower progress? One has to be careful while looking at these figures. There are heavy dropouts. The over all literacy rate depends upon what has happened over generations. There has been greater enrollment of Scheduled Caste children in the primary schools during the last 10-15 years. Unless the drop out rate comes down, literacy cannot improve significantly. These are matters that have to be carefully gone into.

The important point is education. Reservation has become the order of the day. We have reservations not only in schools and in job markets but also in promotions. There is even a talk of amending the constitution in order to provide for reservation in promotion. The point is, why does the demand for reservation arise? I think the reason is the extraordinarily poor quality of education that is being provided. I am not talking about the college or university education with which I'm more familiar. I am talking about the quality of primary education. Those of you who are Marathi reading would have seen an essay by Rajiv Tambe, on the level of primary teachers. It shows that not more than 23 % of the primary teachers, in the two districts that he surveyed, understood basic arithmetic – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. His report is an eye opener. If this is the state of primary education, what kind of education must the Scheduled Caste children be getting? Even with this type of primary education, children are still coming up who prove their mettle at the higher level. This is partly because of the inherent ability of the child and partly because of the family background.

There is a skewed distribution of the inherent ability among the children in every social group in society. The family background certainly greatly helps. This is where the SC children are the most handicapped. Apart from the financial problem, there is no education in the family, no tradition. The child cannot get help from any one in the family. This is, of course, true not only of the Scheduled Caste children but also of children from many other disadvantaged groups in the society. What we should have done in the last 40 years was to provide facility for greater attention at the school level to children from such households. About 40 years ago, when I was going around the school building in the evening in an Israeli village, I saw a lady sitting with some 7-8 children in a classroom. Since the school was over by that time, I asked my companion about what she doing there. He said, "you see, after their normal class hours, some children who are lagging behind, are called by the teacher in the evening and helped to catch up". Every student benefits from such effort of the teacher. This is possible because the number of students in the class is manageably small. But the situation in India to day is different. When I was going to primary school, the class strength was not even 30. Today it is at least 60, often more. Even the best of the teachers cannot help all the children. If the children do not learn, it is nobody's worry. Then emerges the demand for reservation in specialized colleges, like engineering and medicine. Whether it is in these or other higher educational institutions, if the students cannot prove themselves – it is often not surprising, in view of their very poor training in school – there is demand for reservation in jobs and later in promotions. This makes the reserve category student a third class citizens all his life. They might get promoted, but in the privacy of their bedroom the most conscious of them will be regretting their plight. Why do we make the people so petty? If some children do not have the proper family background, it is the

responsibility of the society to provide them with additional facilities in the school to improve themselves. We provide third-rate schools and fourth-rate teachers, and then we expect that the students will come up and prove themselves! Higher education is not a matter of fundamental right. If basic education is good then the selection will take place on the basis of merit. After all, how many people can possibly get jobs in the government through reservation?

We should reflect on what we have done and what we can do. Are there any ITIs in which many of the school students can learn useful occupations, so that they can earn a respectable living either as employees or as self-employed persons? In a fast urbanizing state like Maharashtra, the opportunities must be much greater than in other states. For example, today there is a slowing down of the economy. The ITIs, in many places, are finding smaller number of students willing to join for traditional skills. The students want to go for computer training. The ITIs should be in a position to provide this. Our resources in post school education have not been properly directed. There are at least ten times more seats in higher secondary institutions than in ITIs. Students desirous of going there are forced to seek admission in higher secondary classes. In the last half century, I find we did not think out the social needs properly at every stage, and therefore have lost time.

As I said in the beginning, I have put some random general thoughts for your consideration, using the privilege of being the inaugurator of this workshop. I trust you will have occasion to review these in course of your deliberations.

Thank you.

Development of the Scheduled Castes: A Systemic View*

V M Rao**

I am grateful to the organisers of this seminar for inviting me to participate in the seminar and give the keynote address. I intend to share with you the perceptions I have on the theme of changing development status of the scheduled castes and the prospects in this respect in the coming years. As constituents of a developing society, the scheduled castes suffer from the double handicap of low social status coupled with low occupational status. The low social status has been an outcome of their exposure over a historical past to domination by the mainstream castes – particularly by the rural landowning elites – in the economic and social spheres. The distinguishing feature of the Indian society is the variants of untouchability which separate the scheduled castes from the mainstream castes and, also to an extent, from each other. This feature has the effect of excluding the scheduled castes from the networks which help the mainstream people to participate in the growth and development processes activated by the market and the government. Not surprisingly, the scheduled castes have been pushed down to the lowest rung in the social ladder and have found little help and opportunity in the past to move upwards. In fact, it was not unusual for the other sections in the society to view with apprehension any sign of improvement in the conditions of the scheduled castes. The scheduled castes formed a pool providing cheap labour and undertaking tasks regarded as polluting. It is common for the human societies to have groups of poor subject to severe deprivations of different kinds. But the scheduled castes in India could be regarded as being far worse off than the poor elsewhere in terms of the miserable living conditions and the loss of opportunities, freedom and dignity suffered by them over generations.

The breakdown of traditional village society in India in the recent decades owing to modernisation of agriculture, spread of market economy and growing rural-urban linkage has been a source of some major changes in the conditions and status of the scheduled castes and of the lower strata in general in the rural areas. The most notable change has been the emergence of dalit political formations having a clout strong enough to put the mainstream parties on the defensive. The rapid change over in the nomenclature of the scheduled castes from Harijan to Dalit in just about a decade or so is of enormous significance for the Indian polity. The change reflects a shift in the political initiative in the modernisation of scheduled castes from the paternalistic groups in the mainstream society to groups belonging to the scheduled castes themselves. More important, the polite – almost meek – Harijan eager to be admitted into the fold is getting transformed into a militant Dalit seeking to change the system itself. Behind what might appear to an urban observer as a sudden appearance of the Dalit on the political scene lie complex processes of rural change triggered by the lower caste protest movements of the pre-Independence decades which spread widely and gathered considerable thrust in the decades after Independence. It is enough for our purpose to note that the scheduled castes are no more as helpless and voiceless as in the past. The militancy observed in the parliament and assemblies is not mere rhetoric. It has strong ground level support,

* Keynote Address delivered at the National Workshop on "Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers", jointly organised by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune and Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, March 16-17, 2001.

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organisations and cadres. There has been considerable erosion in the bondages tying down the scheduled castes to particular master and community. Casualisation of agricultural labour and monetisation of wages have made them mobile and part of market economy changing their world view, aspirations for development and capabilities to counter mainstream hostility. The electoral politics has helped them to improve their bargaining power vis-à-vis rural elites. However, the scheduled castes are still far from being placed firmly on the development path. The concrete benefits of development – such as improvement in the living conditions – received by them are likely to be very modest. Even among the landless labourer, the scheduled castes are often seen to be worse off than their counterparts in the mainstream castes. The interesting point to note is the disparity in the performance of the scheduled castes along the principal dimensions viz., the political and the economic. While they have moved considerably ahead at a fast pace in political mobilisation, the improvement registered by them in economic status appears to have been much less impressive. In fact, the indications are that the political mobilisation gathers strength, spread and militancy precisely in areas where the scheduled castes get blocked on the economic route.

This is an interesting clue to pursue further. Keeping in mind their severe handicaps, Indian development strategy has laid special emphasis on affirmative action and a wide range of programmes for the scheduled castes right from the beginning of planning in the early fifties. Half a century is long enough period to expect the strategy to produce tangible and enduring impact. Starting from a state of backwardness comparable to India, countries of East Asia achieved remarkable levels of growth and development in just about a generation. In comparison, not only has the performance of India been quite poor in achieving growth but its record in human development has been dismal. As regards the impact of the development programmes on the scheduled castes, it would be misleading to reach any generalisation for the country as a whole. The southern states have a relatively good record in this respect as compared to the states in the north. However, even the record of these states reflect the limited achievements of the strategy in helping the scheduled castes as would be clear from the points noted below.

- In Karnataka the janatha houses, drinking water schemes and free electricity connection show a good spread in the localities of the scheduled castes. It is not unusual to come across villages where the scheduled caste areas have a better look than the main village.
- It would also seem that the programmes meant for the poor at the bottom like the landless labourers viz., the employment programmes and the public distribution system do reach these groups. A suggestive clue could be the decline in recent years in the BPL population in the southern states. However, what has been achieved in these programmes still very much falls short of the norms of employment guarantee and adequate food security for the people at the bottom.
- The performance is much poorer and patchy in relation to programmes crucial for human development viz. education and health. The awareness among the scheduled castes about the importance of health and education is quite high but the supply side – personnel and institutions – remain weak, non-responsive and non-accountable. In the case of education, it is doubtful that the scheduled castes households have the capacity to see their children through the full cycle of schooling and higher education. There is also evidence that the children who complete the cycle and become graduates find few opportunities for employment suitable to their improved

educational status. In case such opportunities are available on a wide scale, the process of entry of the scheduled castes into the mainstream economy would be relatively smooth and fast. Sadly, the emerging situation appears to be the one where the accumulating frustrations of the scheduled castes youth – as well as of the youth from other lower strata – owing to lack of employment opportunities could become a source of widespread unrest and political turbulence. The scheduled castes realise that their best bet lies in getting out of the stifling village society via higher education. But, at the moment, higher education seems only to serve to sensitise them to their deprivations rather than provide livelihood activities conforming to their aspirations.

- This leads us to the much larger and fundamental theme of the partial and disruptive transition through which our village societies are passing in the course of the externally imposed process of modernisation and integration with the mainstream economy. The growth in the mainstream economy – its slow rate and unfavourable composition – has repercussions on the village societies which are far from development-promoting. Negligence of social sectors weakens the countervailing measures providing safety nets to the poor. Excessive centralisation of policy making processes and tardy progress in activating participatory institutions at the grass roots level make the policy regime unsympathetic – if not hostile – to the desperate struggle of the village societies to adjust to the changes which they can neither control nor fully comprehend. The scheduled castes bear the brunt of the adverse consequences of these trends.

A word about the areas at the other end of the spectrum viz. those with minimal impact of development programmes on the scheduled castes. Rural Bihar could be taken as typical of these areas. The quality of governance at the local and the state level remains very low in these areas. The poor get little protection from law. The scheduled castes live in a state of perpetual confrontation with landowning intermediate and upper castes who freely use oppressive tactics including physical violence. This is hardly a setting favourable for orderly implementation of development programmes. Field studies show that the public distribution system is virtually absent in these areas. A surprising development in some of these areas – for example, Bihar – has been the improvement in agricultural growth in the last about two decades with a measure of rise in wages. More important, the scheduled castes have been able to put their oppressors on the defensive and some researchers believe that they have been able to bargain effectively with the employers on wages. One cannot overlook the widespread misery and the appalling conditions of the scheduled castes in these areas. However, there is also a hint that the scheduled castes have the ability to counter the attacks of the mainstream castes and even drive a hard bargain with them. If this is true, one need not totally lose the hope that eventually the Indian democracy would become broad based enough to accommodate the marginalised groups at the bottom of the social ladder. Unless this happens and fairly soon enough, there would always be a shadow hovering over the prospects of India becoming a developed economy with a cohesive society.

If we are ready to be optimistic on this score, it is possible to visualise two prospective scenarios of progress in the development of the scheduled castes. First, substantial improvements in the development programmes could be brought about within the present system if the provisions for decentralisation and participatory institutions with representation for the scheduled castes are fully implemented. The following changes may be expected to occur though the time frame could differ from area to area.

- Policymaking and implementation of development programmes by the line departments do not quite succeed in delivering the package of development inputs and services to the scheduled castes which is the objective of the development strategy. Unless a household gets the whole package, the desired development impact would not be realised by the household. Further, when the package is incomplete, even the benefits obtained by the household from the programmes which it receives could be much less than the planned benefit. If the development programmes are transferred to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, effective delivery of package of programmes could become feasible.
- Crucial to effective implementation of development programmes are the rapport of the development personnel with the scheduled castes and their accountability to the households belonging to the target groups. When the development personnel at the district and lower levels come under the control of PRIs, the performance of the development personnel may be expected to improve considerably.
- Alert and responsive development personnel could make it possible to target the development programme on the intended subgroups of the poor and the disadvantaged. This assumes particular importance in the case of scheduled castes with significant heterogeneity and development disparities among the large number of subcastes constituting the category. Properly targeted programmes would mean more aggregate benefits to the target groups from the given funds allotted to the programmes as well as a better idea about the quantum of funds needed to cover the target groups within the desired timeframe. Competitive politics create powerful pressure for allocating funds for the programmes meant for the poor and for the scheduled caste and tribes. Mere earmarking of more funds without effective targeting would only encourage more corruption and leakages. The vicious circle is completed by more strident demands for further increases in allocation!

The second scenario we have in mind rests on an even more optimistic assumption bordering, some may say, on wishful thinking. If we look objectively at the changes in the Indian economy since Independence from the point of view of their impact on the position of the poor in the total system, the following trends could easily be discerned.

- The developmental gap between the rural and the urban areas is widening with a significant part of the rural people having no access to even basic minimum amenities.
- The numbers in vulnerable groups - landless labourers, artisans, who have lost their markets and small and marginal farmers - are growing rapidly. There are a host of policies and programmes to provide safety nets to them but, in practice the poor receive little concrete benefit from them.
- The policymaking elites do show some concern about providing a floor below which the poor would not fall. Monitoring of poverty based on the poverty line reflects well this concern. However, the development task of enabling the poor to rise steadily above the poverty line does not receive the necessary attention and priority. The policies critical for this purpose - like land reforms - seem to have little chance of being adopted in the present system.

In the light of these features, it is tempting to formulate the proposition that from the point of view of the position and status assigned to the poor the system which the policymaking elites desire to build at the national level is not very different in essentials from the traditional village societies described at the very outset in this

address. The untouchability practices and the overt coercion and exploitation of the scheduled caste may diminish but not their marginalisation in the society and their inability to have access to the mainstream growth and development processes. In other words while the gap between the scheduled castes and the poor may get eliminated, the gap between the poor and the elite may widen making the former second class citizens, if not non-citizens. So long as the scheduled castes remain Harijans in the sense of internalising the norms of behaviour laid down by the elite, they would hardly have a chance to counter the elite. On the other hand when Harijan matures into Dalit and aligns himself with other marginalised groups like minorities and lower castes, the scheduled castes could become a force capable of bringing about basic changes in the conditions of the poor. The followers of Gandhi chose the elite lifestyle abandoning the mission of pushing India towards a just and humane society. Would the followers of Ambedkar accept the challenge? I must apologise for closing this presentation with a question rather than an answer. But I hope to go back better informed and enlightened.

Thank you.

Programmes for Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra: Facts and Perspective

Sanjay Chahande*

Considering the poor condition of the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the successive five-year plans have regarded their progress as a major objective of national social policy. The Government of Maharashtra has been taking lot of initiatives for the development of these deprived classes by introducing various developmental programmes. While presenting the various developmental programmes that are available for the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra and their coverage, this paper highlights the achievements of certain developmental programmes in the state.

I Introduction

The Social Welfare activities in post-independent India find their inspiration in the Constitution of India, which postulates the goal of a Welfare State. Article 38 of the Constitution directs that the State shall strive to promote the welfare 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.

The Social Welfare Programmes were originally oriented mostly towards providing promotive, protective and curative services. Of late, the emphasis of these programmes is on preventive, developmental and rehabilitative services developed with regard to physically handicapped persons as also backward class people including Scheduled Castes, Vimukta jatis and Nomadic Tribes and Special Backward Classes.

The Scheduled Castes have been specified by 15 Presidential Orders issued under the provisions of Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution of India. According to the 1991 Census the percentage of Scheduled Castes population in Maharashtra is 11.10 and that of Vimukta Jatis and the Nomadic Tribes is 11 per cent to the total population of Maharashtra. The Maharashtra Government is also one of the State Governments which has also specified other categories known as Other Backward Classes.

While the Constitution has prescribed certain protective measures and safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the successive Five-Year Plans have regarded their progress as a major objective of national social policy. The Constitution prescribes protection and safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes specially by way of insisting on their general rights as citizens and with the object of promoting their educational and economic interests and removing their social disabilities.

The increasing investments made through different Five-Year Plans in the Backward Class Welfare and Social Welfare Sectors reflecting the growing interest of the Government in providing welfare services to its citizens. The subject "Social Welfare" being in the concurrent list is the responsibility of the State Government, as well as, the Central Government.

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Background of the Social Welfare Department in Maharashtra

The origin of the present Social Welfare Department goes back to the establishment of the Criminal Tribes Settlement Department, which used to control the so called Criminal Tribes through the Criminal Tribes Act. This Act provided for the establishment of settlements for restricting the movements and activities by asking them to give roll call at a fixed time. The Criminal Tribes Act was repealed as a result of the recommendations made by Dr. Antrolikar Committee in its report, during the regime of the first popular Government (Kher, Chief Minister) in the Bombay State. A new Act known as the Habitual Offenders' Act was then enacted to deal with habitual criminals as defined in the Act.

In the year 1956, the States were reorganised on linguistic basis on the new bilingual Bombay State came into existence, with new areas from Madhya Pradesh and former Hyderabad State attached to it. The pattern of work under Backward Class Welfare and Social Welfare in these new areas was different. The Bombay State Government then decided to establish a new Department of Social Welfare covering various subjects like Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, Welfare of Women and Children, Welfare of the Physically handicapped etc. This Department was separated and came into existence on 15/9/1957 vide Government Resolution, Labour and Social Welfare Department No.BCE/2857/D, dated 23/9/1957.

The work of Social Welfare Department comprises three main categories. The three wings are as follows:

- 1) Director of Social Welfare looking after Scheduled Castes, Vimukta Jatis and Nomadic Tribes and Other Backward Classes.
- 2) The separate Directorate has been established for the Women and Child Welfare.
- 3) Working pertaining to the education and rehabilitation of the physically handicapped like the blind, the deaf and the orthopaedically handicapped and the mentally handicapped.

Present Organisational Set-up of the Directorate

The Director of Social Welfare is the Head of the Department. He is assisted by one Additional Director and five Joint Directors. Other officers in the head office include seven Deputy Directors and eight Assistant Directors, One Assistant Director (Audit) (Chief Audit and Accounts Officer) and four Special Officers.

Divisional/District Set-up of the Directorate

The officers of the Six Divisional Social Welfare Officers are at Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, Nagpur, Amravati and Aurangabad. These Divisional Officers have been declared as the Regional Heads for the implementation of certain schemes directly and for coordination of the activities of the Directorate in their regions including the activities transferred to the Zilla Parishads.

The work of the Directorate was decentralized to some extent by delegating certain administrative and financial powers to the Divisional Officers.

The officers of the District Social Welfare (who are in Class-I service) were established in 26 districts in the year 1981 with the introduction of Special Component Plan. Later on extended to 30 for new four districts. They are entrusted with the work pertaining to all the three wings of the Department viz. Backward Class Welfare

(Schemes not transferred to Zilla Parishads, such as, Post SSC Scholarships, Government Backward Class hostels, Employment etc.) and welfare of physically and mentally handicapped. He also functions as monitoring authority for the 20 Point Programme (Clause 110 and Backward Class Welfare schemes implemented by other department under the Special Component Plan).

The Directorate also has its Social Welfare Officers (Class-II service) in each Zilla Parishad, to implement Backward Class Welfare Schemes transferred to the Zilla Parishads. However, the Department has no officers at the Taluka level.

Welfare Schemes for the Backward Classes

Following important schemes are being implemented by Social Welfare Department:

1) Education

This includes schemes like Hostels for Backward Class students, grant of tuition fees and scholarships to Backward Class students post SSC scholarships to backward Class students and Ashram Shalas for Vimukta Jatis and Nomadic Tribe students, Public Schools etc.

2) Housing

Providing subsidy and loans for construction of houses to Co-operative Housing Societies of Scheduled Castes.

3) Improvement of Dalit Basti

Infrastructural development work and providing basic amenities like drinking water, gutters, roads, electricity, toilets, community halls etc.

4) Implementation of protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocity) Act, 1989.

5) Verification of Caste Certificates.

6) Economic Upliftment through Finance Development Corporations.

- (a) Mahatma Phule Backward Class Development Corporation.
- (b) Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe Development Corporation.
- (c) Leather Industries and Development Corporation.

7) Welfare of Physically Handicapped, welfare of Deaf and Dumb, mentally retarded and Orthopaedically handicapped.

8) Special Component Plan

Overall Planning, Implementation and Monitoring of Special Component Plan.

In Maharashtra the voluntary agencies play a major role in implementing Government schemes in addition to their own welfare programmes. The activities under Backward Class Welfare and Social Welfare are both in the Government sector and the voluntary sector. This is a special feature of the welfare services in Maharashtra State. The following statement shows the work that is done in Voluntary Sector and the State Sector. It will be clear from this that the work of the Social Welfare Department has grown both in volume and complexity.

Institutions Under the Director of Social Welfare

Backward Class Welfare

No.		Govt.	Beneficiary	Voluntary	Beneficiary
1.	Backward Class hostels	243	18794	2287	93928
	Boys				
	Girls				
	129				114
2.	(a) Ashram Shala for VJNT			519-VINT	56760
				10-SC	17320
	(b) Post Basic Ashram Shalas			153-VJNT	
3.	Public School for Scavengers	2	63	1	240
4.	Public School for VJNT			1	120

No		Govt.	Beneficiary	Voluntary	Beneficiary
1	Schools for the Blind	4	220	56	3240
2	School for the Deaf	3	150	207	10350
3	Schools for the Orthopaedically Handicapped	8	485	169	8450
4	Schools for the Mentally Handicapped			130	6500
5	Multipurpose Group Complex	7	330		
6	Homes for the Aged & Infirm			80	1870
7	Leprosy Institute			1	72
8	Beggars Home	14	1878		
9	Matoshri Vruddhashram			31	545

Budget

The Plan Expenditure for the last Four Five Year Plans is as follows

No	Five year Plan	Year	Approved outlay	Actual expenditure
1.	Sixth	1980 to 1985	16124.18	13802.00
2.	Seventh	1985-1990	38074.71	46590.35
	Annual Plan	1990-1991	16061.78	14050.92
	Annual Plan	1991-1992	16095.41	22311.18
	Total	1990-1992	32157.19	36362.10
3.	Eighth	1992-1997	190223.30	184752.93
4.	Ninth	1997-2002	272452.00	240343.63
5.	Annual Plan	1997-1998	37452.00	36168.74
	Annual Plan	1998-1999	60800.00	48265.36
	Annual Plan	1999-2000	64000.00	45709.53
	Annual Plan	2000-2001	55100.00	50800.00

Approximately

It is seen that there is a multifold increase in the 9th Five Year Plan. It can also be observed that in 6th and 7th Five-Year Plan, the expenditure is more than 100 per cent. But in the Annual plan of 1991-92 the expenditure is about 80 per cent. In the 8th Five Year Plan it is observed that revised plan was much more than the original proposed outlay. But in the 9th Five Year Plan of the total budget allocation of Rs.1210 crores, the

expenditure so far is Rs.463 crores i.e., only 38 per cent. For the three years the expenditure is only 68 per cent (Rs.463 crores is 68 per cent) out of the total budget of Rs.677 crores.

II Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra at a Glance

Scheduled Castes population in Maharashtra as per 1990-91 Census is 87,57,842 which comes to 11.9 per cent of the total population of Maharashtra State.

Maximum percentage of population i.e., 19.4 per cent is in the Latur District as against that the minimum percentage of Scheduled Castes population is in Ratnagiri District i.e., 1.77 per cent only. In absolute terms maximum Scheduled Castes population is in Gr. Bombay which is 6.45 lakhs as against that the minimum Scheduled Castes population is in Ratnagiri District which is 27,385 only. The districtwise Scheduled Castes population is Annexed.

Urban Rural Break-up

As per 1991 Census 63 per cent of Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra are in rural area and 36 per cent are in urban area. The censuswise position from 1961 is as follows :

Rural and Urban Population of Scheduled Castes			
Census Year	Rural Population	Urban Population	Total Population
1961	17,41,461 (78.20 %)	4,85,453 (21.80 %)	22,26,914
1971	62,79,026 (75.32 %)	7,46,735 (24.68 %)	30,25,761
1981	30,65,938 (68.44 %)	14,13,825 (31.56 %)	44,79,763
1991	55,52,004 (63.39 %)	32,05,838 (36.61 %)	87,57,842

Thus, it will have to be seen that proportionate allocation of Plan outlay is made for urban and rural population.

Educational status

The total literacy of Maharashtra as per 1991 Census is 64.84 per cent with male literacy being 76 per cent and female being 43 per cent As against this total literacy percentage of Scheduled Caste population 56.46 per cent - male being 70.45 per cent and female being 38 per cent. The literacy rate amongst the Scheduled Castes over three decades is as follows:

Year	Percentage of State	Scheduled Castes
1971	33.80	14.7
1981	42.00	27.8
1991	64.08	56.4

Thus, it is seen that the literacy among the Scheduled Castes is increasing with steady speed. But female literacy which stands at only 39 per cent, is an area of great concern. Further alarming picture is that drop out rate of females from 1st to 10th standard is very high i.e., 84 per cent. Thus, even though many schemes are being implemented in education sector there is a need to target them more towards the female education.

Work Force

The land holding percentage of Scheduled Castes as compared to the general population is annexed.

It is pertinent to note that 52 per cent of male workers are agricultural labourers. 28 per cent are cultivators but out of this 84 per cent are small and marginal farmers only. Categorywise percentage of Scheduled Caste workers in Maharashtra is as follows:

No.	Break up of Main Workers	1991 Census (percentage to Gen. Population)	1991 Census	1991 Census
1	Cultivators	15.63	4.99	14.39
2	Agricultural labourers	46.84	16.68	48.08
3	Live Stock, Forestry Fishing, Plantation of Orchards and Allied Activities.	Indicated in Item Nos. 6 to 9	0.37	
4	Mining and Quarrying		0.18	5
5.	Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs		1.20	
	(a) Household Industry	6.38	2.99	
	(b) Other than house-hold Industry			
6	Construction	38.15	1.42	
7	Trade & Commerce	--	1.45	
8	Transport, Storage and Communication	Sr.No. 3,4 & 6 to 9	1.25	
9	Other Services		4.16	12.08
	Total - Main Workers	100.00	34.69	100.00

Thus, it is seen that the work forcewise Scheduled Castes are at the most disadvantageous position. Agricultural labourers are always a assetless lot. Socially also they are at the worst situation.

Any plan for the welfare of Scheduled Castes has to first target the schemes towards this group.

It is pertinent to note that Agriculture Landless percentage has increased from 1981 to 1991. The census abstract of workforce pattern of Scheduled Caste is annexed but the agriculture labourer position is as follows.

Census Year	Male	Female	Total
1971	363854 (46.18 %)	275751 (72.17 %)	639605 (54.67 %)
1981	425437 (46.40 %)	418973 (66.07 %)	844410 (46.84 %)
1991	805267 (37.16 %)	862825 (66.25 %)	1668092 (48.08 %)

It is observed that almost all primary leather workers are from Scheduled Castes. Unclean occupation like scavenging, sweeping, flaying and tanning etc., are entirely left to the Scheduled Castes. In the urban area, a large proportion of rickshaw pullers, cart pullers, other un-organised non-agricultural wage labourers and civic sanitation workers belong to the Scheduled Castes.

Below Poverty Line Families

The last Below Poverty Line Survey was conducted in Maharashtra in the year 1997. From this survey, it is seen that in general population the Below Poverty Line percentage is 35 per cent as against that the Below Poverty Line percentage of Scheduled Castes is high as 52 per cent.

It is further seen that the Below Poverty Line is high as 88 per cent in the districts like Wardha, Bhandara. The districtwise Below Poverty Line percentage list is annexed in Annexure No. IV.

Thus, it is obvious that there exists wide gap in the poverty status of general population as against the Scheduled Caste population and in some districts most of the Scheduled Caste families are under Below Poverty Line.

III The Review of Welfare Schemes*Backward Class Finance Development Corporations*

In Maharashtra for the Economic Development of Scheduled Castes there are three Finance Corporations i.e., (1) Mahatma Phule Development Corporation; (2) Leather Industries Development Corporation; (3) Anna Bhau Sathe Development Corporation. All these three Corporations, implement schemes for the specific Castes from the Scheduled Castes.

Basically these three corporations implement following three Schemes:

Margin Money Scheme

Under this scheme 75 per cent money is a Bank loan component and 25 per cent money is given by the Corporation as soft loan.

15 per cent Subsidy Scheme

This scheme is implemented from the Special Plan Assistance of Government of India. Under this scheme there is a 50 per cent subsidy up to the maximum of Rs. 5000/-.

Training Programme for Self Employment

Under Margin Money scheme total of 26,000 beneficiaries were assisted with 19 crores of expenditure. Under 50 per cent Subsidy Scheme total of 23700 beneficiaries were assisted with Rs.86 crores and under the Training Schemes 19500 were trained by spending Rs.2.17 Crores.

An evaluation was conducted by Mahatma Phule Development Corporation of these three schemes, implemented in the decade 1981-82 to 1990-91.

Important findings of this study are as follows :

1. Majority of the beneficiaries were from urban area.
2. 60 per cent of the beneficiaries had more income than the stipulated income limit fixed by the Corporation.
3. Only 38 per cent were females.
4. Only 42 per cent beneficiaries were doing the given project properly.
5. 46 per cent had left the business half way through.
6. 10 per cent had not at all started the business.
7. 28 per cent felt that the assistance which they got is less than required investment for that business.

8. Only 10 per cent beneficiaries were followed by the Officers of Corporations or Banks.
9. 89 per cent of the beneficiaries who were properly doing business were earning positive income.
10. In certain trades like Auto Rikshaw the success rate was very high.
11. Most of the beneficiaries had got the information about the schemes from local activists and not from the Bank's or the Corporation's Officers.
12. The training scheme was absolutely ineffective.
13. Response from the Bankers was not proper. The full subsidy was not being released by the Banks.
14. The Corporation was more concerned about the completing the target rather than the overall success of a particular project.

In the final analysis out of 15 lakhs the total targeted beneficiaries of the Corporation till the year 1991 beneficiaries who had got the benefit was about 1,30,000 which comes to about 9 per cent of the target. Hence 91 per cent of the targeted beneficiaries were untouched by the Corporations till the year 1990-91. If the same projections are made for the current year i.e., 2000-2001 then about 80 per cent of the beneficiaries are left untouched by the Corporations even today.

It is felt that most of the beneficiaries had no background of doing business. Further there were no diversification of the various activities. Hence, it is felt that unless proper capacity is developed of an individual it is not proper to give him benefit under one or the other schemes. It is essential to have a proper Entrepreneurship Development Programme whereby first the beneficiaries are selected, they are given rigorous training and then only selected students who are found fit after the training Programme are only given the benefits of one or other schemes of the Corporation.

Further these Corporations will have to reach more in rural areas. The specific percentage of the target can be fixed for the females which can be 50 per cent.

There is need to strengthen the coordination between banks and corporations and also the follow-up of both these organisations needs to be strengthened.

They must also focus on extension and motivation aspect.

Thus, Corporations need to reorient their approach from target oriented approach to Total Entrepreneurship Development approach.

Educational Schemes

Various educational welfare and incentive scheme have been the main thrust area in the Social Welfare Department. As much as 60 per cent of the total budget of the Social Welfare Department is spent on education sector only. The educational schemes are as follows:

1. Various educational institutions in the form of Government Hostel, Aided Hostel and Ashram Schools. The number and details are annexed.
2. Government of India Post Matric Scholarship.
3. Reimbursement of tuitions fees, Examinations fees for Scheduled Castes students at all levels.
4. Other schemes like providing Uniforms, Book Bank, Special Coaching, Attendance Allowance, etc.

The Review

The first step towards the welfare of the Scheduled Castes was taken by Government establishing by Government Hostel viz. Sant Dnyaneshwar Government Hostel for the Scheduled Castes students at Pune in the year 1922. In the year 2000 there are 243 Hostels. The total intake capacity of all the Hostels is 14000. But it is seen that the number of Girls' Hostel is only 94. There are many talukas where the Girls' Hostels are still not existing. The number of the applications for Hostel admissions received are three times that of the existing capacity of the Hostels, hence there is need to increase the number of Government Hostels in Maharashtra.

The Government Hostels basically cater to the Post Matric students. The Grant-in-aid Hostels which are 2289 in number cater to the students from 5th to 10th standard. The total intake capacity is about 96,000.

Considering the heavy drop out of Scheduled Castes students which is 46 per cent from 1st to 5th standard, 62 per cent from 1st to 8th standard and 77 per cent from 1st to 10th standard, there is further need to increase the number of Hostels or Ashram Schools in the State of Maharashtra.

Government of India Scholarships

On an average per annum Rs. 60 crores budget is kept for this scheme and the total number of beneficiaries is about 1,70,000 per year.

Study was conducted by Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai to evaluate this scheme. The major findings are as follows:

1. The number of male beneficiaries are doubled than the number of female beneficiaries.
2. Almost all students had opined that without the Post Matric Scholarship, it would have been impossible to under take the Higher Level education.
3. Majority of the students had to wait from 6 to 9 months from the commencement of academic years from getting the scholarship.
4. Majority of the students felt that the amount was inadequate.

Thus, this scheme has been of great benefit to the students and can be said to have made substantial dent in the higher education of the Scheduled Castes students.

The recommendation was that the (a) scholarship amount be increased; (b) the income limit ceiling be increased upto Rs.80,000/- for general courses and Rs.1,00,000/- for professional courses.

Conclusion

There is steady increase in the literacy percentage of the Scheduled Castes. In 1971 the literacy percentage of the Scheduled Castes was 14 per cent which is increased to as high as 56.4 per cent. This achievement by no ways is mean. Thus, it can be concluded that the various educational schemes which are being implemented by the Social Welfare Department is giving good results.

It is further seen from the table which indicates that Maharashtra tops the country with 95 per cent of the students getting free education in various educational institutions.

However, the female literacy is still very bad which 38 per cent and the girls' drop out from 1st to 10th standard is extremely high i.e., 84 per cent. Hence there is need to have better targeting and more schemes for the girls' education.

SC and ST Students Receiving Free Education in Rural Areas (in Government Institutions) – July 1990 – June 1991 (Percentage)

No.	State	Scheduled Caste		Scheduled Tribe	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1.	Andhra Pradesh	95.88	86.40	89.42	100.00
2.	Assam	81.60	88.80	86.76	92.17
3.	Bihar	86.71	86.41	81.49	73.31
4.	Gujarat	86.93	90.76	90.37	95.76
5.	Jammu & Kashmir	94.12	86.09	87.49	100.00
6.	Haryana	83.50	95.02	100.00	100.00
7.	Karnataka	88.68	91.40	93.01	89.23
8.	Kerala	55.77	48.73	30.10	39.44
9.	Maharashtra	94.84	96.46	94.40	93.83
10.	Madhya Pradesh	65.24	73.09	69.96	88.66
11.	Orissa	71.87	73.85	83.11	85.94
12.	Punjab	80.32	80.29	61.71	52.99
13.	Rajasthan	79.84	86.11	82.17	92.08
14.	Tamil Nadu	83.55	79.67	95.31	86.03
15.	Uttar Pradesh	55.30	66.53	47.23	69.16
16.	West Bengal	71.94	76.89	67.98	85.73

Source: NSSO 46th Round, July 1993.

Dalit Basti Improvement Scheme

The village structure in Maharashtra is a typical as that of the entire country, whereby Harijan Basti is located away from the main village settlement. Further infrastructure facilitywise this Harijan Basti is very poor. Benefits which have reached to the main village do not percolate down to this settlement.

Government of Maharashtra started the Dalit Basti Improvement Scheme from the year 1974. The aim of this scheme is to provide infrastructural facilities and basic amenities like internal roads, gutters, water supply scheme, community halls, toilets, etc.

On an average for last three years per annum about Rs.50 crores outlay is being kept of this scheme. On an average about 2000 Bastis are being covered under this scheme since 1992.

Even though there is no formal evaluation study of this scheme the general feed back from the field machinery is that sanitationwise and water supplywise this scheme has immensely benefited the Dalit Bastis.

However, there is no proper survey of the Dalit Basti and there is need to have proper survey so that this scheme may be implemented in more cost effective way.

Co-operative Housing Scheme

This Scheme was introduced in the year 1949 for popularly known as P.W.R. scheme. Under this scheme the loan subsidy and construction subsidy is given to the beneficiaries by Government.

There are two phases in the scheme with old pattern and new pattern. The new pattern was introduced in the year 1974. It is seen that the Social Welfare Department was giving loan, as well as, subsidy as per old pattern, while as per new pattern only subsidy component is given by the Social Welfare Department and loan component is to be raised from the Maharashtra Housing Finance Corporation.

It is seen that success rate of the old pattern is as high as 90 per cent. As against that 70 per cent houses are left incomplete in a new pattern.

The Government has so far spent Rs. 35 crores from the year 1974 on this scheme.

The total targeted beneficiaries were 58,000 as against that only 28,000 beneficiaries have got the completed houses. It means that only 50 per cent of the benefit has been utilised and 50 per cent money has almost gone down the drain. Further the recovery of loan component is about 45 per cent.

As the success rate of the exiting scheme is extremely poor, there is need to totally reform this scheme.

The readymade housing from Government agencies like MHADA, CIDCO, can be purchased. The funds can be directly given to them. This can eliminate the bogus Cooperative Societies which swindle the funds. Further, because of procedural delays, the cost of the project increases and this is also one of the reasons for incomplete schemes.

The *Indira Awas Yojana* which is being implemented by the D.R.D.A. with the help of Government of India funds is successful scheme and more money can be pumped in by Government of Maharashtra, so that in targeted manner housing can be provided to all needy beneficiaries.

IV Special Component Plan

The concept of Special Component Plan was introduced by Government of India in the year 1979-80. The Government of Maharashtra started its implementation from the year 1980-81.

For proper implementation of Special Component Plan the district-level machinery was created in Social Welfare Department in the year 1981. The major policy initiative was taken in the year 1994-95 when the Government decided on trial basis the Planning Authority would be Social Welfare Department. This system was formalised by the G.R. of year 1999 and the Social Welfare Department is the planning authority for Special Component Plan in the same way as that of the Tribal Department for TSP. Earlier, the Planning Department use to earmark the proportionate outlay to each and every department.

As the planning process has come to Social Welfare Department proper sectoral targetting is possible because Social Welfare Department can prioritise the schemes, decide the sectoral outlays and introduce new scheme or modify the existing scheme. It is essential to have more outlays and schemes which can give direct benefit to the Scheduled Caste population. Special Component Plan planning cannot be the process of keeping 11 per cent outlay against each and every scheme in General Plan. It has to be Plan targetted towards the specific problems of Scheduled Castes.

Thus, the plan has to be targetted towards giving some productive asset to landless labourers increasing the productivity of land of small and marginal cultivators, to improve the efficiency of traditional occupation and generate self employment.

It is further analysed that the participation of Scheduled Castes has to be increased in co-operative sector. The quality of education has to be addressed to. Overall empowerment of Scheduled Caste women is also essential. Thus, the schemes will have to be formulated towards the specific needs of the Scheduled Caste population.

Study Group Recommendations

Government of Maharashtra had constituted a Study Group to recommend for proper planning of Special Component Plan in 9th Five Year Plan. Their recommendation are

as follows: (i) It is proposed that the percentage of SCP should be increased upto 16.50 per cent as the percentage of SC population during the year 1996-2002 likely to be increased; (ii) The percentage of SCP 60 per cent for the preliminary services to 40 per cent for individual benefits of SC families; (iii) National outlay should be deleted; (iv) Proportionate outlay taking into account of SC population of Vidarbha/Marathwada/Rest of Maharashtra.

Agriculture and Allied Services

Crop

- (i) The State Government has allowed lands to the Sc families but irrigation facilities are not available. Hence, is proposed that packed programme should be prepared and land developments bullock cart, electrical pipe etc., should be provided/land development digging of way etc., should be implemented. Promigies where irrigation facilities available subsidy the amount of purchases seeds and fertilizers equipment etc., pesticides should be granted to these families. Selected small farm families should be granted loan through the bank on minor rate of interest. In rural areas seminars of this SC beneficiaries should be contacted on training of operation of equipment should be given to them. All equipments such of seed, fertilizers should be provided before starting harvest.
- (ii) At present the rates and subsidies are low to the percentage of subsidy is very meagre. Therefore, the SC farmers are unable to take advantage of these schemes. Therefore, the Study Group proposed to enhance the rate of loan subsidy taking into account. Present market rate/ transportation rates are high.
- (iii) Collective farms systems should be introduced among two to five SC farmers. The high power point should be provided.

Animal Husbandry

Goat, sheep, farming poultry development scheme should be developed at local basis.

Dairy Development

- (i) At present the sanctioning subsidy is very low. It is proposed that grant of supply of cows/buffaloes should be enhanced.
- (ii) The cooperative dairy society in remove area should be revised as comprises to progressive state or the progressive development area. Due to it subsidy to agriculture.

Fish Development

The capital share amount and the management subsidy amount should be revised. The rate of transportation and sales subsidy should be increased.

Co-operative

The all schemes of cooperative department under SCP should be revised and show that SCP beneficiaries can be benefitted. The rate of subsidy and income ceiling limit should be increased so that the SCP beneficiaries should get the benefit of it.

Power Development

The rural electrification and dalit basti should be electrified and rent of Rs.10/- per month per beneficiary should be charged and meter system should be closed, as well as,

electrical connections to electrical pumps should be given on priority basis on 50 per cent of subsidy basis.

Industries and Minerals

Rural artisans, handicapped, small industries, grocery shops etc., should be provided financial assistance with training and the SC beneficiaries who desires to do the occupations such as, brick works, maintenance of scooter, pan stall etc., should be given financial assistance and cooperation. From the Backward Class Financial Corporation of Mahatma Phule, Lokshahir Annabhau Sathé Mahamandal in this respect the share capital budgetary provision should be increased.

The Industrial Estate should be introduced in Dalit Bastis only. In future the MIDC should invariably established nearby Dalit basti and priority should be given to Small Scale Industries.

Housing

- (i) In Urban area the houses should be constructed at Government cost and should be provided to SC/NBs beneficiaries at present where they reside.
- (ii) Study Group has proposed a new Housing Board for SC/NBs on the lines of MADHA and all the housing schemes should be transferred to that housing board and Government should provide sufficient funds.
- (iii) On the line of Andhra and Haryana the housing scheme should be implemented in Maharashtra.

Urban Development Department

At present the scheme is implemented through Urban development Department should be implemented on priority for SC/NBs beneficiaries where they reside.

Welfare of Backward Class

- (i) The education facilities towards sanction of scholarships should be sanctioned to all children in the family instead of two children.
- (ii) For admission purpose the basic pay for the servant of Class-III and Class-IV should only be considered.
- (iii) Ashram Schools for SC beneficiaries should be implemented in all districts of Maharashtra.
- (iv) Tailoring Class, Typing classes, Motor driving should be given to the needy SC persons and these schemes should be implemented in all districts of Maharashtra.
- (v) Drinking Water, social forestry, plantation, gardening, cleanliness in Voluntary Organisations and Govt. institutions programme should be undertaken on priority basis.
- (vi) Pre-recruitment of Female Police Constables along with necessary arrangement should be made.
- (vii) To develop sport sufficient instrument for exercise should be provided in hostels, Ashram Schools and Dalit Bastis.
- (viii) Maintenance allowance to the Boys and Girls who are residing in hostels should be increased. Further amount towards supply of uniform to girls should be increased.
- (ix) Since, 1995-96 the scheme under SCP has been transferred to Social Welfare Department for preparation of planning, monitoring and supervision but due to inadequate staff presently provided at the disposal of Director of Social Welfare,

the work mentioned above is not being effectively done, hence, adequate staff at Directorate level and Secretariat level should be provided immediately.

- (x) The Social Welfare Officer as Class-II in Zilla Parishad should be upgraded as Class-I as all other heads of departments in Zilla Parishads are Class-I.
- (xi) At six Divisional level Additional Commissioner in Social Welfare Department should be created and the post of Divisional Social Welfare Officer be upgraded as Commissioner.
- (xii) At taluka one executive officer and at village one Talathi or Kotwal should be created.
- (xiii) According to the judgement given by the High Court the Caste Verification Committee be headed by the Additional Director and the Joint Director and knowledgeable person from the field of different castes and communities in the rank of Class-I for each division should be created.

Evaluation of Study Results

Government of Maharashtra had conducted evaluation study to see the impact of certain schemes implemented under Special Component Plan. One of the important scheme was that of providing well, pump set and other benefits to the Below Poverty Line Scheduled Caste farmers. This study revealed that only 29 per cent of the beneficiaries could cross the poverty line.

The Planning Department had also conducted a study to evaluate the impact of giving assistance to sugarcane growers Scheduled Caste farmers. This study showed that scheme was more beneficial to co-operative sugar factories than the farmers. This study had in fact revealed that the excess payment was made to the sugar co-operative factories than actual number of farmers benefitted.

Another evaluation study was conducted of the scheme whereby thatched roofs are replaced by Mangalory tiles or galvanised sheets. This study revealed that 85 per cent beneficiaries had got material in good condition and 15 per cent of the beneficiaries, material was not received in good condition, 5 per cent of the beneficiaries had disposed off material, 90 per cent of the beneficiaries had found that the material supplied was useful and 10 per cent had said that it was useless. 75 per cent of the beneficiaries opined that this scheme had solved shelter problem.

Issues for Special Component Plan

- Tackle Landless Labourers.
- Improve Small and Marginal Farmers..
- Tackle Unemployed Youth.
- Modernize Traditional Occupation.
- Improve The Environment.
- Entry in Co-operative Sector.
- Excellence in Education.
- Empowering the Women.

V Notes on Difficulties Arising in the Manner of Investigating and Enforcement of the SC|ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989

Need for Ammendment of the Act

The Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and SC|ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, is implemented in the State of Maharashtra.

The Government of Maharashtra Social Welfare, Cultural Department has issued Government of Maharashtra resolution the relief to the victims of atrocities vide No.UTA-1095/CR No.1169/BCW-2 dated 24.9.1997, according to the scheduled caste/scheduled tribes prevention of atrocity rule 1995 (schedule attached to rule no.12(4) as an Annexure-1).

The schedule shows the reliefs to the victims according to section of the atrocity acts as below:

No	Type of Offence	Atrocity Act Rule No.	Provision	Suggestion for Ammendment
1.	Relating to Right to Franchise	3(1)(VII)	20,000/- to be given as per nature of gravity of offence.	It is experienced that the bogus complaints are coming as the Monitory relief Rs.20,000/-receives. There can be provision to recover the money with interest if after trial court comes to the conclusion that complaint was false.
2.	Insult Intimidation and Humiliation	3(1)X	Rs.25,000/- is to be given to the victims as below. 1. 25 per cent chargesheet is sent to court. 2. Rest amount after the conviction.	As Above
3.	Outraging the Modesty of a Woman	3(I)(XI)	Rs.50,000/-is given to victims 50 per cent after the medical exam. and 50 per cent after the conclusion of the trial.	The modesty of a woman consists, to make a woman necked ,to sign in opinion to insult the woman and etc. does not show any signs or enquiry on the body of the woman so the essentiality of medical certificate my be cancelled The relief may be given on the basis of 1)Medical Certificate or 2) Enquiry report of Executive Magistrate

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No	Type of Offence	Atrocity Act Rule No.	Provision	Suggestion for Amendment
4	Sexual Exploitation of a Woman	3(I)(XII)	Rs.50,000/- is given to victims, 50 per cent after medical exam. and remaining after conclusion of the trial.	It is noticed that in major cases of rape the medical exam is carried on after 24 hours of the rape. If the married woman is raped it is difficult to notice the signs of the rape. The relief may be given on the basis of 1) Medical Certificate or 2) Enquiry report of Executive Magistrate.
5	In case of murder, death, rape gang rape, permanent incapacitation and dacoity.	-	The defendant of the victims is to be given Rs.1000/- as a pension.	Rules of Family Pension be made applicable.

Jurisdiction of the Special Court Vis-a-Vis Normal Courts

The atrocity cases in Maharashtra normally are reviewed in the session courts along with the other cases. So the decision of the cases takes place for normally too much long time. So the Special Courts in the sensitive area should be operated particularly for the cases of victims of atrocities.

Fixing the Time Limit for the Disposal of the Cases

It is observed by verifying the disposal of the cases in the Courts that it takes abnormally long time for disposal of the cases. So a time bond period i.e., three months may compulsorily be given to the court to conclude and to have decision of the atrocity cases.

Scheme for Monitoring Relief to Victims of Atrocities on Member of SC/ST's due to Caste Consideration

Vide Government Resolution (GR) No. UTA-1681/53/D/XXV dated 29th Nov.1982, Provision of financial assistance to the victims of SC/ST's is provided on the basis of registered offence on caste consideration basis. But in other cases i.e., offence registered under Indian Penal Code Act is not included in the revised GR dated 24/9/1997. It is a general complaint that many deserving cases are not registered under PCR even though they may fall in its perview.

If the complainant feels so and if the court after trial comes to such conclusion that there was also caste angle to such case then it is suggested that in such cases if they are registered under the Indian Penal Code they should be provided all benefits of monitory relief.

Measures to Reduce the Percentage of Aquital of Cases Registered under Atrocity Act

It is observed on the basis of the statistical information provided by Police Deptt. PCR Cell, Mumbai that the percentage of aquital cases registered under PCR Act is very high. For example in the year 1999 it is observed that out of 253 cases, 238 cases were acquitted, only 15 cases were convicted. The percentage of acquitted cases is 94 per cent.

To reduce the percentage of aquital cases it is suggested that a Special Committee be formed to find out the major causes of the high aquital percentage and suggest the further amendments in the Act.

Creation of the Posts of Additional Collectors to Each District

Vide Government in Revenue and Forest Department No.S-14/3613/CR-209/91/E-3, dated 28/1/1992 the post of Additional Collector for each district was created. One of the major reason quoted in preamble is for the effective implementation of Atrocity Act and various developmental schemes for the B.C. people to give the social security and economic justice to the SC/ST people.

There is a need to implement this Government Resolution in proper spirit and monitor the performance of Additional Collector from this angle.

ANNEXURE - 1

Total Population, Scheduled Caste Population and its Percentage to Total Population (Districtwise) 1991 Census

Sr. No.	Districts	Total Population	SC Population	Percentage of Schedule Caste Population
1	Gr. Mumbai	9929891	645914	6.52
2	Thane	5249126	271797	5.18
3	Raigad	1824816	50999	2.79
4	Ratnagiri	1544057	27385	1.77
5	Sindhudurg	832152	42435	5.10
6	Nasik	3851352	326755	8.48
7	Dhule	2535715	134359	5.30
8	Jalgaon	3187634	295047	9.26
9	Ahmednagar	3372935	418479	12.41
10	Pune	5532532	631063	11.41
11	Satara	2451372	233014	9.51
12	Sangli	2209488	277458	12.56
13	Sholapur	3231057	497913	15.41
14	Kolhapur	2989507	381029	12.75
15	Aurangabad	2213779	305246	13.79
16	Jalna	1364425	176452	12.93
17	Parbhani	2117035	233323	11.02
18	Beed	1822072	244281	13.41
19	Nanded	2330374	422942	18.15
20	Osmanabad	1276327	208609	16.34
21	Latur	1676641	319568	19.06
22	Buldhana	1886299	216687	11.49
23	Akola	2214271	264554	11.95
24	Amravati	2200057	284499	17.48
25	Yeotmal	2077144	226820	10.92
26	Wardha	1067357	149975	14.05
27	Nagpur	3287139	619226	18.84
28	Bhandara	2107629	355484	16.87
29	Chandrapur	1771994	299533	16.90
30	Gadchiroli	787010	95996	12.20
	Total-(State)	78937187	8757842	11.09

ANNEXURE - 2

As per 1991 Census Districtwise Literacy Percentage of Scheduled Castes

No	Districts	Male	Female
1	Gr. Mumbai	82	59
2	Thane	76	53
3	Raigad	77	53
4	Ratnagiri	77	52
5	Sindhudurg	81	60
6	Nasik	76	45
7	Dhule	73	37
8	Jalgaon	70	34
9	Ahmednagar	67	36
10	Pune	72	46
11	Satara	74	42
12	Sangli	69	39
13	Sholapur	62	30
14	Kolhapur	68	40
15	Aurangabad	68	31
16	Jalna	53	18
17	Parbhani	55	20
18	Beed	58	24
19	Nanded	57	23
20	Osmanabad	59	27
21	Latur	59	27
22	Buldhana	68	31
23	Akola	71	39
24	Amravati	73	49
25	Yeotmal	71	43
26	Wardha	79	58
27	Nagpur	79	62
28	Bhandara	84	54
29	Chandrapur	75	50
30	Gadchiroli	68	38
	TOTAL-(STATE)	30	42

ANNEXURE - 3

The Categorywise Percentage of Scheduled Caste Workers in Maharashtra State is as follows

Sr. No.	Break up of Main Workers	1991 Census	1991 Census (Percentage to Gen. Pop.)	1991 Census
1.	Cultivators	15.63	4.99	14.39
2.	Agriculture Labourers	46.84	16.68	48.08
3.	Live Stock, Forestry, Fishing, Plantation of Orchards and Allied Activities.	Indicated in item Nos. 6 to 9	0.37	
4.	Mining & Quarrying		0.18	
5.	Manufacturing, Processing Servicing and Repairs		1.20	25.45
	(a) House-hold Industry	6.38	2.99	
	(b) Other than house-hold Industry			
6.	Construction	38.15	1.42	
7.	Trade and Commerce		1.45	
8.	Transport, Storage and Communication	Sr.No. 3,4 and 6 to 9	1.25	
9.	Other Services		4.16	12.08

ANNEXURE - 4

Agriculture Land Holding by Various Social Groups 1980-81 (Agriculture Holding and Area in Thousands) (Bracket figures shows the percentage)

Class/Area	Scheduled Caste		Scheduled Tribes		Others		General Social Group	
	Nos.	Area	Nos.	Area	Nos.	Area	Nos.	Area
Marginal (Below 1 Hec)	6923 (68.9)	2510 (21.8)	2728 (39.8)	1309 (7.8)	40471 (56.2)	15916 (11.7)	50122 (56.4)	19736 (12.1)
Small (1 to 2 Hec)	1644 (16.3)	2324 (20.2)	1551 (22.6)	2220 (13.3)	12877 (17.9)	18625 (13.8)	16072 (18.1)	23169 (14.1)
Semi Medium (2 to 4 Hec.)	952 (9.5)	2576 (22.4)	1405 (20.5)	3850 (23.1)	10098 (14.0)	28219 (20.8)	12455 (14.0)	34645 (21.0)
Medium (4 to 10 Hec)	438 (4.4)	2554 (22.2)	936 (13.7)	5596 (33.5)	6694 (9.3)	40393 (29.8)	8068 (9.1)	48443 (29.6)
Major (10 Hec over)	95 (0.9)	1557 (13.4)	234 (3.4)	3729 (22.3)	1837 (2.6)	32419 (23.8)	2166 (2.4)	37705 (23.0)
Total	10052 (100)	11521 (100)	6854 (100)	16704 (100)	71977 (100)	135572 (100)	88893 (100)	193797 (100)

ANNEXURE - 5

Census Year	Area & per centage	Total Workers			Cultivators			Agricultural Labourers		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Femal e	Total
1971	Rural per centage	608201	330047	938248	115637	34027	149664	348551	263383	611934
	Urban per centage	179755	52020	231775	2460	51801	2978	15303	12368	27671
	Total per centage	787956	382067	1170023	118097	34545	125642	363854	275751	639605
1981	Rural per centage	833768	542796	1376564	193345	82721	276066	403486	399066	802552
	Urban per centage	334842	91378	426220	4619	1096	5715	21951	19907	41858
	Total per centage	1168610	634174	1802784	197964	83817	281781	425437	418973	844410
1991	Rural per centage	1432387	1096227	2528614	306325	180950	487275	755094	820148	1575242
	Urban per centage	734674	206059	940733	8652	3306	11958	50173	42677	92850
	Total per centage	2167061	1302286	3469347	314977	184256	499233	805267	862825	1668090

ANNEXURE - 6

Districtwise Scheduled Caste Below Poverty Line Percentage

Sr.No.	District	BPL Percentage
1	Thane	11.48
2	Raigad	67
3	Ratnagiri	64
4	Sindhudurg	77
5	Nasik	32.15
6	Dhule	54
7	Jalgaon	67
8	Ahmednagar	41
9	Pune	17
10	Satara	39
11	Sangli	27
12	Sholapur	47
13	Kolhapur	25
14	Aurangabad	34
15	Jalna	62
16	Parbhani	85
17	Beed	57
18	Nanded	48
19	Osmanabad	46
20	Latur	49
21	Buldhana	61
22	Akola	64
23	Amravati	68
24	Wardha	88
25	Nagpur	20

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ANNEXURE - 6

Districtwise Scheduled Caste Below Poverty Line Percentage

Sr.No.	District	BPL Percentage
26	Bhandara	88
27	Chandrapur	67
28	Gadchiroli	90
	Total	52

ANNEXURE - 7

Statement Showing Performance of Special Central Assistance in Maharashtra State from the Sixth Five Year Plan to 1995-96

Year	S.C.A. Receipt and Utilisation			Percentage of SCA Expenditure
	Allocation	SCA Receipt	SCA Expdr	
1980-81		645.00		
1981-82	800.00	645.77	550.96	86
1982-83	870.00	608.81	615.68	101
1983-84	942.00	922.14	909.82	99
1984-85	N.A.	742.71	1289.58	174
1985-86	648.44	862.21	1090.26	124
1986-87	1255.80	1139.49	1348.25	118
1987-88	1255.80	1067.27	1500.00	141
1988-89	913.03	1113.38	1107.85	100
1989-90	1329.43	1130.06	946.46	84
1990-91	1477.48	1457.07	1839.27	128
1991-92	1702.00	1543.21	1659.89	109
1992-93	2183.26	1430.17	1430.17	100
1993-94	2909.19	1831.54	1831.54	100
1994-95	2100.00	1575.89	1575.89	100
1995-96	2525.00	1691.00	1691.00	100
1996-97	2525.00	1691.00	1691.00	100
1997-98	2525.00	2525.00	2525.00	100
1999-2000	2300.00	2067.00	1866.17	90

ANNEXURE - 8

Statistical Information Under Special Component Plan

Year	Special Component Plan			20-Point Programme		
	Outlay	Expend- iture	Percentage	Target	Achieve- ment	Percentage
VI Five Year Plan	13,291.25					
1980-81	2,216.00	1,273.26	57		53,049	
1981-82	3,336.00	1,995.96	60	1,74,000	1,86,634	68
1982-83	3,100.00	3,229.94	104	1,86,634	2,07,722	111
1983-84	3,081.00	2,856.94	93	1,10,953	3,26,385	294
1984-85	4,391.18	4,445.90	101	1,07,077	1,15,585	108
Total-VI Five Year Plan	16,124.92	13,801.34	86	6,78,664	8,89,506	127
VII Five Year Plan	25,440.35					
1985-86	4,287.13	6,354.73	148	89,876	1,15,329	128
1986-87	5,738.17	7,103.70	124	89,385	1,17,069	131
1987-88	7,440.54	8,893.10	120	89,395	1,23,085	128
1988-89	8,224.22	10,878.88	131	84,242	1,06,399	126
1989-90	12,384.65	13,359.94	108	89,700	98,525	111
Total-VII Five Year Plan	38,174.71	46,590.35	122	4,42,598	5,60,460	127
1990-91	16,061.78	14,050.92	87	1,00,000	1,18,349	118
1991-92	16,095.41	22,311.18	139	1,25,000	1,25,594	100
VIII Five Year Plan						
1992-93	17,067.78	20,281.72	119	1,05,000	1,18,301	112
1993-94	19,660.04	21,680.86	110	1,32,000	1,27,151	97
1994-95	39,028.44	33,590.31	86	1,53,000	1,53,000	100
1995-96	55,000.00	49,733.00	91	1,53,000	1,32,371	87
1996-97	59,467.04	59,467.04	100	1,40,000	1,05,874	76
1997-98	32452.00	36168.74	97	1,40,000	1,20,297	86
1998-99	60800.00	60800.00	100	140000	114433	100
1999-2000	64000.00	45709.53	71	140000	60671	43
2000-2001	55100.00	55100.00	100	140000	140000	100(Ant)

ANNEXURE - 9

Review of Coverage of Scheduled Castes & Neo Buddhists Families under Individual Economic Benefit under Point No.11 (a) of 20 Point Programme

Sub Sector/Agency	Unit No. of Families	1995-96 Achievement	1996-97 Achievement	1997-98 Achievement	1998-99 Achievement	1999-2000 Achievement	2000-2001 Target
Agriculture (Cultivator)	No.	23778	23542	33642	35706	11830	36000
a) Crop							
Animal Husbandry (Agril. Labour and Cultivator)	No.	2648	3277	3606	4894	1216	5000
Dairy Development Programme	No.	461	436	195	187	Nil	1000
Fisheries	No.	426	365	388		Nil	Nil
Land Reforms (Surplus Land Cultivators)	No.	826	170	522	736	Nil	Nil
I.R.D. Programme (Cultivators Agril. Labourers who are below poverty line)	No.	43786	36362	38821	34241	12542	4900
Co-operation (Agril. Labourers, Cultivators and Weavers)	No.	7999	3359	1598	4185	3249	4500
Industry (Artisans/ Rickshaw puller and others.	No.	2491	2714	3048	3270	3785	3500
Maharashtra Khadi Village and Industries	No.	5560	2497	2437	2272	2500	2500
Mahatma Phule BC Development Corporation Ltd. (Agril. Labourers, cultivators/artisans/ weavers and other identified below poverty line assisted through margin money and SCA.	No.	35011	24898	21007	12271	17559	20000

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ANNEXURE - 9

Review of Coverage of Scheduled Castes & Neo Buddhists Families under Individual Economic Benefit under Point No.11 (a) of 20 Point Programme

Sub Sector/Agency	Unit No. of Families	1995-96 Achievement	1996-97 Achievement	1997-98 Achievement	1998-99 Achievement	1999-2000 Achievement	2000-2001 Target
Sanjay Gandhi Swavlamban (weaver section Benef. Concerned with small traders.	No.	3252	2900	4531	462	430	8000
Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe Vikas Mahamandal Ltd.	No.	6133	5254	6420	6129	5188	6000
LIDCOM	No.			6000	2436	2372	4500
		132391	105874	120297	114433	60671	140000

Economic Development of Scheduled Castes in Rural India: Rhetorics and Realities

B B Mohanty *

This paper makes a comparative analysis of the aspects of the economic development of the scheduled castes in rural India across the major states. The results show that the scheduled castes continue to be the economically disadvantaged communities and there has been hardly any improvement. The perceptible changes in certain respects in some states are not due so much to the progressive measures of planning but to the scheduled caste movements and organizations. Therefore, the author argues that the entrenched dominant castes never allow the benefits of economic development to percolate down unless forced to.

The members of the scheduled castes mostly reside in the countryside under enfeebling socio-economic conditions and are assigned traditional caste-specific stigmatised menial labour. In view of their perpetual socio-economic disabilities and deprivations, concerted efforts have been made for their overall development ever since the beginning of the planning era. The economic development of the scheduled castes along with the other weaker sections is treated as an integral part of Indian planning and avowed goal of development. It has been in operation in all the five year Plans though with varying degrees of emphasis. In the early phases of planning, welfare programmes were drawn up for their educational and economic development, and emphasis was laid on the effective implementation of the community development programmes and land reforms. Subsequently, to avoid expenditure being diverted away from these groups as had often happened in the 1950s and 1960s, the Special Component Plan was formulated during the Sixth Five Year Plan. As a result, the earmarked allocations were made for their overall development, apart from the general programmes of economic development undertaken by the Central and State Governments. A number of commissions, committees and study groups were appointed from time to time to look into their progress and to suggest appropriate policy guidelines. Hence, it is imperative to examine the extent to which these efforts have contributed to the economic development of the scheduled castes as it is an issue of major policy concern.

Recently a few attempts have been made to assess the development of the scheduled castes (Murdia, 1975; D'Souza, 1990; Thorat, 1997; Chakrabarty, 1998; Jodhka, 2000; Pai, 2000; Mohanty, 2001a). However, the analysis in most of these studies is confined either to the all-India level or to specific states and regions as also to selected facets. In fact, studies involving a comparative analysis of the economic conditions of the scheduled castes in rural areas across the states are almost non-existent. In the light of

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The earlier draft of the paper was presented at the National Workshop on the Economic Development of Scheduled Castes with Special Reference to the Agricultural Landless Labourers held at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, in March 16-17, 2001. The author is thankful to the participants for their comments. Thanks are also due to the anonymous referee of the journal for his critical comments and suggestions. The usual disclaimer applies.

this background, the present paper attempts to look into the aspects of the economic development of scheduled castes in rural India.

I

In the Indian rural society the caste is the bedrock. To be born into a particular social group is to be the bearer of its prescribed duties and rights. The lower castes or the ex-untouchables are supposed to serve the higher castes and remain loyal to them. As per their place in the social hierarchy, the scheduled castes are subjected to cumulative domination (Oommen, 1984:45). The modes of living, working and ideology that make up this stratification have developed a sustainable in-built mechanism for perpetuating the system. Given the deeply frozen inequality and deprivation in the social structure, it is difficult to alleviate the economic conditions of the scheduled castes, who languish at the lowest rung of the hierarchy, unless they challenge the system by giving up their submissiveness and serfdom syndrome.

Though the caste-based stratification is as old as Indian history, it reached its extreme form under the British colonialism. The cumulative effects of the exploitative land revenue policy, commercialisation of agriculture and elaborate caste-based politico-legal system made the members of the lower castes vulnerable to social injustice and exploitation, and precipitated their subalternity. The higher caste elites who dominated each sphere of British administration consolidated their economic position. Nevertheless, the 'democratising' influence of the British policy in the early nineteenth century gave rise to organised movements among the lower castes in different parts of India (Zelliot, 1970; Ahemad, 1971). Though these movements were largely social in nature, they gave a distinct identity to the lower castes and made the British recognise their rights. More importantly, the dalit political mobilisation led by Ambedkar through the establishment of All-India Scheduled Caste Federation brought about a sea-change in their self-definition and consciousness. As a consequence, the idea of welfare of the backward castes developed in stages.

After Independence, the political necessities and democratic processes set into motion by the constitution made it difficult to segregate and neglect such a large section of population. The major political parties showed interest in the welfare of the scheduled castes (Oommen, 1984). The programmes of economic development pushed a section of them to the forefront which generated a mild stream of consciousness among them and created new pressures. However, planning in India is fundamentally a political programme through which the state tries to impress the masses to get their support without coercion or regimentation (Myrdal, 1972:62). Therefore, the state representing the privileged minorities, formulates policies that can concede the demands of the upper strata of the society on the one side, and produce ideological effect that is responsive to 'popular will' on the other. The policy and plan aim to achieve development in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the structure of inequality. To quote Myrdal (1972:44) "... the South-Asian planners remain in their paradoxical position: on a general and non-committal level they freely almost passionately proclaim the need for radical social and economic change, whereas in planning their policies they tread most warily in order to not disrupt the traditional social order". Therefore, every plan has the poetic part of the "chapter on objectives, approach and policy, often from the guiding principles of our constitution. Having once gotten over this poetic preamble, the operational part got down to the serious business of ensuring the subversion of every one of them" (Gadgil, 1983: 111). Moreover, in an insensitive democracy like India, the state action is

identified with people's action and people's development rests on their organised movement and collective mobilisation.

II

The scheduled caste population continues to be predominantly rural. Over 80 per cent of it lives in the rural areas and the proportion is as much as about 90 per cent in the states like Bihar, and Orissa (Table 1). In the rural Indian economy land is the pivotal property both in terms of income and employment around which the socio-economic privileges and deprivations revolve. Having recognised that poor land ownership position of the scheduled castes accounts largely for their socio-economic backwardness, land reform became a necessary part of the process of national planning for their emancipation. Each state (with scheduled caste population) without an exception formulated its own measures to allot land, as well as, to protect it from being transferred to non-scheduled castes. Besides, land reforms have been included in the Ninth Schedule for their speedy and unhindered implementation.

Table 1: Scheduled Caste Population

States	(per cent)			
	Population*		Rural Population **	
	1981	1991	1981	1991
Andhra Pradesh	14.87	15.93	84.81	82.69
Bihar	14.51	14.56	91.52	90.98
Gujarat	7.15	7.41	67.30	62.06
Haryana	19.07	19.75	84.94	82.29
Karnataka	15.07	16.38	78.08	76.60
Kerala	10.01	9.92	87.86	81.48
Madhya Pradesh	14.1	14.51	82.08	78.14
Maharashtra	7.14	11.1	68.44	63.39
Orissa	14.66	16.2	90.60	89.26
Punjab	26.87	28.31	81.26	79.45
Rajasthan	17.04	17.29	82.04	80.21
Tamil Nadu	18.35	19.18	79.84	78.68
Uttar Pradesh	21.16	21.04	89.54	88.21
West Bengal	21.99	23.62	87.59	84.61
India	15.81	16.73	84.00	81.28

* As the percentage of general population; ** As the percentage of total SC population Source: Primary Census Abstract Scheduled Castes, 1981, 1991.

Despite the measures undertaken by the State Governments, the incidence of landlessness continues unabated. It is estimated that more than 77 per cent of the scheduled castes are landless without any productive assets (Ninth Five-Year Plan Draft 1997-2000, Government of India). Furthermore, according to the Agricultural Census 1990-91, over 87 per cent of the scheduled caste landholders belong to the small and marginal farmers category. The analysis of the operational holdings and their changes over the years may show the achievements of land reform measures and the emerging pattern of land distribution across the states (Table 2). In most of the states the number of holdings and area operated by the scheduled castes are poor as compared to their

demographic strength. However, the landholding position of these communities in West Bengal is much better than any other state both in terms of area as well as number. Constituting 23 per cent of the state's population, they control more than 23 per cent of the holdings which amounts to 20 per cent of the operated area. The states where the share of the scheduled castes to the total operated area is less compared to their population but has shown considerable improvement over the years are Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka. On the contrary, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh report a slow process of improvement. In this regard, the scheduled castes are worst positioned in the Punjab. With more than 28 per cent of the state's population, they controlled only 2.4 per cent of the operated area in 1990-91 which declined further as compared to the position in 1980-81 (2.5 per cent).

Table 2: Distribution of Operational Holdings among Scheduled Castes

States	(per cent)			
	Number		Area	
	1980-81	1990-91	1980-81	1990-91
Andhra Pradesh	12.62	12.70	6.87	7.50
Bihar	8.16	11.60	4.51	5.20
Gujarat	4.06	4.10	3.08	3.20
Haryana	2.17	3.00	1.29	2.00
Karnataka	8.49	11.00	5.99	8.10
Kerala	8.54	9.60	2.44	2.80
Madhya Pradesh	12.85	12.60	7.93	8.10
Maharashtra	6.81	8.00	4.48	6.00
Orissa	12.17	13.70	7.86	8.60
Punjab	5.00	4.80	2.54	2.40
Rajasthan	14.26	14.70	11.31	11.70
Tamil Nadu	7.84	11.30	4.92	7.10
Uttar Pradesh	14.77	16.40	9.24	10.50
West Bengal	23.58	23.20	19.37	19.70
India	11.31	12.50	7.03	7.90

Source: Agricultural Census Reports, Figures for 1990-91 are taken from Agricultural Situation in India.

It is widely reported that the inherent loopholes and ambiguities in the legislative measures, slow proceedings at all levels of the bureaucracy, lack of updated land records, ignorance and illiteracy of scheduled caste population and backdoor methods of the large owners are the major reasons that hinder a fair distribution of land (Murdia, 1975; Judge, 1999; Appu, 1996; Mohanty, 2001a). Even a marginal improvement in the landholding status of these groups and its resultant upliftment becomes intolerable and un-acceptable to the dominant groups. They resist the allotment of land through well-organized groups like Ranvir Sena, Brahmarsi Sena, Bhumi Sena and Lorik Sena (Diwakar, 1999; Mohanty, 2001a).

One way of looking into the economic development of the scheduled castes is to make a comparative analysis of the changes in the structure of their workforce with that of the non-scheduled castes. In most of the states the proportion of the rural main workers is more among the scheduled castes compared with that of the non-scheduled

castes (Table 3). Though at the all-India level both the scheduled and non-scheduled castes show a slight increase in the number of rural main workers with a corresponding decrease in that of the marginal and non-workers, it is negligible in the case of the scheduled castes. The states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Orissa indicate a declining trend of the main workers among the scheduled castes accompanied by an increase of non-workers. On the other hand, all these states show an increase of the main workers among the non-scheduled castes. The reduction in the main workers is mainly due to erosion in the occupational category of household industry without the expansion of alternative employment opportunities. In the States like Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh both the categories exhibit an increasing trend. However, in most of these states the proportion of growth among the scheduled castes is less than that of the non-scheduled castes.

Table 3: Rural Main, Marginal and Non-Workers among SCs and Non-SCs
(per cent to population)

States	Main Workers		Marginal Workers				Non-Workers					
	SCs		Non-SCs		SCs		Non-SCs		SCs		Non-SCs	
	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991
AP	53.25	52.31	44.41	46.27	4.42	2.58	4.31	3.01	42.33	45.11	51.28	50.72
Bihar	37.05	35.82	29.01	29.45	3.21	2.50	2.93	2.86	59.74	61.68	68.06	67.68
Gujarat	33.18	35.57	33.83	36.61	6.49	7.47	7.06	9.08	60.33	56.96	59.11	54.31
Haryana	28.94	28.92	28.01	28.83	4.14	2.74	4.09	3.10	66.92	68.34	67.90	68.07
Karnataka	44.11	44.64	38.63	40.91	4.57	4.16	4.53	5.02	51.32	51.21	56.84	54.07
Kerala	37.11	37.73	25.88	27.74	5.98	4.61	3.92	3.08	56.91	57.66	70.19	69.18
MP	42.54	41.26	40.59	40.23	5.16	5.53	5.49	6.60	52.30	53.21	53.92	53.17
Maharashtra	44.90	45.54	42.52	44.02	5.51	4.48	5.46	5.61	49.60	49.97	52.02	50.37
Orissa	36.64	35.24	32.47	33.00	6.01	5.09	5.76	5.43	57.35	59.68	61.77	61.57
Punjab	29.10	29.94	29.37	30.19	3.97	1.27	2.36	1.03	66.93	68.79	68.27	68.78
Rajasthan	32.88	33.39	31.24	32.84	7.00	8.45	7.66	9.24	60.12	58.16	61.10	57.91
Tamil Nadu	49.01	49.12	41.58	43.87	3.74	3.04	3.15	3.53	47.25	47.85	55.27	52.60
UP	32.01	33.05	29.02	29.75	2.18	3.17	1.62	2.87	65.81	63.78	69.35	67.37
West Bengal	29.76	31.57	27.43	30.25	2.26	2.54	2.26	2.58	67.98	65.88	70.32	67.18
India	37.26	37.60	34.23	35.27	3.90	3.70	4.16	4.42	58.84	58.70	61.61	60.30

AP: Andhra Pradesh; MP: Madhya Pradesh; UP: Uttar Pradesh.

Source: Primary Census Abstract, 1981, 1991, for General Population and for Scheduled Castes.

The members of the scheduled castes mostly derive their livelihood in the rural areas by working in the agricultural sector (Table 4). They are under-represented in the categories of non-agricultural workers in almost all the states compared with that of the non-scheduled castes. The situation is relatively better in Kerala, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat. However, in many of these States the proportion of non-agricultural workers among the scheduled castes show a declining trend. Moreover, the growth of non-agricultural workers may not lead to a real improvement in their economic situation. It is just possible that the combined effects of a growing population and inelastic opportunities in agriculture have resulted in the purging of an unusually large segment of scheduled caste workers from their employment as agricultural labourers. In the States like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kerala and the Punjab the increasing trend of the rural non-agricultural workers among the scheduled castes follows that of the non-scheduled castes. It seems that in these states, the opportunities of the scheduled castes in non-agricultural activities are linked with the opportunities of

the non-scheduled castes. In Karnataka and Haryana the increase is confined to the non-scheduled castes only. The magnitude of the agricultural workers belonging to the scheduled castes is higher in the states of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Over 90 per cent of the rural main workers of the scheduled castes in these two states are the agricultural workers whereas in case of the non-scheduled castes it is much less. The relatively higher proportion of the non-agricultural workers among the scheduled castes in the Panjab and Haryana is largely due to their higher incidence of landlessness.

Table 4: Rural Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Workers among SCs and Non-SCs
(per cent to main workers)

States	Agricultural Workers				Non-Agricultural Workers			
	SCs		Non-SCs		SCs		Non-SCs	
	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991
Andhra Pradesh	91.74	91.66	77.72	78.31	8.26	8.34	22.28	21.69
Bihar	90.91	92.12	85.70	87.10	9.09	7.88	14.30	12.90
Gujarat	77.29	76.12	80.16	76.83	22.71	23.88	19.84	23.17
Haryana	72.05	72.49	76.41	73.06	29.44	27.51	25.83	26.94
Karnataka	83.43	84.27	79.44	78.62	16.57	15.73	20.56	21.38
Kerala	63.40	61.10	45.05	43.06	36.60	38.90	54.95	56.94
Madhya Pradesh	85.10	86.12	87.81	88.42	14.90	13.88	12.19	11.58
Maharashtra	78.36	81.57	83.40	83.04	21.64	18.43	16.60	16.96
Orissa	81.38	80.29	82.03	80.93	18.62	19.71	17.97	19.07
Punjab	77.24	75.18	75.82	72.81	22.76	24.82	24.18	27.19
Rajasthan	79.64	82.26	81.91	82.62	20.36	17.74	18.09	17.38
Tamil Nadu	89.57	88.42	74.92	73.86	10.43	11.58	25.08	26.14
Uttar Pradesh	89.01	88.00	85.43	83.30	10.99	12.00	14.57	16.70
West Bengal	80.66	77.32	71.14	67.39	19.34	22.68	28.86	32.61
India	85.12	84.49	80.03	78.99	14.88	15.51	19.97	21.01

Source: Same as in Table 3.

The analysis of the occupational classification of the agricultural workers of the scheduled and non-scheduled castes and the changes therein may provide additional information for the assessment of the economic development of the scheduled castes. The latter are grossly over-represented in the category of agricultural labourers across the states which is at the bottom of the occupational-prestige ladder (Table 5). They are under-represented in the categories of cultivators and non-agricultural workers. It is found that the scheduled caste cultivators in the country as a whole decreased to 29 per cent in 1991 as against 32 per cent in 1981 with a corresponding increase in that of the agricultural labourers (from 53 per cent in 1981 to 55 per cent in 1991). The proportion of agricultural labourers among the scheduled castes is higher in the states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and the Punjab which comes to 70 to 75 per cent of the main workers. In most of the other states it is around 50 to 60 per cent. On the other hand, the proportion of agricultural labourers among the non-scheduled castes is much less in all the states. Moreover, in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa a large portion of the agricultural labourers belonging to the non-scheduled castes category are tribals. In Rajasthan the percentage of agricultural labourers is much less among the scheduled castes as compared with that of the other states. But it is many times higher than the proportion of that of the non-scheduled castes. Excepting Kerala, Bihar, Orissa

and West Bengal, the remaining states witness growth of agricultural labourers among the scheduled castes with a corresponding decline in the number of the cultivators. It is remarkably higher in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. It may be inferred that the agricultural conditions prevalent in these states have pushed them to agricultural labourers category. The modernization of agriculture in the process of enhancing the cost of cultivation has discouraged them to take to farming. Recently a large number of dalit farmers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra committed suicide owing to crop failure and indebtedness (Parthasarathy and Shameem, 1998; Omvedt, 1999; Mohanty, 2001b).

Table 5: Rural Agricultural Labourers and Cultivators among SCs and Non-SCs
(per cent to main workers)

States	Agricultural Labourers				Cultivators			
	SC		Non-SC		SC		Non -SC	
	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991
Andhra Pradesh	72.68	77.48	34.78	40.07	19.07	14.18	42.95	38.24
Bihar	76.51	75.64	30.08	32.48	14.40	16.48	55.62	54.62
Gujarat	55.17	57.88	27.74	28.68	22.12	18.24	52.42	48.15
Haryana	58.45	63.18	9.20	12.40	13.60	9.31	67.21	60.66
Karnataka	51.72	56.70	27.99	30.91	31.71	27.57	51.46	47.72
Kerala	60.95	57.80	27.50	25.99	2.45	3.30	17.55	17.07
Madhya Pradesh	43.03	43.57	24.68	24.08	42.08	42.55	63.13	64.34
Maharashtra	58.30	62.30	33.15	33.17	20.05	19.27	50.25	49.87
Orissa	50.28	49.45	26.11	27.57	31.10	30.84	55.92	53.36
Punjab	69.49	69.71	10.96	12.62	7.75	5.47	64.86	60.19
Rajasthan	19.25	24.33	5.89	8.69	60.38	57.93	76.02	73.93
Tamil Nadu	68.88	71.77	30.85	35.74	20.70	16.65	44.07	38.13
Uttar Pradesh	37.09	41.34	11.56	14.82	51.92	46.66	73.86	68.48
West Bengal	46.94	46.04	28.43	26.75	33.72	31.27	42.70	40.63
India	53.20	55.12	24.55	26.13	31.92	29.37	55.48	52.85

Source: Same as in Table 3.

On the other hand, Kerala, Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa indicate a declining trend of the proportion of agricultural labourers among the scheduled castes. While in West Bengal it is largely due to land reforms, in Orissa and Bihar the out-migration of scheduled caste labourers to other states may have brought this about. Their declining proportion in Kerala may be due partly to the land reforms and partly to the expansion of non-agricultural employment opportunities and overseas migration. Among the states, the number of cultivators in the Punjab, Haryana and Kerala among the non-scheduled castes is negligible. However, in most of the states it decreased considerably and particularly in the agriculturally developed states like Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. In almost all the states the fall in the proportion of cultivators has been accompanied by a rise of agricultural labourers. True, there has been a general deterioration in the occupational background of the people from 1981 to 1991 in as much as the category of cultivators has greatly shrunk and that of the agricultural labourers expanded. But this deterioration has affected the scheduled castes most.

The economic development of the scheduled castes in the rural areas is also to a considerable extent linked with their urban sources of income and employment. In view

of the limited employment opportunities and the growing proportion agricultural workers in the rural areas the scheduled caste workers have migrated to the urban areas in search of employment opportunities. This trend is witnessed in almost all the states. It is evident from the decreasing trend of rural population among the scheduled castes across the states (Table 1). Though the scheduled caste workers are heavily concentrated in the low paid jobs in the informal part of the urban sector (D'Souza, 1990), they are relatively in a better condition than their rural counterparts. But it is found that the proportion of urban main and marginal workers among the scheduled castes has decreased at the all-India level with a corresponding increase in that of the non-workers (Table 6). Among the states only Gujarat, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal indicate an increasing trend. However, in many of these states the increase is insignificant. On the other hand, the proportion of urban main workers among the non-scheduled castes has gone up in a majority of the states with a corresponding decrease in that of the non-workers. While Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Orissa indicate a rising trend, the states of Kerala, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu show a falling trend of the urban non-workers for both the scheduled and non-scheduled castes.

Table 6: Urban Main, Marginal and Non-Workers among SCs and Non-SCs
(per cent to population)

States	Main Workers				Marginal Workers				Non-Workers			
	SCs		Non-SCs		SCs		Non-SCs		SCs		Non-SCs	
	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991
AP	34.06	32.21	30.01	30.08	1.12	0.69	0.77	0.51	64.82	67.10	69.22	69.42
Bihar	29.70	27.52	25.40	24.29	0.97	0.65	0.49	0.44	69.33	71.83	74.11	75.27
Gujarat	27.82	27.96	28.86	29.67	0.78	0.76	0.65	0.68	71.40	71.28	70.49	69.65
Haryana	28.60	27.34	28.92	28.21	0.72	0.42	0.30	0.21	70.67	72.23	70.78	71.59
Karnataka	30.26	30.56	29.88	31.56	1.16	0.58	0.85	0.60	68.57	68.86	69.27	67.84
Kerala	30.13	32.85	24.49	27.27	4.82	3.38	2.41	1.84	65.05	63.77	73.10	70.89
MP	31.38	30.16	28.37	28.48	1.47	1.20	0.79	0.79	67.15	68.64	70.84	70.73
Maharashtra	30.15	29.34	31.39	31.77	1.26	1.00	0.82	0.80	68.60	69.65	67.80	67.43
Orissa	33.63	30.20	29.64	28.74	2.27	1.31	1.12	0.66	64.10	68.49	69.24	70.60
Punjab	28.65	28.58	29.70	30.30	0.78	0.18	0.21	0.08	70.57	71.23	70.09	69.62
Rajasthan	28.02	27.42	26.29	27.14	1.30	1.41	0.75	0.92	70.67	71.17	72.97	71.94
Tamil Nadu	33.40	33.89	31.11	32.44	1.17	0.82	0.62	0.72	65.42	65.29	68.27	66.85
UP	28.60	27.56	26.76	26.42	0.66	0.80	0.26	0.54	70.75	71.64	72.98	73.04
West Bengal	28.16	28.30	28.96	29.37	0.75	0.61	0.94	0.32	71.08	71.09	70.10	70.31
India	30.18	29.51	29.11	29.49	1.08	0.84	0.73	0.65	68.73	69.65	70.16	69.85

AP: Andhra Pradesh; MP: Madhya Pradesh; UP: Uttar Pradesh

Source: Same as in Table 3.

In addition, the slow process of improvement of the scheduled castes in certain respects has also made the rich dominant castes hostile towards them. They commit atrocities on them in league with the police and local administration. The successive reports of the Commissioner of SC and ST have recorded some of these cases that came for legal action. Many such cases are likely to remain unreported or suppressed due to problems associated with the tedious process of investigation. State-wise number of atrocities on the scheduled caste population is presented in Table 7. It may be seen therefrom that Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh registered the maximum number of atrocities. Such cases are negligible in West Bengal. It is interesting to note that the governments of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka,

Maharashtra, the Punjab and Haryana have also attempted to identify a number of districts of their respective states as sensitive from the point of view of atrocities on scheduled castes (Commissioner of SC and ST, 28th Report, 1986-87). The major reasons for them revolve around the distribution of land to the landless families, and non-payment or under-payment of minimum statutory wages, apart from increasing awareness about their rights and privileges (*ibid*, p. 288).

Table 7: Atrocities on SC Population (1981-1986)

States	Atrocities Per One Lakh Population
Andhra Pradesh	14.43
Bihar	107.21
Gujarat	146.27
Haryana	26.54
Karnataka	28.58
Kerala	57.98
Madhya Pradesh	396.32
Maharashtra	79.00
Orissa	22.48
Punjab	5.72
Rajasthan	162.07
Tamil Nadu	33.22
Uttar Pradesh	105.25
West Bengal	0.81

Source: Report of the Commissioner for SCs and STs, 28th Report, 1986-87.

III

From the preceding discussion it is evident that the scheduled castes in rural India continue to be disadvantaged. Though some states exhibit perceptible improvement, it is limited to aspects consistent with the state-specific socio-political conditions and necessities. The better economic position of the scheduled castes in West Bengal is largely attributed to the Tebhaga and Naxalbari Movements and the consequent activities of a left-of-centre party. Though these movements were not exclusively directed for the welfare of the scheduled castes, the organised struggle of landless poor in the rural areas against the landed class who were mostly from the upper castes motivated the Communist government in the state to undertake radical land reform measures that led to the improvement of the landowning status of scheduled castes and the consequent change in the workforce structure. The strong organisations among the lower class people also contributed in an important way for the reduction of atrocities. However, the scheduled castes continue to remain disadvantaged in the economic front compared with the non-scheduled castes. The situation is largely due to the absence of scheduled caste movements and mobilisation in the state (Beteille, 2000; Jodhka, 2000). They do not have a separate identity despite caste hierarchy, inequality and destitution (Samaddar, 1994:54-55).

The situation in Kerala is somewhat different. In south India Kerala was a pioneer state in social movements. Initially the movements of the lower castes were concentrated in the Travancore region. The subsequent movements led by Sri Narayana Guru established a new social identity for the Izhavas and generated an awareness among the

lower castes. In 1893 the *Izavas* formed the *Aruvipuram Shree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam* to work for their religious, social and economic uplift. This was converted into a wider organization through the formation of the *Shree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam*. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century the *Izhavas* agitated for admission of their children to schools (Alexander, 1989:372). Following this, the Pulays who were lower than the *Izhavas* in the hierarchy, formed the *Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham* and other organisations such as, *Pulaya Mahasabha* to promote their interests. These movements improved the lot of the lower castes (Rao, 1979). The emergence of the Communist Party in the thirties built on the foundations laid by the caste associations attacked the exploitative relations in a frontal way and attempted to remove the unequal features of the traditional social structures (Alexander, 1989). Notwithstanding the fact that Kerala enacted India's most successful land reforms, the scheduled castes' landholding has not improved substantially as in Bengal. The proportion of cultivators belonging to this category continues to be negligible. However, the state has a higher proportion of workers in the non-agricultural sector. In spite of democratic activism of the people for over a century there is no effective socio-political body of the scheduled castes to influence the government policies.

The position of the scheduled castes is relatively better in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka in terms of the progress of landholding position. However, in these states, there is a sharp decline of cultivators with a corresponding rise of agricultural labourers. The increase in the size of the agricultural labourers among the scheduled castes in Maharashtra is mainly attributed to the inclusion of more caste groups like the Nav-Buddhists in the scheduled caste groups in the 1991 Census. The improvement in Tamil Nadu is primarily due to Periyar's Self-Respect Movement. In 1944, Periyar founded a political party, the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and through its mouthpiece, *Viduthalai* he advocated the unity of the low caste Hindus (particularly the untouchables and shudras) and emphasised the need for their socio-economic development to challenge the dominance of the higher castes specifically the Brahmins. The subsequent movement led by DMK (*Dravida Munetra Kazhgam*) effectively mobilised the lower castes against the dominant upper castes which contributed to the overall improvement of the scheduled castes.

Similarly, Maharashtra's better position is attributed to the lower caste movements led by Jyotirao Phule and subsequently by B.R.Ambedkar. Phule's endeavour had a pioneering dimension. He avoided the traps of Sanskritisation by endeavouring to develop among the lower castes an alternative value system. As early as 1853, he opened schools for the untouchables. In 1873, he founded the Satyashodhak Samaj to strengthen the unity among the low castes. Though started with social issues, subsequently it embraced the problem of inequality in the distribution of land. Consequently, Ambedkar and his Dalit Panthars gave a larger dimension to the dalit movement and emphasised the removal of educational backwardness and landlessness from among the scheduled castes. The recent efforts of the Republican Party of India also asserted the rights of the scheduled castes.

The progress in Karnataka is also due to the emergence of the dalit movements. The districts that are included in Karnataka from Madras Presidency had exposure to a non-Brahmin movement, which was based on a wider mass mobilisation (Pani, 1998:68). The dalit movement started from 1968 with the emergence of *Bhim Sena* under the leadership of Shyam Sunder. The subsequent leadership of Basavalingappa mobilised the lower castes effectively (Yadav, 1998:115). The agitation became more active from

1973 with the emergence of *Dalit Sangharsha Samiti*. Though it became organizationally the strongest and long lasting dalit movement in the country (Omvedt, 1974:327), it was confined to limited pockets.

The scheduled castes in the Punjab and Haryana have not experienced economic improvement in any respect. Rather, their position has declined further. The incidence of landlessness is more with the decline of cultivators and steady growth of agricultural labourers. Though the proportion of non-agricultural workers is more among the scheduled castes it shows a declining trend. In the context of rapid growth-oriented agricultural modernization in the states, the improvement of landholding position would have a sustainable developmental impact on the scheduled castes population. Absence of scheduled castes organizations is one of the important factors for their poor economic conditions. The dalits do not have a significant role to play in the state politics (Jodhka, 2000:399). Though this region was strongly affected by the social reform movements with anti-brahminical overtones in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they have not given adequate opportunity to the lower castes especially the scheduled castes to organise themselves against the upper caste interests. The subsequent *Ad-Dharm Movement* (organized in 1926) was more of religious and social in nature and largely under the control of the upper castes. The organization and ideology of these movements were different from those of the dalit movements of South and West India (Patankar and Omvedt, 1979).

The relatively poor economic condition of the scheduled castes in Andhra Pradesh is because of the strong grip of the higher castes. Though there were some protests like Adi-Andhra Movement in the coastal area, they faded away after late 1940s. The early peasant organisations, such as the *Kisan Sabha* also did not project the caste factor as a special issue (Omvedt, 1994:288). Though a few Backward Class Movements such as Munnuru Kapu Movement and Padmasali Movement under the leadership of Bojjam Nrasimlu and Konda Lakshman Bapuji were launched in Hyderabad State, after the formation of Andhra Pradesh they were merged into one, i.e., the Andhra Pradesh Backward Classes Association, which largely confined its agitation to the reservation issues. The forward castes continue to dominate the society and politics (Reddy, 1989; Harriss, 1999). The recent emergence of Dalit Maha Sabha and the evidences of organized protests may bring some changes.

However, compared to many states, the scheduled castes' condition is better in Gujarat in several respects despite the persistent dominance of the forward castes (*Brahmins, Baniyas and Patidars*) which could not be challenged due to the absence of a strong and independent scheduled caste movement (Wood, 1984; Rutten, 1995; Shah, 1998; Harriss, 1999). The comparatively better situation is possibly due to several other factors such as the old cultural tradition of 'charity' organizations, the influence of Gandhiji and Gandhians who initiated constructive work and welfare activities, the success of cooperative movement particularly in diary, fishery, poultry, handicrafts, etc.

The scheduled castes are disadvantaged in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Uttar Pradesh did not experience large-scale scheduled caste movement during the colonial period (Pai, 2000: 415). The mobilisational impact upon the vast mass of the dalits came too late to have a transformative impact on the society (*ibid*). However, comparatively better progress in this state was possible because the scheduled castes are organized through the dalit based *Bahujan Samaj Party* (Omvedt, 1998; Duncan, 1999; Brass, 1997).

The scheduled castes are worst positioned in Bihar in almost all respects. True, judged from all the accepted indicators of development, the state is at the bottom. The conditions of the dalits are incomparably bad. The scheduled castes do not have an organized identity. The attempt was made to build a mass movement in 1940s through the formation of the Bihar State Backward Classes Federation under the leadership of Chandapuri but it became weak after 1950 because of the 'accommodation' strategy of the Congress Party (Frankel, 1989: 84-85). Except the increasing incidences of caste-based conflict and violence, the scheduled castes could not coordinate their efforts to organise a mass movement. However, the recent awakening in some parts of rural Bihar in the face of social mobilization spearheaded by diverse groups of politicians may lead to some improvement (Appu, 1993; Frankel, 1989)

The deplorable condition of the scheduled castes in Madhya Pradesh is accountable to strong dominance of the upper castes. Both Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan consisted largely of former princely states where the former rulers remained politically powerful. The upper caste-dominated right wing political parties have a traditional base and the state assemblies are dominated by them (Harriss, 1999; Judge, 1999). However, the position of scheduled castes in Rajasthan is relatively better probably because most of them derive income largely from animal husbandry, which is the characteristic feature of the rural economy of the state. Many of them are also cultivators.

Similarly, in Orissa the scheduled castes have not organized themselves against the higher castes. The state has experienced neither caste movements as found in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, nor sustained organized left movement as in Bengal. Though the caste feeling is socially present, it does not manifest itself politically (Sahu, 1998:132). The Brahmins and Karans dominate the society and politics and the failure of caste associations has facilitated this hegemony (Mohanty, 1990:321). There has been long-standing dominance over major parties by political elites drawn from the numerically tiny higher caste groups (Manor, 2000:827). Most of the administrative and bureaucratic positions are occupied by them (Mohanty and Bahidar, 1993).

IV

In short, the scheduled castes continue to be the economically disadvantaged communities and there has been hardly any improvement. The perceptible changes in certain respects in some states are not due so much to the progressive measures of planning but to the scheduled caste movements and organizations. The dominant castes do not allow the benefit of economic development to percolate down unless forced to. Beteille (2000: 367) rightly puts, "Where the disparities have been reduced, the reduction has not been a smooth or painless process. The hierarchical society we inherited from the past may be likened to a gigantic iceberg of which only a small upper portion was visible above the waters, with its massive body resting below, frozen, immobile and submerged. In the warm, not to say heated, environment created by democratic politics, the ice has began to melt, realising swirls and eddies of incalculable momentum. Is it surprising that the change from a society which respected hierarchy to one which demands equality should be marked by disorder, turbulence and even violence?"

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Scheduled Castes Households in Rural Maharashtra: Findings of an Empirical Study in Early 1980s

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Over the years number of agricultural developmental programmes have been introduced by the Government for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population in Maharashtra. However, not many studies have assessed the impact of these programmes on these deprived sections of population using the survey data collected from rural households. This study evaluates the impact of agricultural developmental programmes introduced by the Government of Maharashtra on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, using the data collected from 54,833 households covering 219 villages from 25 districts in Maharashtra.

I Introduction

The Government of Maharashtra decided in July 1978 to undertake an evaluation study for assessing the impact of its agricultural development programmes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) population in the state. As desired by the Government the study was undertaken jointly by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) and seven Universities in the state which showed willingness to participate in the project. The seven universities were: Marathwada Agricultural University, Parbhani; Marathwada University, Aurangabad; Panjabrao Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola; Nagpur University, Nagpur; Shivaji University, Kolhapur; University of Bombay and University of Poona. At the initial meeting of the representatives of GIPE, Universities, the Planning Department of the Government of Maharashtra (GOM) and the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Maharashtra (DESM), it was decided to invite the GIPE to co-ordinate the (survey) work by the participating Universities and also to prepare the final report. The representatives of the GIPE (Professor N. Rath, Director, GIPE and Professor A.S. Nadkarni, who was placed in overall charge of the project), the representatives, one each of seven universities and Director, Additional Director, DESM constituted the Research Team.

The starting point of the study was to be a survey of rural households, covering all the districts of Maharashtra except Greater Bombay. The survey was undertaken in May 1981 to May 1982. At the time of the survey the number of districts in Maharashtra leaving out Greater Bombay was 25. (This number increased later to 29 through sub-division of some districts). For the conduct of the survey the 25 districts were distributed among the seven universities. It was decided that a University Representative (UR) would nominate two teachers from colleges located in a district assigned to his University as Teachers - Supervisors (TS) and that the actual work of the survey of rural households would be carried out under the supervision of TS and the overall direction of the concerned UR by college students to be selected on the basis of their background, ability, willingness to work, honesty, degree of involvement in rural society and so on. It was to be ensured that a Student-Investigator (SI) for the survey of households in a selected village should be resident of that village or a nearby village. There would be two SIs for survey work in a village, one of whom would belong to SC/ST population.

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These directives regarding personnel for the survey were evidently designed to evoke willing co-operation from rural households to SIs they would be knowing.

According to the initial design every participating university was expected to select for survey 10 villages in a district assigned to it, such that the average number of households for the 10 villages should be around 200 per village. It may be noted that the average number of households per village in Maharashtra, as per 1981 Census, was 191. It was decided that all the households in a selected village - SC, ST and Non-SC/ST - were to be covered by the survey, so that there could be comparative assessment of impact on SC/ST vis-a-vis that on the rest. If this design was adhered to, the number of total villages surveyed in Maharashtra would have been 250 (for 25 districts) and number of rural households in the state covered by the survey, 50,000. In actual fact 219 selected villages from 25 districts were surveyed, since in some districts the number of villages selected was less than 10. All the same, the total number of households surveyed (following pruning of schedules found defective after careful scrutiny) came to 54,833. This is because in many districts the number of households in villages surveyed exceeded 200.

This means that the villages and, hence, the households for survey were not to be selected on the basis of any random sampling exercise. One may object that this vitiated the representative character of the findings of the survey. Technically there is some truth in this objection. All the same, it was felt that data collected from a massive group of over 50,000 households, spread over 25 districts of Maharashtra, would be substantial and variegated enough to yield worthwhile conclusions, particularly if motivated resident SI, selected imaginatively and trained adequately by University participants (UR and TS), carried out the survey with a sense of purpose.

The study was intended to focus on the impact of agricultural development programmes of the Government of Maharashtra on SC/ST population compared to that on the rest of the population. Eventually, the focus was modified in a variety of ways. In view primarily of budgetary constraints the study was limited to benefits flowing from only a few selected agricultural assistance programmes out of the very large number of such programmes. Then again, the target group for study was to be not just the cultivators but also the landless and wage-labourers in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. This meant that a few of the assistance programmes for such sections, such as, for example, the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS), were also included in the study. It was further felt that since a large-scale survey of this magnitude was to be undertaken in over 200 villages in Maharashtra, spread over 25 districts it may be worthwhile collecting information also on assistance programmes in the fields of education, house construction, medical assistance and such other welfare activities, particularly since these are relatively limited in number as compared to programmes of assistance to agriculturists.

Since the information was to be collected from households in a selected village it would be useful to state what we understood by a 'household'. Those who resided in the village under the same roof and had a common kitchen were to be regarded as constituting 'a household'. While writing down the names of members of a household in the questionnaire, the investigators were required to include only those members who normally resided in the village as also boys/girls of the households studying outside the village. Any near relative ordinarily staying outside the village to earn his/her livelihood was to be left out.

As co-ordinator the GIPE prepared survey design and also, draft questionnaire which was discussed and finalised by the Research Team. GIPE further issued written instructions useful for investigational work. The URs were expected to explain these instructions to TSs, who, in turn, would brief the SIs, in these instructions. Then again, the GIPE also kept itself informed from time to time about the progress of the survey work. The work of coding was handed over to the District Statistical Offices of the DESM. The GIPE prepared a Code Transcription Sheet (CTS) for transferring data from schedules in a coded form. Finally, the GIPE prepared the programme for computerisation of data that would eventually yield tables on items required by the GIPE for preparing the report.

II Landholding Profiles of Households Surveyed

Introduction

The 54,833 households surveyed were distributed among the Scheduled Castes (SC), the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and others (Non-SC/ST) as follows: SC, 10,863 (19.81 per cent of the total); ST 7,199 (13.13 per cent), and Non-SC/ST 36,771 (67.06 per cent). In rural Maharashtra the proportion of the three sets of households according to the 1981 Population Census are: 7.89 per cent, 13.00 per cent and 79.11 per cent respectively. This means that in our sample the proportion for ST households was more or less the same as in the Census. But our sample had nearly 20 per cent of the households, which belong to SC as against roughly 8 per cent in the Census. Correspondingly the sample proportion for Non-SC/ST at around 67 per cent was lower than the Census proportion of 79 per cent. [It needs to be mentioned here that the data for SC rural households in the Census report do not include those of the rural households of Nava Bouddhas (NB), i.e., former SC converted to Buddhism, unlike in the case of Survey data. This evidently vitiates comparability between the two sets of data (Census and Survey) for SC rural households. To enhance comparability it would be necessary to add to the Census figures of SC rural households those of NB rural households. In one of the Census 1981 Publications on Maharashtra (Series 12, Paper 1 of 1984: 'Household Population by Religion') we get figures of rural households of Buddhists in Maharashtra. Considering that the NB have constituted almost the whole of the Buddhist population in Maharashtra we added together the figures in 1981 Census of rural households of SC and Buddhists. The proportion of this total for SC, understood in an appropriately wider sense, to the total number of rural households in Maharashtra comes to 14.87, i.e., 15 per cent.

In fact, it may be noted that the selection of our sample villages - 10 in a district with an average number of households of 200 per village - was not done with reference to either the size of the district population or its composition into that of SC, ST and Non-SC/ST. Therefore, there is no reason to expect proportions of SC, ST and Non-SC/ST population in our sample to tally broadly with those in the Census either for districts or for the State as a whole. Any such broad agreement would be more accidental than designed. However, in view of the large number of households surveyed in every district, it would be surprising if the composition of the sample population in this matter turned out to be very wide off the actual position. It does so, however, [to some extent] in the case of SC and Non-SC/ST. The need for household data which would facilitate comparison between SC/ST and Non-SC/ST has influenced our choice of villages, inflating the proportion of SC households in the sample. However, this is

not considered to be undesirable since wider coverage of SC/ST households would give us a better empirical basis for our conclusions.

Landholding Among SC, ST and Non-SC/ST

The households have also been classified according to size of their operational landholding. These size-classes are: (i) landless; (ii) marginal: those cultivating less than two acres; (iii) small: those cultivating two acres to less than six acres and (iv) medium and large: those cultivating six acres or more. The classification also tallies somewhat (if not entirely) with the national classification into the 'landless', 'marginal farmers', 'small farmers', and 'medium and large farmers'. Accordingly, we shall designate throughout in this report households without land as 'Landless', those holding less than two acres as 'Marginal', those with two to less than six acres as 'Small', and those with six acres or more as 'Medium and Large'. The distribution of these classes of landholders in our sample was as follows: Landless (39.70 per cent); 'marginal' (9.13 per cent); 'small' (24.15 per cent) and 'medium and large' (27.02 per cent). These figures show that the largest proportion of sample households were landless, followed by those in the 'medium and large' category, the 'small' category and the 'marginal' category, in that order. If we leave out the landless and consider only the cultivating households we find that the 'marginal' category households formed 15.15 per cent of the total cultivating households, the corresponding percentages for the 'small' and 'medium and large' category households being 40.05 and 44.80 per cent respectively.

We are, however, interested in comparison between SC, ST and Non-SC/ST, taking into account the division by landholding in each one of the three social groups. The following table (Table 1) gives the proportion of households in each of the four land-related classes (landless, 'marginal', 'small' and 'medium and large'), within a social group to the total households surveyed in the relevant social group in rural Maharashtra as a whole.

It is seen from the table that in our survey the landless preponderated among SC and ST, being nearly 62 per cent of the households in the former and about 54 per cent in the latter, while among Non-SC/ST the percentage of the landless was only 30. Even among the landholding SC/ST households, the small and marginal cultivators formed the bulk, while among the others (Non-SC/ST) the division between the small-marginal and the medium-large category households, was roughly half and half. This shows that the overwhelming bulk of SC and ST households belonged to what is called the weaker section of our rural society. It is necessary to note here that the assistance programme of the Government intended for agriculturists, however small, simply cannot reach more than 60 per cent of SC households and more than 50 per cent of ST households in the State. Non-SC/ST are much less disadvantaged in this respect.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Households in the Different Social Groups by Size of Cultivated Holding (Survey)

Land-related Class	SC	ST	Non - SC/ST	Total
Landless	61.92	53.66	30.40	39.70
Marginal	9.00	7.14	9.56	9.13
Small	17.97	23.13	26.21	24.15
Medium and Large	11.21	16.07	33.63	27.02
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Besides land, provision of irrigation is the most important factor governing the generation of income by the households. It also facilitates adoption of a large number of measures extended by Government for improvement of agriculture. SC and ST households, with some land, appear to be much less advantageously placed in this regard also than Non-SC/ST. Table 2 below shows that while 35 per cent of Non-SC/ST households with land had some irrigated land, only 20 per cent of SC-households and 14 per cent of ST households with land had any irrigation facility.

Among Non-SC/ST the percentage of households with some irrigated land increased with the size-class of landholding. Then again, in each size-class of landholding Non-SC/ST proportion was higher than SC/ST proportions. Thus, the disadvantage of the households with land belonging to SC and ST relatively to those of Non-SC/ST is brought out by the data presented.

Table 2: Percentage of Households in a Landholding Class (Within a Social Group) who have Some Irrigated Land

Land Related Class	Social Group		
	SC	ST	Non-SC/ST
1	2	3	4
1. Marginal	26.48	19.46	27.70
2. Small	17.62	12.07	32.91
3. Medium and Large	19.54	14.35	39.31
4. All Classes	20.26	14.00	35.31

There is one more detail relating to households with irrigation which may be looked into. We have data in our tables on the total number of households with land in each social group. These have been classified also into four size-classes of irrigated land: (i) those with no irrigated land; (ii) those with irrigated land of less than two acres; (iii) those with irrigated land of two acres to less than six acres and (iv) those with irrigated land of six acres and more. Let us consider the highest size-class by land under irrigation, viz., six acres or more. In Table 3, we give the percentage of households having irrigated land of six acres or more, to total households with land in each social group.

Table 3: Percentage of Households with Irrigated Land of Six Acres or More to Total Households with Land

Social Group	Percentage
(1)	(2)
Scheduled Castes	1.64
Scheduled Tribes	1.41
Non-SC/ST	4.51

It is seen that the proportion of households with irrigated land of six acres and more to the total households with land was 1.64 per cent for SC, 1.41 per cent for ST and 4.51 per cent for Non-SC/ST. The proportion for SC and ST was more or less the same but that for Non-SC/ST was significantly higher. This finding also testifies to the fact of relative disadvantage suffered by SC/ST landholders in comparison with those belonging to Non-SC/ST.

III Summary And Findings

Comparative Assessment of Benefits

All throughout we attempted to gauge the extent of relative benefit from a scheme to social groups/land-related classes by comparing the percentage of households belonging to a social group/land-related class getting the benefit with similar percentages for the other social groups/land-related classes. In some cases we also calculated the average quantity of a certain magnitude (e.g., the average number of persons working on the EGS per household separately for social groups/land-related classes for comparing benefits to groups/classes.

There is one more preliminary point to make. The percentage of households or the average per household has to be with reference to a base number of households. In some cases the base number consisted of the total households surveyed in each social group/land-related class. However, where not all the households surveyed reported information on a relevant item, the base number of households consisted of those who reported information. Thus when we compare percentages/averages in the analysis below, it must be remembered that these percentages/averages are with reference to the relevant total of households.

It will be seen that a comparative assessment of benefits to the different social group/land-related classes may be made from three different angles. There is, firstly, a comparison between the three social groups (as between SC, ST and Non-SC/ST, particularly SC/ST in comparison with Non-SC/ST). Secondly, there can be a comparison across land-related classes within a social group, i.e., between the 'landless', 'marginal', 'small' and 'medium and large' category households, separately within each social group. Finally, we may make a comparison across social groups within a land-related class, i.e., between SC, ST and Non-SC/ST households belonging to each land-related class.

Assistance Schemes in the Agricultural Sector: Relative Benefits

There have been a myriad schemes of assistance of the Government of Maharashtra intended to benefit the cultivators. For reasons (already) mentioned we selected only some of these programmes to elicit information from the surveyed households on the degree of benefit received.

As we look through the tables in the Chapter I on Agriculturists we find that there were schemes the benefit from which accrued to a small percentage of households (i.e., between 3 to 7 per cent; in a few cases, even less than 3 per cent) belonging to most social groups/landholding classes. Such schemes may be described as those yielding a 'small' degree of benefit to the target group.

In the case of a few schemes the proportion of beneficiary households within several groups/classes ranged broadly between 10 to 20 per cent, though, to be sure, a few landholding classes belonging to social groups had percentages lower than 10. We shall describe benefit in such cases as of a 'moderate' degree.

A large number of schemes from within our list benefitted a fairly high percentage of households within several groups/classes - the percentage being above 20 for a substantial number of groups/classes. These were cases of 'large' degree of benefit. The following schemes yielded the benefit of this size: construction of bunds by Government; subsidy/loan by Government for the purchase of farm implements; financial assistance by Government in respect of seeds; supply of fertilizers by Government and/or co-operative

society; supply of pesticides by Government and/or cooperative society; financial assistance by Government in respect of pesticides; regular supply of water from river valley dam; financial assistance from Government for pumps set on wells; training camps organised by Government for agriculturists; and demonstration farms. Finally, it may not be out of place to mention here that about 30 to 40 per cent of households belonging to landholding classes within social groups reported that their income from agriculture increased during the preceding five years.

We have mentioned above that the last category of schemes (those with a 'large' degree of benefit) included a large number of schemes from among those selected for study. The benefit from one of these ('bunds constructed by Government) accrued to a sizeable percentage of households within each social group/land-holding class only in the Marathwada region. In this region the percentage of beneficiary households among ST (72) was much higher than that among SC or Non-SC/ST (about 55). This relative advantage of ST households held within each landholding class. Furthermore, within SC/ST, the benefit increased with the size-class of landholding, whereas, among Non-SC/ST the 'medium and large' category benefitted the most, with the benefit to the 'marginal' and 'small' categories being, more or less, on par.

In the context of two schemes (viz., the supply of fertilisers by Government and/or co-operative society and the supply of pesticides by Government and/or co-operative society), we distinguished broadly between two alternative sources of supply. These were: (i) the public sources, i.e., Government and/or co-operative society, and (ii) the market. We were interested in finding out to what extent the households depended on the public sources. We found that whereas the non-public source (the market) was the more important source in the case of fertilisers, the opposite was true in the case of pesticides. In respect of fertilisers, we additionally concluded as follows: 'It is interesting to note that among SC/ST, the proportion of households depending on the public source of supply increased and that of households relying on the non-public source diminished as the size-class of landholdings increased. In other words, the more disadvantaged landholding households belonging to SC/ST had to depend relatively more on the non-public source of supply of fertilisers. The same cannot be said of cultivators from Non-SC/ST'.

There were two schemes in respect of which we tried to find out the percentage of households receiving subsidy and those receiving loan from the Government (a) for the purchase of farm implements and (b) for pumps set on wells. The percentage of households receiving subsidy for the purchase of farm implements was the highest among ST in each landholding class, whereas, the same was the case for SC among loan-recipients also in each landholding class. Under this scheme (subsidy/loan) the percentage of beneficiary households in each social group was seen to have increased with the size-class of landholdings. As for the second scheme (pumps set on wells) we found that SC had the highest percentage in each landholding class among receivers of subsidy. In respect of loan-assistance, however, Non-SC/ST fared the best in each landholding class.

That leaves five schemes, viz., financial assistance by Government for seeds; financial assistance by Government in respect of pesticides; regular supply of water from river valley dam; training camps organised by Government for agriculturists; and demonstration farms (in the case of which we tried to find out the percentage of households whose members were taken by the Government representatives to such farms). We found that in respect of these schemes ST had the highest percentage of

beneficiary households. Non-SC/ST households had the next highest percentage except in the case of the scheme relating to the training camps organised by Government for agriculturists. Finally, the proportion of beneficiary households increased with the size-class of landholdings in each social group in respect of the two financial assistance schemes intended for seeds and for pesticides.

Assistance Schemes for Owners of Livestock: Relative Benefits

Several schemes of the Government of Maharashtra are intended to benefit owners of livestock. Those among these which were included in our questionnaire administered to the surveyed households are as follows: Government subsidy for the purchase of livestock; Government subsidy for the purchase of cross-bred cows; Government subsidy for raising cross-bred calves; Government subsidy for the purchase of chickens; supply of goats by the Government; arrangement for veterinary treatment; and free inoculation to animals/poultry. Besides, we also tried to find out the extent to which households selling milk/eggs availed themselves of selling outlets made available by the Government and the co-operative organisation.

We found that the percentage of beneficiary households in every social group/land-related class was insignificantly small in the case of the following schemes: Government subsidy for the purchase of livestock; Government subsidy for the purchase of chickens; and supply of goats by the Government. Inter-group and/or inter-land-related class comparisons pertaining to benefits from these schemes seem pointless.

A similar conclusion applies, in fact, to one more scheme of assistance, viz., Government subsidy for raising cross-bred calves. It is true that the percentage of households receiving such a subsidy to households possessing cross-bred cows was 9.30 for SC, 3.46 for Non-SC/ST and 2.33 for ST. However, only the landless SC households, the 'medium and large' category households among ST and the landless, as well as, 'medium and large' category households belonging to Non-SC/ST, reported having obtained the subsidy mentioned. What is more, the percentages mentioned above were to households possessing cross-bred cows, which, in turn, formed a minuscule proportion of households owning milch animals in every social group/land-related class.

Quite a high percentage of households (from among those possessing cross-bred cows) reported having received subsidy for the purchase of cross-bred cows. The proportion was substantially high at 79 per cent for ST as against 49 per cent and 25 per cent for SC and Non-SC/ST respectively. SC/ST fared much better than Non-SC/ST, with ST percentage being significantly higher than that even for SC. Furthermore, among SC/ST the landless households benefitted more than the landholding households; and even among Non-SC/ST it was the marginal category households followed by those within the landless category who were the major beneficiaries. However, as pointed out in the preceding paragraph households possessing cross-bred cows formed a minuscule percentage of households with milch animals in every social group/land-related class - the percentages being mostly in the range of 1.00 to 1.50. This means that, though the percentage of cross-bred-cows-owning households who received Government subsidy for the purchase of cross-bred cows was significantly large, the scheme of assistance, in fact, reached an insignificantly small percentage of households in our survey who reported having milch animals.

As for veterinary treatment to livestock falling sick nearly 57 per cent of Non-SC/ST households stated that they ordinarily arranged for such treatment. The

corresponding proportions for SC and ST were about 44 and 41 per cent respectively. Two conclusions follow from this. Firstly, among the social groups, Non-SC/ST had an edge over SC/ST in this respect. However - and this is the second observation to make - a fairly large proportion of households (nearly 43 per cent among Non-SC/ST, 56 per cent among SC and 59 per cent among ST) did not, probably could not, arrange for veterinary treatment for livestock fallen sick. These households administered customary treatment or no treatment at all. This is not a happy state of affairs.

In respect of free inoculation by Government both to animals and poultry, the proportion of the relevant Non-SC/ST households reporting benefit was significantly higher than the corresponding ones for SC/ST households concerned. The percentages were as follows: (a) Animals: Non-SC/ST (39); SC (30); ST (27); and (b) Poultry: Non-SC/ST (41); SC (22); ST (20). This relative position of Non-SC/ST vis-a-vis SC/ST in respect of the scheme for free inoculation to animals/poultry held in the case of each *landholding* class within the groups. As for the landless households, Non-SC/ST fared better than SC/ST in the case of the scheme pertaining to *poultry*. However, the percentage of beneficiary households in respect of the scheme for the *animals* was, more or less, the same for the landless households belonging to all the three social groups. Finally, there appeared to be no particular correspondence between the size-class of landholdings and the extent of benefit received, as evidenced by the percentage of beneficiary households.

Coming to the sale of milk by households owning milch animals we find that 40 per cent of Non-SC/ST, 33 per cent of SC and 20 per cent of ST households selling milk availed of the selling outlets provided by public agencies such as Government Milk Centre and Co-operative Milk Producers' Society. However, as between the two public agencies, the co-operative society was far more important than the Government Milk Centre to the milk-selling households. About 34 per cent of Non-SC/ST, 26 per cent of SC and 16 per cent of ST households concerned sold milk only to the Co-operative Milk Producers' Society. Furthermore, it is worth-noting that nearly 60 per cent of Non-SC/ST, about 67 per cent of SC and 80 per cent of ST households selling milk had to depend on non-public selling outlets such as private traders, etc. Finally, it was found that in each social group the dependence on public agencies among the landholding households declined (i.e., the dependence on non-public agencies increased) as the size-class of landholding increased.

We now turn to sale of eggs by poultry-owning households. It is seen that 3.26 per cent of Non-SC/ST, 1.3 per cent of ST, and 0.74 per cent of SC households selling eggs sold these to the Government centre and co-operative organisation. In other words, the sellers of eggs had to turn almost entirely to the non-public agencies for disposing off the eggs. There seems to be no point, therefore, in making comparisons either between land-related classes within each social group or between social groups within a land-related class.

Wage Labour

The most important programme of the State Government affecting directly the wage workers in rural Maharashtra is the EGS. Our findings relating to EGS in rural Maharashtra are as follows:

(i) About 15 per cent of wage-workers among ST reported that they worked on EGS. The proportion was lower at about 10 per cent for SC and for Non-SC/ST. Among the land-related classes in each social group the percentage was the lowest for the landless; (ii)

The average number of persons working on EGS, per household reporting any wage-labour, was on the low side for all social groups. All the same, even here the participation by ST as evidenced by its average, was greater than that by SC or Non-SC/ST. Among SC/ST the wage-labourers belonging to landholding households availed of the EGS relatively more than those from the *landless* households. We also noted that there were considerable inter-regional differences in respect of the average number of persons working on EGS per reporting household. The average was the highest, more or less, for every social group in Western Maharashtra; (iii) The data on average man-months per person on EGS brings out that though the average number of persons (per reporting household) working on EGS was less for Non-SC/ST, these persons could get work on EGS for a relatively longer period on an average. Furthermore, the average man-months per person on EGS were, broadly speaking, more for the *landholding* households in a social group than for the *landless* households. Besides, we also found considerable inter-regional differences in respect of average man-months per person on EGS. Those working on EGS in the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions could get work for a longer period than those in Western Maharashtra and Konkan. Thus, Western Maharashtra which had the highest average number of persons working on EGS per reporting household had the lowest average man-months per person on EGS.

We also tried to find out whether the respondent-households experienced difficulties in getting work on EGS, and if so, the types of difficulties they faced. Our survey revealed that 36.1 per cent of SC, 34.3 per cent of ST and 33.8 per cent Non-SC/ST households (with one or more members doing wage-labour) stated that they experienced difficulties in getting work under the EGS. The proportions, broadly speaking, were higher for the landholding households in each social group than for the landless households.

As for the types of difficulties faced by households reporting difficulties, it is seen that a substantial percentage of households mentioned the following two difficulties: (1) The lack of co-operation from Government officials and (2) The inconvenient location of the EGS works. A much larger percentage of the reporting households among SC/ST cited difficulty (1) above whereas, in the case of Non-SC/ST households, the percentage of the concerned households mentioning one or the other difficulty was, more or less, the same.

Welfare Programmes

The welfare programmes considered were the programmes of assistance relating to education, house construction, drinking water supply, electricity supply, and medical assistance. A summary of findings relating to welfare programmes in these fields is given in the following paragraphs.

(A) Education

Non-SC/ST had a higher percentage of households with anyone going to school/college than SC/ST. In this respect SC were better-placed than ST. Furthermore, we also found that in each social group the landholding households had higher percentages than the landless ones.

The schemes of assistance of an educational nature have included those providing hostel facilities to Backward Class (B.C.) students, with some seats reserved for non-B.C. students categorised as Economically Backward Class (E.B.C.) to promote social integration. Hostel facilities have entailed besides free food and accommodation,

also concomitant amenities in the form of supply of text-books, stationery articles, school uniforms and so on. Even day-students are provided assistance in the form of supply of school uniforms, text-books, writing materials such as slates, pencils, exercise books, etc. Then again, eatables are provided to students of Balwadis, who are drawn from both B.C and non-B.C. sections.

Consider first the percentage of households who received at least one of the materials (slates and pencils, exercise books, etc.) free of charge. The proportion of the beneficiary Non-SC/ST households (with adults and/or minors being educated) which was 10 per cent was much less than that of the corresponding SC (18 per cent) and ST (23 per cent) households. A comparison between households belonging to the three social groups within each land-related class brings out the same finding about relative benefits. Furthermore, it may be noted that in each land-related class ST households were better-placed in this respect than SC households. Then again, in each social group, the percentage of beneficiary households within the 'medium and large' category was the lowest - in fact, lower than that even for the landless households. Finally, even if we consider each of the materials separately we find that the percentage of ST households receiving each material free of cost was higher than that for the relevant SC households, who, in turn, had a higher percentage of beneficiaries amongst them than Non-SC/ST.

The same picture of relative benefits emerges in respect of hostel facilities to the three sets of households. About 12 per cent of ST, 9.2 per cent of SC and 8.9 per cent of Non-SC/ST households (in which adults and/or minors were being educated), reported that they had wards staying in hostels. Furthermore, in each landholding category ST proportion was the highest followed by those for SC and then Non-SC/ST respectively. Besides, within each social group, households with larger landholdings ('small' and 'medium and large' categories) reported a higher percentage with wards in hostels than households with smaller or no landholding (viz., 'marginal' and landless categories).

A comparison between social groups/land-related classes from the point of view of the portion of hostel expenses borne by the households reveals as follows: while 41 per cent of ST and 33 per cent of SC households concerned did not have to bear any of the hostel expenses, only 3 per cent of Non-SC/ST households belonged to this totally exempted category. What is more, about 75 per cent of ST and 70 per cent of SC households (with wards staying in hostels) benefitted from either full or partial relief in respect of hostel expenses; the corresponding proportion for Non-SC/ST was much lower at around 40 per cent. On the whole, our data brings out that in the field of education ST households were the principal beneficiaries of the Governmental schemes of assistance, followed closely by the households belonging to SC. The benefit to Non-SC/ST households was much less.

(B) Housing

There have been several Governmental schemes of housing which are intended to benefit the rural population. These have been designed primarily to ease the housing problem faced by the weaker sections in rural Maharashtra which includes besides the backward classes, persons belonging to the economically backward class as well.

Under one of the schemes the Government has been endeavouring to help the landless and the houseless rural labourers by giving them land for house-construction and also by setting up huts on the land. We find that whereas 12 per cent of Non-SC/ST households (with one or more members performing wage-labour)

reported having obtained land for house construction, this was true in the case of 16 per cent of SC and 19 per cent of ST households concerned. Thus, SC/ST seem to have benefitted relatively more than Non-SC/ST from this scheme. Then again, in each land-related class as well SC/ST were ahead of Non-SC/ST in point of receipt of benefit. So far as the construction of houses by Government was concerned, the picture in respect of accrual of benefit was again the same - SC/ST being relatively better-off than Non-SC/ST in each land-related class. As could be expected, the landless in each social group benefitted more than the landholding households. There was reason to believe that not all the households who received land from Government for house construction, had houses constructed for them by the Government.

There have also been schemes of providing financial assistance for house-construction. A relatively small percentage of households in each social group/land-related class reported receipt of such assistance. Even then the proportion in the case of SC/ST (about 4 per cent for each group) was higher than that for Non-SC/ST (about 2 per cent). The benefit to each land-related class within SC/ST was, by and large, greater than that to its counterpart among Non-SC/ST.

(C) Supply of Drinking Water

Over 4/5th of the households in each social group stated that they obtained water from a source in the village itself. There are various sources of drinking water available to the rural population. Some of these, such as, public well, tank, Government tube-well and water tap are provided by some public agency (Government or local body). It was found that the most important source of drinking water for all social groups/land-related classes, was the public well, with anywhere between 50 to 65 per cent of households in the different classes depending on this source. Next in importance was the private well. The proportion of households within groups/classes relying on this source ranged between 11 to 28 per cent. The water tap as a source of drinking water was not far behind, with 10 to 20 per cent of households turning to this source for the purpose.

Our data also brought out as follows: (1) The relatively better-off households among Non-SC/ST could depend relatively less on public wells than (a) the landless amongst them and (b) also the landholding households within SC/ST; (2) Though all the social groups had to depend relatively more on public wells than on private wells, the fact that the percentage of households using public wells was more in the case of SC/ST than Non-SC/ST whereas, a larger percentage of Non-SC/ST had private wells to draw from than SC/ST, indicated the superior economic position of Non-SC/ST, relatively to SC/ST; (3) However, the proportion of ST households using water tap was the highest among social groups at 14.53 per cent. The proportion pertaining to Non-SC/ST and SC was 12.45 per cent and 11.59 per cent respectively.

Apart from the sources of drinking water supply, we also tried to find out whether the households got drinking water throughout the year. Almost 92 per cent of the Non-SC/ST households, 89 per cent of SC households and 84 per cent of ST households stated that they got drinking water the whole year round. Thus, Non-SC/ST were better-placed in this respect than SC/ST, ST turning out to be the most disadvantaged among the social groups. The same relative position among the groups was also found, more or less, within each land-related class. It is indeed disturbing that about 10 to 15 per cent of SC/ST households and nearly 8 per cent of those within Non-SC/ST did not get drinking water throughout the year. In this connection the finding of the survey that about 30 per cent of

'marginal' category and nearly 23 per cent of 'small' category ST households could not get drinking water the whole year round, is a matter of great concern.

(D) Electricity and Gobar Gas

Our survey brought out that only 1/4th of the surveyed households taken together reported that they had electricity in their houses, though it can be deduced from the official statistics that a little less than 3/4th of the Maharashtra villages were electrified by the end of 1981-82. This underlines the obvious point that electrification of a village does not mean electrified houses.

A comparison between the social groups revealed that while 30 per cent of the surveyed Non-SC/ST households had electricity in their houses, the corresponding proportions respectively for SC and ST were 19 and 13 per cent. Besides, within each social group the *landless* households were worse-off than those belonging to any of the landholding categories. Finally, among the landholding households within the three groups the broad picture that emerges is that those from the 'medium and large' category were better-placed than the correspondings households belonging to the other two landholding categories.

As for the gobar gas plant, an insignificantly small percentage of the surveyed households in each social group/land-related class stated that they had such plants. The proportions were as low as 0.77 per cent for Non-SC/ST, 0.53 per cent for SC and 0.47 per cent for ST households. The groupwise proportions of households having gobar gas plants who reported that they received Government subsidy for the plants were as follows: ST (38 per cent); SC (24 per cent) and Non-SC/ST (24 per cent). Lastly, a sizeable percentage of households in each social group/land-related class having gobar gas plants reported that their plants functioned well. The relevant figures for the social groups were: Non-SC/ST (70 per cent); ST (62 per cent) and SC (53 per cent). We ought to remember, however, that all these percentages related to a very small number of households who had gobar gas plants.

(E) Medical Aid and Family Planning

Between 63 to 66 per cent of the surveyed households within the three groups reported illness in the family during the preceding one year. Of the illness-reporting households, 68.6 per cent of SC, 61.9 per cent of ST and 61.6 per cent of Non-SC/ST households stated that they visited Government dispensary for treatment. Of the households visiting Government dispensary, the proportion in each social group reporting that they received medicines free, was as follows: ST (81.3 per cent); SC (77.3 per cent) and Non-SC/ST (76.1 per cent). The percentages were quite high for the land-related classes within each group. The impression one gets is that the bulk of the households who visited Government dispensaries for treatment received medicines free of charge.

As for the adoption of family planning by the surveyed households we found that nearly one-third of these within each group had a member having undergone family planning surgery. Furthermore, the relevant percentages for the landholding households in each group were significantly higher than those for the *landless* households.

State of Life of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India*

Abusaleh Shariff, Tarujyoti Buragohain and P K Ghosh **

This paper presents the levels of household income and material well-being among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and landless wage earners in rural India. Income differentials have been estimated from the NCAER's Human Development Indicator 1994 data set, for landowners, the landless and landless wage earners among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the other category (not including Scheduled Castes and Tribes). Among Scheduled Castes and Tribes, landholding households have a much lower level of household income than the national average. This implies that a large proportion of households among Scheduled Castes and Tribes own a very little amount of land. The household income of landless others is much higher than the household income of landless among Scheduled Castes and Tribes. However, the income differentials are least among landless wage earners irrespective of caste. Among landless others only 42 per cent are wage earners, compared to 63 per cent among Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Agricultural and allied activities contribute 56 per cent of household income among Scheduled Tribes. However, the landless wage earners derive only 2.8 per cent of income from this very important source of income. Landless wage earners receive a total of 92 per cent of their income from wages out of agricultural as well as on agricultural wage work. Work participation rate (an indication of employment stress in the Indian context) is much higher among landless wage earners or compared to that among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and all of rural India. It must be reiterated that land is the main asset for a decent living in rural India. But the number of landless households is increasing over time more so among Scheduled Castes. As much as 63 per cent of Scheduled Castes own land less than one hectare, compared to all-India rural average of 46 per cent and 43 per cent among Scheduled Tribes.

Introduction

At the time of Independence, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) accounted for about 20 per cent of India's population and were the most deprived groups in most of the parameters of development. The governments and planners, both at the Centre and states, formulated and implemented various policies to improve the social and economic conditions of these two groups. The classification and identification of SCs and STs is a state subject, and hence is not uniform in all the states. However, in all the states both these two groups are considered to be the most disadvantaged groups based on social group criteria. The Constitution of India, based on the principle of growth with

* Paper presented at a national level workshop on "Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes, with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers" held at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, during March 16-17, 2001.

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equity and social justice, incorporates a number of provisions favouring SCs and STs. They include: (a) relaxation of norms for accessing and utilization of social service; (b) ensuring enrolment and active participation at the local educational institutions through relaxation of marks, and (c) reserving a certain quota in most of the government and public sector jobs.

In rural India over 42 per cent of households are estimated to be landless or near-landless, and most of them are agricultural and nonagricultural wage earners. Although this group of landless households consists of many castes and religions, it is dominated by SCs and STs. The proportion of in landless households in rural India and of SCs and STs can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to Total population and Rural Landless Households

Years	SCs*	STs*	Total*	Rural Landless Households**
1960-61	14.7	6.8	21.5	37.0
1970-71	14.6	6.9	21.6	37.4
1981-82	15.8	7.8	23.5	39.9
1991-92	16.5	8.1	24.6	42.2

Sources: * Census of India 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991; ** NSS 17th, 26th, 37th and 48th rounds.

Ownership of land is a good indicator to understand the economic status of rural households. The landless and landless wage earners, along with small and marginal farmers, in rural areas are the principal target groups for all anti-poverty programmes. It is in this context that an attempt has been made to evaluate the income and material well-being of landless and landless wage earners among SCs and STs and their relative position to the national average.

Data Sources

This paper uses data of the NCAER's HDI (Human Development Indicator) Survey 1994 and the National Sample Survey (NSS) data on landholdings among social groups, of various rounds. The NCAER conducted a household survey during 1993-94 in the 16 major states of India covering about 33,230 households spread over 1,765 villages and 195 districts with the objective of preparing a human development profile of India. The survey was conducted primarily to estimate indicators relating to education, health and material well-being at the state level for different social groups. Methodology of the survey has been discussed in detail in Shariff (1999).

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), set up in 1950 collects data on various facets of the economy through nationwide sample surveys covering different subjects of importance, such as employment and unemployment, consumer expenditure, landholdings, livestock, enterprises, debt and investment, social consumption, demography, morbidity, disability, etc. The NSS is a continuous survey, in the sense that it is carried out in the form of successive "rounds", each round usually of one year duration.

Major Findings

Household Income

Adequate level of income control over physical resources is a necessary prerequisite, though not the sole one, for ensuring a reasonable quality of life. Apart from being an important indicator of material well-being, the assets owned by households especially land, serve as a proxy indicator for many other aspects of well being. An adequate level of income and assets indicate the feasibility of leading a decent life and, therefore, a higher level of well-being. Conversely, a lower level of wealth leads to non-fulfilment of many of such aspirations, and hence, correspond to a lower level of wellbeing. A comparative analysis of household income and assets held by different communities could, therefore, unravel some significant aspects of well-being and "quality of life".

The household income estimated from the survey reflects the actual short-term worth of households and their capacity to mobilize funds for immediate consumption. Using the household income data from the NCAER survey, a comparison is drawn between the total and per capita household income of all landowners, landless and landless wage earners and that of these among SCs and STs. An average rural household in the country earned Rs. 25,653 per year, corresponding to Rs. 4,485 per capita in 1993-94. SCs and STs recorded a very low level of household income at Rs. 17,465 and Rs 19,556, corresponding to a per capita income of Rs. 3,237 and Rs. 3,504 respectively (Table 2). Similarly, an average landholding household earned Rs. 31,163 per year, corresponding Rs. 5,109 per capita. Among SCs and STs, landholding households recorded a much lower level of household income at Rs. 21,785 and Rs. 22,621, corresponding to a per capita income of Rs. 3,692 and Rs. 3,900 respectively. This implies that a large proportion of population among SCs and STs owned a very little amount of land as compared to that among others. (For distribution of land among different social groups see Table 7). The average household income of landless others is much higher than the household income of landless among SCs and STs (Fig. 1). A very low income differential is observed among landless wage earners belonging to different categories. Among landless others only 42 per cent are wage earners as compared to 63 per cent among SCs and STs. It appears from the data presented above that household income in rural India is closely linked with the size of the agricultural land and the income derived from that land.

These levels of income suggest that both household income and per capita income are substantially lower among the landless and landless wage earners belonging to SCs and STs in comparison with national levels. The landless wage earners among SCs are relatively homogeneous in terms of levels of both household and per capita income, as reflected by the Gini ratio (Shariff, 1999).

Sources of Household Income

Some interesting observations can be made from the study of the share of various household income sources among landowners, landless and landless wage earners belonging to SCs, STs and others. On the whole, the source of agriculture and allied activities contributes 55 per cent of the household income in rural India as against 38 per cent and 56 per cent of the household income respectively in the case of SCs and STs (Fig. 2).

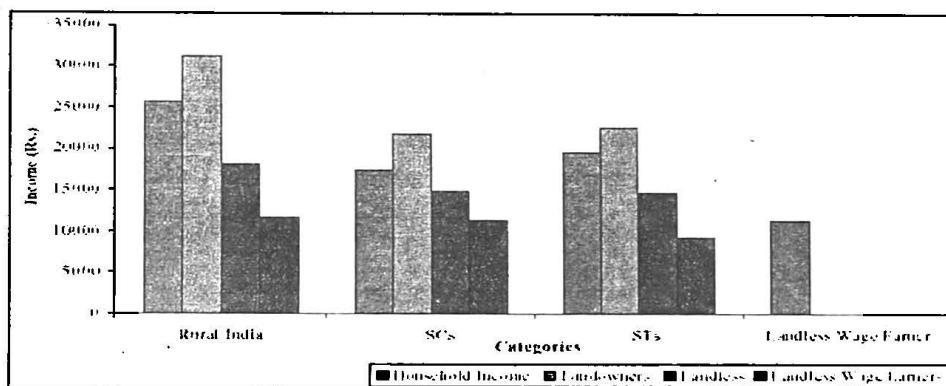


Fig. 1: Average Household Income by Social Groups in Rural India

Table 2: Levels of Household Income among Different Categories

(Rs.)

Rural India				
	Average HH Income	Average HH Income of Landholding Groups	Average HH Income of Landless Others	Average HH Income of Landless Wage Earners
Per Household	25653	31163	18158	11645
Per capita	4485	5109	3426	2197
Scheduled Castes				
	Average HH Income	Average HH Income of Landholding Groups	Average HH Income of Landless Others	Average HH Income of Landless Wage Earners
Per Household	17465	21785	14854	11205
Per capita	3237	3692	2913	2197
Scheduled Tribes				
	Average HH Income	Average HH Income of Landholding Groups	Average HH Income of Landless Others	All Landless Wage Earners Average HH Income
Per Household	19556	22621	14621	11313
Per capita	3504	3900	3924	2308

Source: NCAER's HDI survey 1994.

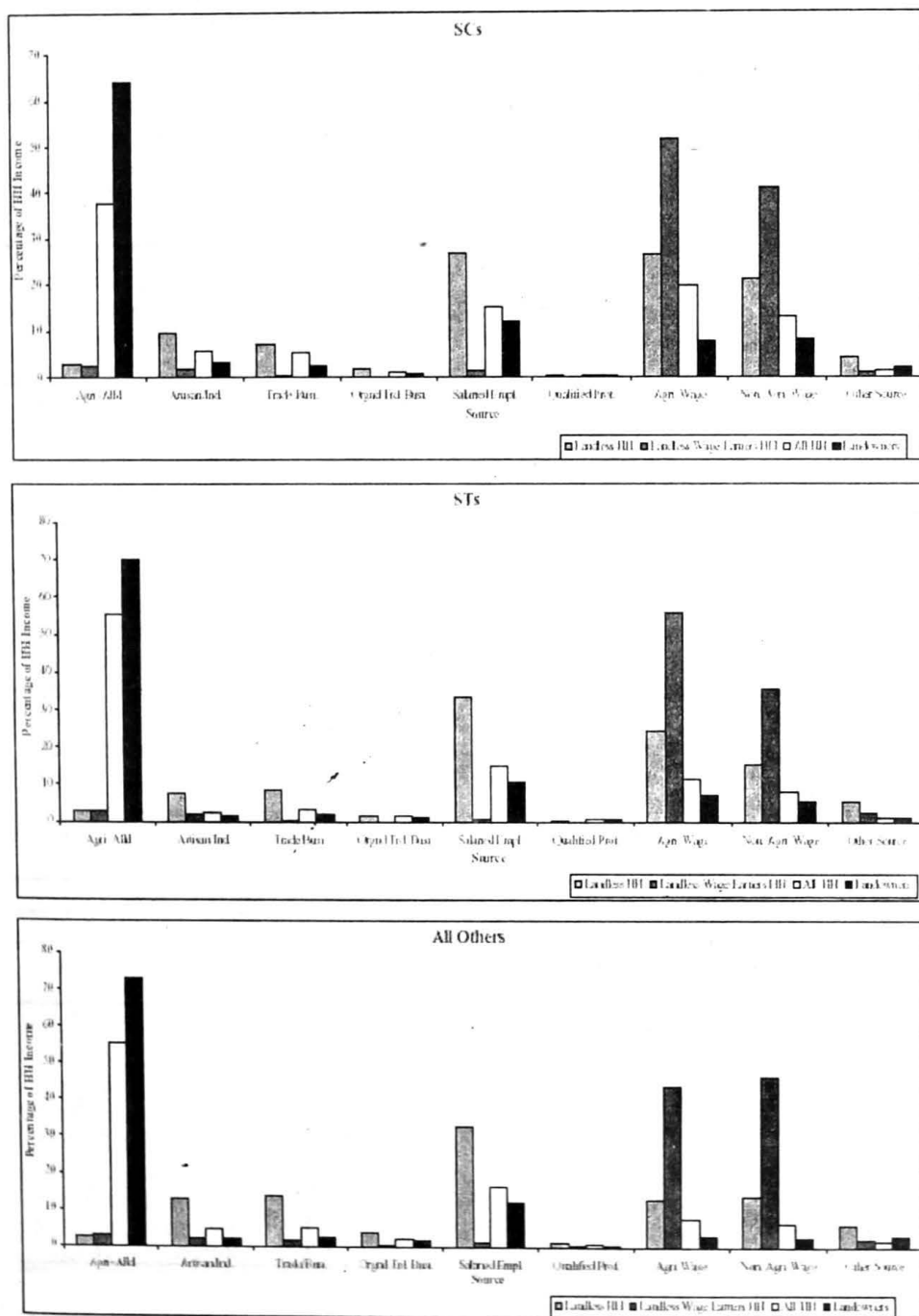


Fig. 2: Sources of Household Income among SCs, STs and All Others, Rural India

For the landless and landless wage earners the source of agriculture and allied activities contributes only about 3 per cent of the household income among SCs, STs and others. For landless wage earners, agriculture and non-agriculture wages together contribute about 92 per cent and 90 per cent of the household income among both SCs and STs and others respectively (Table 3). For the landless, salary contributes about 27 per cent of the household income among SCs as against 33 per cent among STs and

Table 3: Percentage of Household Income by Sources for Landless and Landless Wage Earners among SCs and STs

	Scheduled Castes				Scheduled Tribes			
	Landless HH	Landless Wage Earners HH	All HH	Land Owners	Landless HH	Landless Wage Earners HH	All HH	Land Owners
Agri+alld activities	2.9	2.5	37.7	64.0	2.9	3.1	55.6	70.0
Artisan/ ind. Work	9.3	1.8	5.7	3.2	7.7	2.1	2.7	1.9
Pretty trd. small bus.	7.1	0.5	5.1	2.5	8.4	0.4	3.2	2.1
Orgnd trd. business	1.9	0.1	1.0	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.5	1.0
Salaried employment	26.8	1.4	15.2	11.9	33.4	0.6	14.8	10.7
Qualified profession	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.6
Agri. wage	26.2	51.5	19.7	7.8	24.4	55.7	11.7	7.1
Non.-agri. wage	21.0	41.0	13.1	8.0	15.3	35.8	8.0	5.0
Other source	4.2	1.2	1.5	2.0	5.5	2.3	1.0	1.0

	Others				All India
	Landless HH	Landless Wage Earners HH	All HH	Land owners	
Agri+alld activities	2.6	2.8	55.0	73.0	55.0
Artisan/ind. Work	12.8	2.3	4.5	2.3	4.5
Pretty trd. small bus.	13.9	1.4	5.0	2.7	5.0
Orgnd trd. busines	3.9	0.1	1.9	1.4	1.9
Salaried employment	32.6	1.2	16.5	11.9	16.5
Qualified profession	1.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5
Agri. wage	12.9	43.8	7.9	2.8	7.9
Non.-agri. wage	13.9	46.3	6.3	2.7	6.3
Other source	5.9	1.8	1.7	2.9	1.7

Source: NCAER's HDI Survey 1994.

others. In the case of landowners, percentage of household income from agriculture and allied activities ranges from 64 per cent in among SCs to 73 per cent among others.

However, the household income from other sources like pretty trade, organised trade and qualified professions is not very significant in rural areas.

Ownership of House and Amenities

Ownership of a house or a dwelling is very high in India. A dwelling unit can be of many types, such as pucca (brick and mortar) house, a thatched structure or a hut. About 96 per cent of the rural people own a house, out of which about 45 per cent own pucca and semi-pucca houses (Table 4). Among landholders, almost everybody owns a house irrespective of caste. About 55 per cent own pucca and semi-pucca houses among others as against 38 per cent and 29 per cent respectively among SCs and STs. For the landless, 94 per cent, 92 per cent and 90 per cent own houses respectively among SCs, STs and others. But only about 36 per cent, 28 per cent and 46 per cent own pucca and semi-pucca houses respectively among SCs, STs and others. Among landless wage earners, about 95 per cent, 94 per cent and 92 per cent own houses respectively belonging to SCs, STs and others.

Table 4: Household Characteristics among SCs, STs and Others

	Scheduled Caste				Scheduled Tribes			
	Land Owners	Land less	Landless Wage Earners	All SCs	Land Owners	Land less	Landless Wage Earners	All SCs
Owning house	98.0	94.0	95.0	96.5	98.0	92.0	94.0	95.0
Kutcha house	62.0	64.0	70.0	66.6	71.0	72.0	86.0	74.0
Separate kitchen	37.0	28.0	25.0	30.1	34.0	32.0	22.0	34.4
Electric connection	42.0	41.0	34.0	30.7	30.0	35.0	24.0	29.7
Protected water	57.5	56.6	56.0	57.9	67.5	64.8	61.0	61.6
Piped water	19.6	29.0	30.0	27.0	15.0	30.0	24.0	20.0
Toilet	9.0	8.0	5.0	8.3	9.7	16.0	4.7	12.2
Household Durables								
Bicycle	51.3	46.6	39.0	48.1	45.0	30.6	24.0	32.0
Television	7.7	10.1	3.8	5.6	5.7	10.4	1.4	6.5
Radio/Transistor	33.4	28.9	22.0	29.4	27.0	29.0	16.0	27.1
Electric fan	15.7	20.0	13.0	10.7	9.1	8.8	3.9	10.5
Motorcycle/Scooter	1.8	1.0	0.2	1.2	3.0	4.2	0.2	3.3
Sewing machine	11.8	11.0	6.1	5.9	3.7	2.9	1.4	2.9
Productive Assets								
Tubewell	9.0	7.1	4.9	5.4	3.6	1.8	0.9	2.8
Generator	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2
Thresher	2.0	0.1	-	0.8	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.6
Bullock cart	13.9	1.1	1.2	5.9	15.5	1.8	1.9	10.7
Tractor	1.8	0.7	0.4	1.0	1.5	0.9	0.2	1.3
Biogas plant	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.1	1.0
Milch animals	5.5	0.3	0.3	0.7	4.5	0.5	0.4	1.1
Draught animals	4.5	1.1	0.8	0.6	3.5	0.3	0.3	1.6

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Table 4: Household Characteristics among SCs, STs and Others

	Others			
	Landowners	Land less	Landless Wage Earners	All SCs
Owning house	98.0	90.0	92.0	95.5
Kutcha house	45.0	54.0	68.0	55.4
Separate kitchen	55.0	42.8	33.0	42.4
Electric connection	57.0	51.0	35.0	42.9
Protected water	63.3	60.3	60.8	62.0
Piped water	28.0	33.4	32.2	30.0
Toilet	18.0	18.9	8.5	15.3
Household Durables				
Bicycle	59.0	49.4	36.0	54.1
Television	17.6	16.6	3.7	11.8
Radio/Transistor	45.0	38.0	23.0	37.7
Electric fan	31.0	27.0	10.3	20.3
Motorcycle/Scooter	5.9	4.3	0.2	3.9
Sewing machine	17.0	15.4	5.7	9.7
Productive Assets				
Tubewell	14.0	6.1	2.3	9.1
Generator	1.1	0.3	0.2	0.7
Thresher	5.0	0.3	0.1	2.7
Bullock cart	21.0	1.4	1.6	11.1
Tractor	5.4	0.9	0.3	2.6
Biogas plant	1.9	0.5	0.3	1.1
Milch animals	5.0	0.2	0.3	1.1
Draught animals	2.6	0.5	0.3	0.9

Source: NCAER's HDI survey 1994.

Separate Kitchen

Having a separate kitchen symbolizes autonomy for female members within the Indian socio-cultural context. It may be important both from the health and hygiene point of view and from a gender perspective. Having a separate kitchen in the home enables women to enjoy privacy and control over space which is also necessary in child and personal care activities, such as breastfeeding, and facilitates more autonomous control over food preparation and distribution (Shariff, 1999). About 30 per cent and 34 per cent of households have a separate kitchen among SCs and STs respectively as against 42 per cent households in rural India (Table 4). The proportion of households having separate kitchen is relatively higher among landholding categories. About 37 per cent of landholding households have a separate kitchen as against 28 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of landless and landless wage earner households among SCs. Similarly, for STs about 34 per cent of households have a separate kitchen among landholders as against 32 per cent and 22 per cent respectively among landless and landless wage earners. About 55 per cent, 42 per cent and 33 per cent of landholding, landless and landless wage earner households have a separate kitchen respectively among other category in rural India.

Electricity

Domestic use of electricity is a good indicator of the level of living. On the whole, only 43 per cent of rural households were found to have electric connections in rural India. The proportion of households connected with electricity was very low among SCs (31 per cent) and STs (30 per cent). About 57 per cent of landholding households have electricity category as against 35 per cent of landless wage earner households among others in rural India. About 24 per cent and 34 per cent of landless wage earners have electricity among STs and SCs respectively.

Protected and Piped Water

About 58 per cent of SCs households have protected water in India as against 62 per cent among STs and others. The proportion of households having a regular supply of piped water was 30 per cent among other households as against 27 per cent, and 20 per cent among SCs and STs respectively. It is surprising to note that a relatively higher proportion of landless and landless wage earner households have access to regular supply of piped water than landowners irrespective of caste.

Toilets

Only about 9 per cent of landless wage earners have access to private toilets as against 15 per cent of all rural households. The proportion is higher among STs (12 per cent) than among SCs (8 per cent). It is interesting to note that about 16 per cent of landless households among STs have a toilet as against 19 per cent among others. Having a toilet also symbolizes the status of the household. Perhaps a large number of landless households among STs and others have salaried persons. About 33 per cent of household the income of these two groups comes from salary.

Ownership of Household Durables

Like SCs and STs, landless wage earners are considered as a disadvantaged group in comparison with all other social groups, as regards ownership of household durable.

Bicycle

Fifty four per cent of all rural households own bicycles as against 48 per cent and 32 per cent among SCs and STs. About 24 per cent of landless wage earner households own a bicycle among STs as against 39 per cent and 36 per cent respectively among SCs and others.

Radio and Television Set

The second most frequently owned asset is a radio/transistor. About 38 per cent of other rural households and about 29 per cent and 27 per cent of SCs and STs respectively own radio/transistor in rural India. Among landless wage earners 23 per cent own a radio/transistor as against 22 per cent and 16 per cent respectively among SCs and STs. About 12 per cent of rural households own television as against about 6 per cent and 7 per cent among SCs and STs respectively. Among landless wage earners, about 1 per cent of STs own television as against 4 per cent of households among SCs and others. About 17 per cent of the landless among others own television as against 10 per cent of those among SCs and STs.

Motorcycle/Scooter

Only about 4 per cent of rural Indian households own a scooter/ motorcycle as against only 1 per cent and 3 per cent households respectively among SCs and STs. Landless wage earners do not own any scooter or motorcycle in rural India.

Electric Fan

About 20 per cent of rural households own an electric fan as against 11 per cent among SCs and STs. About 4 per cent of landless wage earners among STs own an electric fan as against 13 per cent and 10 per cent among SCs and others. About 31 per cent of landholding households among others own an electric fan as against 16 per cent and 9 per cent respectively among SCs and STs.

Sewing Machine

About 10 per cent of all rural households own a sewing machine, which is considered to be a productive asset for generating income. About 3 per cent and 6 per cent of households own sewing machine respectively among STs and SCs in rural India. About 15 per cent of the landless among others own a sewing machine as against 11 per cent and 3 per cent respectively among SCs and STs. Only 1 per cent of landless wage earner households among STs own a sewing machine as against about 6 per cent among SCs and others. About 17 per cent of landholding households among others own a sewing machine as against 12 per cent and 4 per cent respectively among SCs and STs.

Productive Assets

The information on ownership of productive assets in rural areas provides an idea of the growth pattern and the use of technology in agriculture. Information in this survey was collected with regard to the ownership of agricultural amenities and implements such as a tube-well, thresher, winnower, bullock cart, electric generator, and tractor. Information on the ownership of a biogas plant, milch and draught animals was also collected. In rural India bullock carts continue to be used as a mode of transport. About 6 per cent of SC households own a bullock cart as against about 11 per cent among STs and Others in rural areas. About 21 per cent of landholding households among others own a bullock cart as against 16 per cent and 14 per cent respectively among SCs and STs. Only about 1 per cent of landless and landless wage earners among SCs own a bullock cart whereas about 2 per cent of landless and landless wage earners own a bullock cart among STs. About 9 per cent of rural households own a tube well which is an indicator of assured supply of water for cultivation. Among SCs only about 5 per cent have a tube well and only 2 per cent among landless wage earners.

Work Participation Rate

Two types of Work Participation Rates (WPRs) are estimated: one based on usual status and the other reporting work participation, if any, for those whose usual status is domestic chores, students, and non-workers which can be termed subsidiary status work participation.' For rural India as a whole the usual status male and female WPRs are 52 and 18 per cent respectively. A noteworthy aspect is that the coefficient of variation for male WPR is only 6.8 while for the female WPR it is 56 per cent, suggestion a wider variation in usual status employment of women in India. The usual status male WPRs closely match with the rates of the census 1991. The usual status female WPRs are,

however, relatively lower when compared with the 1991 census rates which are similarly defined. The usual and subsidiary status female WPR works out to 26 per cent for India as a whole with a considerable low coefficient of variation of 34 per cent. This percentage matches well with 26.8 per cent estimated from the 1991 Census data. The WPR among landless wage earners is the highest for both males and females. The landless wage earner WPR is 54 per cent for males and 33 per cent for females as against 53 per cent for males and 23 per cent for females among SCs. These rates are much higher than the all-India average. The male WPRs among STs match with the all-India average, but the female WPR is much higher than the all-India average. The female WPR is 28 per cent among STs.

The overall participation rate is affected by the extent of participation of children and the elderly in the labour force.

The adult WPRs for males aged 15-59 present a relatively more stable picture. The usual status adult WPRs is 83 and 30 per cent respectively for males and females in India. The WPRs for males and females according to the extended definition are 83 and 41 per cent respectively. There is about 11 per cent increase in WPR among females, due to inclusion of subsidiary status. The adult WPRs for both males and females are much higher among SCs, STs and landless wage earners under usual and subsidiary status than the all-India average. About 18 per cent increase is observed in WPR among females in the landless wage earner group as compared to the all-India average of female WPRs.

Average Days Worked Per Adult Wage Earner

In rural India the overall annual duration of agricultural wage employment is 115 days for males and 68 days for females. But it is highest among STs and substantially higher among landless wage earners. For example, the average duration of agricultural wage employment among STs is 116 days for males and 84 days for females and among landless wage earners is 156 days and 102 days for male and female respectively. It is observed that for landless and landless wage earners, both male and female among STs the duration of agricultural wage employment is much higher than that among, SCs and others. An interesting observation can be made in non-agricultural wage employment. For landless and landless wage earners the duration of employment among males is 115 days and 125 days respectively among others as against 103 days and 109 days respectively among SCs. For STs, the duration of work in non-agricultural wage work among landless and landless wage earners is only 90 days and 97 days respectively among males. On the other hand, the duration of non-agricultural wage work among females belonging to STs is 30.4 days and 31 days respectively among landless and landless wage earners as against 19 days and 20 days respectively for those belonging to SCs and 26 days and 25 days respectively for those belonging to others (Table 5).

Average Wage Income from Wage Work

In rural India the average income per adult wage worker from both agricultural work and non-agricultural work is Rs. 5809 for males and Rs. 1287 for females. This estimate is computed by multiplying average numbers of wage employment days by all adult wage earners during the previous years of the survey. The non-agricultural average wage income received by adult wage earners specially among females is very low, because a large number of wage workers among females do not get any employment opportunities to work Fig. 3.

Table 5: Average Days Worked Per Adult Wage Earner by Population Groups

	Agri. Wage Work		Non.-agri. Wage Work		Total Days Work	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
SCs	115.7	64.9	99.5	17.0	215.2	81.9
Land Owners	95.0	56.6	94.6	14.0	189.6	70.6
Landless HH	130.3	70.7	102.9	19.0	233.2	89.7
Landless Wage Earners HH	140.6	73.5	109.0	19.9	249.6	93.4
STs	116.2	84.4	81.4	25.5	197.6	109.9
Land Owners	98.0	75.6	76.2	22.4	174.2	98.0
Landless HH	146.4	98.9	90.0	30.4	236.4	129.3
Landless Wage Earners HH	155.5	102.0	96.5	30.8	252.0	132.8
Others	114.4	63.5	102.8	20.1	217.2	83.6
Land Owners	106.9	63.4	93.7	15.7	200.6	79.1
Landless HH	124.3	63.7	114.7	25.8	239.0	89.5
Landless Wage Earners HH	137.9	67.3	124.6	24.8	262.5	92.1
All Rural India	115.2	67.5	98.0	20.0	213.2	87.5

Source: NCAER's HDI survey 1994.

The annual income from both agricultural and non-agricultural wagework is estimated by multiplying the average number of days worked and the average income per day earned by an adult wage earner. The average wage income of females from non-agricultural work is negligible. The total wage income of males is Rs. 5809, which is more than four times of the income of females. Among landless wage earners the female wage income is the highest (Rs. 2756) for STs and the lowest (Rs. 1281) for other category (Table 6).

Table 6: Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Wage Income Per Day and Annual of Adult Wage Earners

	Agri. Wage Per Day		Non. Agri. Wage Per Day		Total Annual Income from All Wage Work		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
SCs	40.4	20.5	18.4	2.4	6505	1371	7876
Land Owners	33.4	17.7	16.8	2.1	4762	1031	5794
Landless HH	45.3	22.4	19.5	2.7	7909	1635	9544
Landless Wage Earners HH	47.6	23	20.5	2.8	8927	1746	10673
STs	33	22	12.4	4	4844	1959	6803
Land Owners	29.8	19.4	12.1	4.1	3842	1558	5401
Landless HH	38.7	25.2	12.7	3.7	6809	2605	9413
Landless Wage Earners HH	40.3	25.9	13.4	3.7	7560	2756	10316
Others	34.4	15.7	16.8	2.2	5662	1041	6704
Land Owners	32	14.6	15.6	1.8	4883	954	5836
Landless HH	37.7	17	18.3	2.8	6785	1155	7940
Landless Wage Earners HH	40.5	18	19.6	2.8	8027	1281	9308
All Rural India	36.3	18.3	16.6	2.6	5809	1287	7096

Source: NCAER's HDI Survey 1994.

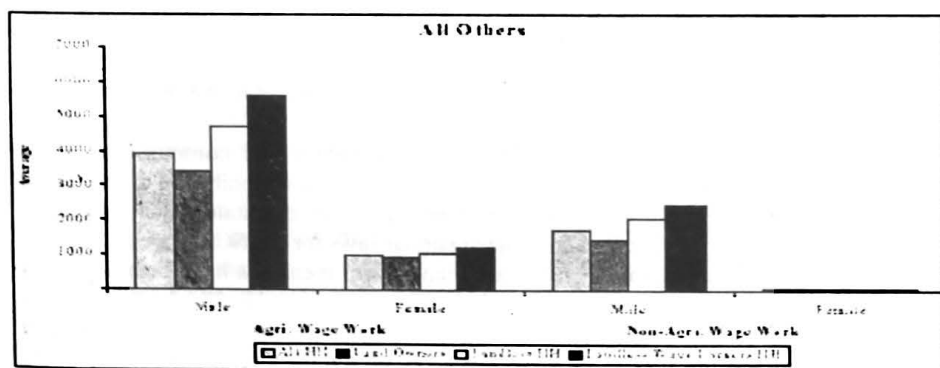
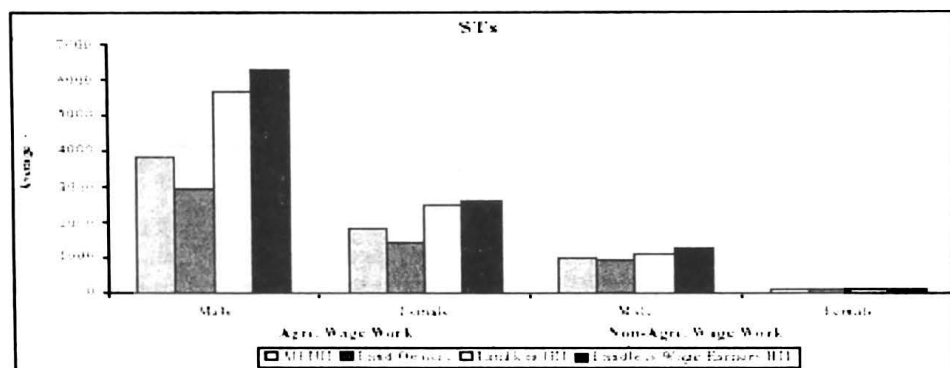
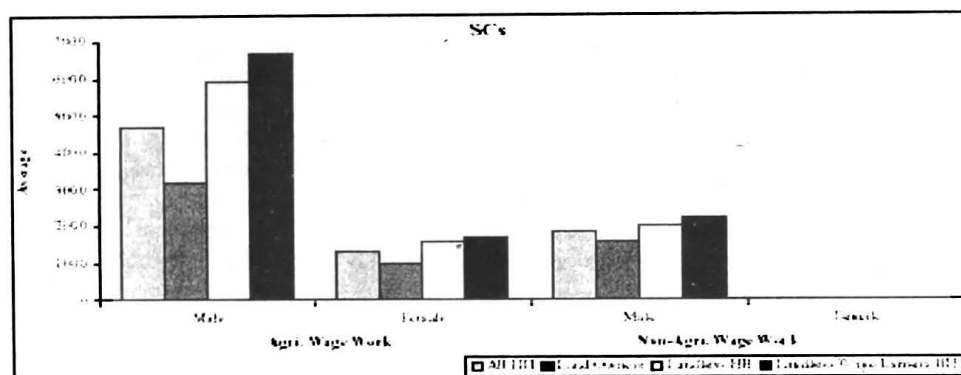


Fig. 3: Average Annual Income from Wage Work (in Rs.)

Distribution of Land among Social Groups

The distribution of land among social groups presents an interesting feature. Distribution of land among different social groups seems to be more egalitarian than distribution among the states (Shariff, 1999). About 63 per cent of SCs and 43 per cent of STs own less than one hectare of land as against the national average of 46 per cent (Table 7). About 31 per cent of STs own more than one but less than two hectares of land as against 23 per cent and 28 per cent respectively of SCs and others. As land size increases percentage of landowning households decreases. About three per cent of other households and only one per cent of households among STs and SCs own more than two hectares of land.

Table 7: Percentage of Household Owning Land in Different Size and Household Size by Population Groups

Social Groups	Land Size less than 1ha		Land Size 1-2 ha		Land Size 2-5 ha		Land Size 5-10 ha		Land Size 10+ ha		All Size	
	% HH	HH Size	% HH	HH Size	% HH	HH Size	% HH	HH Size	% HH	HH Size	Avg. Land Size	Avg. HH Size
STs	43.0	5.3	31.0	5.7	22.0	6.7	3.0	8.0	1.0	8.4	1.7	5.8
SCs	63.0	5.5	23.0	6.2	12.0	6.7	2.0	7.5	1.0	7.0	1.2	5.9
Others	37.0	5.4	28.0	5.5	29.0	6.6	4.0	8.0	3.0	8.1	2.2	6.0
All India	46.0	5.6	27.0	6.1	21.0	6.7	4.0	8.0	1.8	8.5	1.8	6.1

Source: NCAER's HDI Survey, 1993-94.

Household Income by Land Size

The household income differentials among social groups are more significant due to vast differentials in landholding size. But it is observed that even among households with same landholding size the household income is different. This implies that household income does not depend only on land. However, it is obvious that as land size increases household income also increases. In all land size categories the household income of SCs and STs is lower than the national average of Rs. 5109. Similar pattern is observed in the case of per capita income (Table 8).

Size of Landholdings among SCs and STs by States

In rural India land is the most important productive asset and is also a symbol of power and privilege. Its possession enhances one's economic and social status. A look into the ownership pattern of land among SCs, STs and others may therefore be revealing in the context of their relative social and economic position.

Following the recommendations of several committees and commissions, many states with sizeable STs in their population have enacted laws prohibiting alienation of tribal land and also restoration of alienated land. Some of the states like Karnataka, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal enacted similar laws for the SCs as well.

Since Independence, comprehensive agrarian reform measures have been launched to reduce the glaring inequality in land distribution and to ensure *land to the tiller*. These measures constituted the largest body of agrarian legislation in the country. Several scholars have studied the impact of these measures on agrarian relations (Joshi, 1975; Appu, 1975; Bandopadhyay, 1986; Sharma, 1992). Scholars have also studied the trends in the distribution of landholdings in rural India (Sanyal, 1977, 1988; Vyas 1979; Nair,

1990; Sharma 1994). These studies, however, fail to throw much light on the changing access of SCs, STs and others to land and also the distribution of land among these communities separately. Again, not many studies are available which exclusively focus on the land distribution among SC and ST households¹. These two communities, particularly SCs, have been the *target group* of the numerous land reform legislations in the country since the 1950s. For example, it has been routinely reiterated in plan and other policy documents that while distributing surplus land, priority shall be given to landless SC and ST households.

Table 8: Household and Per Capita Income by Land Size among Different Groups (Rs.)

Social Groups	Land size less than 1 ha		Land size 1-2 ha		Land size 2-5 ha	
	HH Income from all Sources	Per capita Income	HH Income from all Sources	Per capita Income	HH Income from all Sources	Per capita Income
STs	15113	3023	20326	3566	31188	4655
SCs	16349	2725	24837	4139	37061	5531
Others	22930	4586	27314	4966	45980	6967
All India	19045	3401	28495	4749	42677	6369

Social groups	Land size 5-10 ha		Land size 10+		All size	
	HH Income from all Sources	Per capita Income	HH Income from all Sources	Per capita Income	HH Income from all Sources	Per capita Income
STs	60434	7554	110050	13101	22621	3900.2
SCs	50836	6778	77066	11009	21785	3692.4
Others	112426	14053	227914	28489	7719	6689.0
All India	76488	9561	142861	16807	31163	5108.7

Source: NCAER's HDI Survey, 1994.

The pertinent questions to be answered in this context include:

- What is the relative share of SCs, STs and other households in the total land, and how it has changed over time?
- What is the incidence of landlessness among SCs, STs and others and how it has changed over time?
- What is the extent of inequality in the distribution of land within these communities?

There we make an attempt to answer these on the basis of data collected by the NSSO. The data on land distribution among all households are available since 1953-54 (8th Round), but that on SCs and STs are available since 1982 in the *Report on Landholdings* (37th Round, NSS Report No. 300) and *Report on some Aspects of Household Ownership Holdings (I)* (48th Round, NSS Report No. 399).

¹ Studies available on tribal agriculture mostly focus on the practice of shifting cultivation.

An analysis of these data shows that the proportion of land owned by SC households has increased in most of the states in varying degrees. At the all-India level this has increased to 10 per cent in 1992 from a level of 8 per cent in 1982. Despite this increase their share in land remained substantially lower than their share in total population except in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal where the gap is not so wide. The percentage share of SCs, STs and other households separately in the total population and their share of land in major states or obtained from the NSSO data are presented in Table 9.

The proportion of SCs in rural population of the states varies from as high as 30.2 per cent in Punjab to as low as 7.0 per cent in Gujarat. During the decade 1982–92, the maximum increase in this proportion was in Maharashtra, from 7.5 to 11.5 per cent. The proportion of SCs in rural population is high in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Haryana. Their share in total land has increased in a number of states like Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. This increase is marginal in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In the remaining states, the share of land owned by them remained more or less unchanged except in Assam where it declined. In 1992 their share in land was high in West Bengal (23.8 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir (16.5 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (14.8 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (12.9 per cent), Tamil Nadu (13.0 per cent) and Rajasthan (12.0 per cent). In the states of Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Gujarat and Bihar it was 5 per cent or lower. In rural India as a whole, it was 10.3 per cent. These shares, however, should be seen together with their proportion in population. In most of the states, the share of SC households in the total land was substantially lower than their share in the total population. The exceptions are Assam West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir and Madhya Pradesh where the gap is not so wide.

The ST households constitute nearly one-fourth of the rural population in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh and one-fifth in Gujarat. During the decade 1982–92, the proportion of STs in rural population did not change substantially in any of the states. However, their share in land increased markedly in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal. In 1992, the percentage of total land owned by ST households was higher in relation to their share in rural population in Bihar, Karnataka, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It was nearly equal in Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Tamil Nadu, while in the rest of the states it remained substantially lower.

The share of land owned by other households remained higher than their share in population in most of the states. However, during the decade of 1982–92, the share of land owned by other households declined by varying degrees in all the states, except Bihar and Himachal Pradesh. In some states, viz. Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal, the magnitude of decline was substantial. In rural India as a whole the share of land owned by other households declined from 82 per cent to 78 per cent. These changes, *pari passu*, imply an increase in the share of land owned by SC and ST households. And in fact the share of SC households increased from 7.89 per cent to 10.34 per cent and that of ST households from 10.10 per cent to 11.72 per cent for the country as a whole.

The proportion of land owned by ST households also increased in most of the states. STs had a higher share in land relative to their share in population in five states (Bihar, Karnataka, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). It was nearly equal in Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Tamil Nadu. At the all-India level the share of STs in the population was 10.0 per cent and their share in land was 11.7 per cent in 1992.

Table 9: Percentage of SCs, STs and Others in Total Rural Population and their Share of Land in Major States, 1982 to 1992

States	Year	Scheduled Castes		Scheduled Tribes		Others	
		Population	Land	Population	Land	Population	Land
Andhra	1982	16.4	7.9	7.3	8.7	76.3	83.4
Pradesh	1992	18.0	8.6	8.0	10.0	74.0	81.4
Assam	1982	-	11.3	-	11.6	-	77.1
	1992	7.2	7.4	14.1	15.7	78.8	76.9
Bihar	1982	15.2	3.2	8.9	22.1	76.0	74.7
	1992	15.3	5.0	8.2	17.4	76.5	77.6
Gujarat	1982	7.0	3.2	19.1	10.4	73.9	86.4
	1992	7.3	5.3	21.0	10.2	72.0	84.5
Haryana	1982	20.7	0.8	-	-	79.3	99.2
	1992	21.8	5.9	-	-	78.2	94.1
Himachal Pradesh	1982	25.2	13.9	4.9	6.8	69.9	79.3
	1992	26.3	14.8	4.6	2.1	69.1	83.1
Jammu & Kashmir	1982	9.3	8.8	-	-	90.7	91.2
	1992	-	16.5	-	-	-	83.5
Karnataka	1982	16.5	8.9	6.0	2.8	77.4	88.3
	1992	18.2	9.8	5.3	7.9	76.5	82.3
Kerala	1982	10.8	2.2	1.2	0.3	87.9	97.5
	1992	11.0	2.9	1.5	0.9	87.5	96.2
Madhya Pradesh	1982	14.5	7.7	27.8	23.8	57.7	68.5
	1992	14.9	12.9	28.9	23.8	56.3	63.3
Maharashtra	1982	7.5	3.4	12.7	8.9	79.8	87.7
	1992	11.5	8.5	13.3	11.4	75.2	80.1
Orissa	1982	15.1	9.6	24.3	26.0	60.7	64.4
	1992	16.8	10.1	24.5	36.1	58.8	53.8
Punjab	1982	30.2	2.1	-	-	69.8	97.9
	1992	32.2	5.1	-	-	67.9	94.9
Rajasthan	1982	17.7	12.5	14.9	6.4	67.4	81.1
	1992	18.0	12.1	15.4	9.4	66.5	78.5
Tamil Nadu	1982	21.9	8.2	1.5	1.7	76.7	90.1
	1992	23.0	13.0	1.4	1.2	75.6	85.8
Uttar Pradesh	1982	23.1	10.2	0.2	1.6	76.7	88.2
	1992	23.2	11.8	0.2	1.4	76.6	86.8
West Bengal	1982	26.2	20.6	7.3	4.0	66.5	75.4
	1992	27.6	23.8	7.3	8.7	65.1	67.5
All India	1982	16.8	7.9	9.2	10.1	74.8	82.0
	1992	17.9	10.3	10.0	11.7	72.1	78.0

Notes: SCs concentrated states: Punjab, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Rajasthan, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh & Bihar STs concentrated states: Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra & Assam.

Sources: (i) Report on Landholdings (1): 37th Round, NSS Report No. 330.

(ii) Report on Some Aspects of Ownership Holdings (1): 48th Round, NSS Report No. 399.

Incidence of Landlessness

The proportion of SCs and STs in rural population, as well as proportion of landless households among them, is quite high. However, overall there has been an increase in the incidence of landlessness among all population groups except STs. The incidence of landlessness among SC, ST and other households, along with the changes, during 1982–92 is shown above in Table 10. It can be seen that the incidence of landlessness declined among all the three social groups in most of the states.

Table 10: Trends in Incidence of Landless Households among the SCs and STs in Major States, 1982 to 1992

(Per cent of households)				
States	Year	SCs	STs	Others
Andhra Pradesh	1982	13.6	14.8	11.0
	1992	12.5	1.8	13.1
Assam	1982	5.0	13.6	7.3
	1992	5.5	5.7	15.4
Bihar	1982	35.6	13.5	2.5
	1992	19.7	2.7	6.1
Gujarat	1982	23.9	25.6	13.1
	1992	18.1	10.9	17.5
Haryana	1982	10.1	-	5.0
	1992	9.0	-	1.8
Himachal Pradesh	1982	6.1	-	8.7
	1992	7.1	10.0	11.7
Jammu & Kashmir	1982	0.7	-	7.3
	1992	4.0	-	2.4
Karnataka	1982	14.5	26.7	12.7
	1992	10.7	5.3	10.5
Kerala	1982	16.6	20.4	12.0
	1992	14.3	6.5	7.7
Madhya Pradesh	1982	18.1	14.0	13.6
	1992	20.5	16.6	12.6
Maharashtra	1982	26.4	28.8	19.5
	1992	24.3	25.2	6.2
Orissa	1982	7.2	10.1	6.8
	1992	11.2	11.0	16.4
Punjab	1982	6.0	-	6.6
	1992	6.7	-	5.1
Rajasthan	1982	12.9	8.7	6.6
	1992	7.8	5.5	6.2
Tamil Nadu	1982	14.5	5.0	20.8
	1992	19.2	6.3	17.6
Uttar Pradesh	1982	7.2	7.4	4.0
	1992	6.2	7.8	4.4
West Bengal	1982	19.1	52.9	11.7
	1992	12.0	16.2	9.8
All India	1982	12.6	17.1	10.2
	1992	13.3	11.5	10.5

Note: - Not available.

Sources: (i) Report on Landholdings; (1) 37th Round, NSS Report No. 330.

(ii) Report on Some Aspects of Ownership Holdings; (1) 48th Round, NSS Report No. 399.

The exceptions are Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Himachal Pradesh in respect of SC households; Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh in case of ST households and Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa in respect of other households. Again, across the states, the decline in the incidence of landlessness among SC households was substantial in Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

In the case of ST households, the proportion of landless households in West Bengal declined from 52.9 to 16.2 percent. The decline was also sizeable in Gujarat, from 25.6 to 10.9 percent. Among other households, the extent of this decline was more pronounced in Maharashtra, followed by Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Despite a decline in the proportion of landless households among SCs in majority of the states during 1982-92, the proportion remained substantially higher as compared to that among other households in as many as eight states, namely, Bihar, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, and marginally higher in Karnataka, Punjab and Rajasthan. In rural India as a whole, the proportion of landless SCs households among SCs stood at 13.3 per cent compared to 10.5 per cent among other households and 11.5 per cent among STs. From the NCAER's 1993-94 Survey data, it is estimated that 34 per cent of all rural households are landless of which SCs account for 35 per cent, STs 11 per cent all others 53 per cent.

In the case of ST households, the incidence of landlessness was substantially higher in comparison to other households in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, while it was marginally lower in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala. Keeping in view the share of SCs and STs in rural population, the proportion of landless households among them was very high or compared to that for households not belonging to SCs and STs.

A rising trend in the relative share of land, coupled with a rising trend in the inequality in the distribution of land, among SC households in a number of states is perhaps an indication of the fact that the additional land is being cornered by those who already have a larger share of it.

Many states with a sizeable ST population have enacted laws prohibiting alienation of and restoration of alienated tribal land. However, there is no such law for the SCs. SCs and STs have been the target group of the numerous land reform legislations in this country since the 1950s. Despite this the majority of SCs and STs still work as agricultural labourers. In 1987-88 the proportion of agricultural labourers was 52 per cent among SCs, 42 per cent among STs and only 23 per cent among other households.

Conclusion

Of all the class division in the society, SCs and STs are socially and economically the most disadvantaged groups. In spite of constitutional provisions and different national development policies for the betterment of these two groups, their level of income and share of landholdings are still much below the national average as reflected in this study. It has emerged from the study that the rural economy is based on land. Those who own land have substantially higher household income than the landless. About 70 per cent of the household income comes from agriculture and allied activities. The household income varies with land size. Very low household and per capita income is observed among landless and landless wage earners. About 90 to 92 per cent of the household income comes from both agricultural and non-agricultural wage work. However, the non-agricultural work opportunities in rural India are very low for females. It is also observed

that there is a very close association between household income and ownership of household amenities.

About 63 per cent of SCs and 43 per cent of STs own less than one hectare of land. However, the proportion of land owned by SC households has increased in most of the states. The share of land increased in Haryana from 0.8 per cent in 1982 to 6 per cent in 1992. At the all-India level it increased to 10 per cent in 1992 from a level of 8 per cent in 1982 among SCs. Among STs, the percentage of land share increased to 12 per cent in 1992 from 10 per cent in 1982. Except Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, in all other states the share of land owned by STs is very low. The proportion of landless household among SCs at the all-India level marginally increased from 12.6 per cent in 1982 to 13.3 per cent in 1992. However, among STs the percentage of landless households declined from 17 per cent in 1982 to 11.5 per cent in 1992. The proportion of landless households in West Bengal declined from 53 per cent in 1982 to 16 per cent in 1992 among STs.

All efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of SCs and STs fall short of the desired impact. A comprehensive scrutiny of the policies followed so far, both their formulation and their implementation, is perhaps needed to locate the factors inhibiting the progress rate. Many of such factors are likely to be region and community specific. A well-structures survey should be undertaken to collect information on the interplay of these factors. The current policies should continue, as large section of SCs and STs have still not benefited from these policies. Simultaneously steps should be taken to revise such polices and priority should be given to landless wage earners.

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Scheduled Castes, Their Disadvantages and Deprivation: A Rural All-India Profile

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This paper examines the economic handicaps and extent of deprivation of the Scheduled Caste households in rural India. It compares them with the Scheduled Tribe households and other social groups in terms of their economic profile in 1993-94. It examines the extent of poverty and inequality among the Scheduled Castes by different landholding classes and household types both at a point in time and over time between 1987-88 and 1993-94. The evidence presented call for efforts to augment both the physical and human capital endowment of the Scheduled Caste households in order to promote their opportunities, empowerment and security.

I Introduction

Scheduled Castes (SC) is a Socially Disadvantaged Group (SDG) and is recognised as such by the Government of India (GoI). The other SDGs are the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and the Minorities. All these groups lag behind the rest of the society due to their social and economic backwardness. The GoI has repeatedly declared its special 'concern and commitment for the well-being' of the SDGs. Successive Five Year Plans have stressed the need for designing development strategies targeted at creating employment and income generating activities among the SCs and STs so as to alleviate their poverty. The Ninth Plan dwells at length on the need for empowering these SDGs (GoI 2000). Therefore, it would be of interest to examine their economic handicaps and extent of deprivation that hamper their empowerment.

The focus of this paper is on one major subset of the SDG, viz., the SCs and examine their relative economic backwardness vis a vis other important groups like the STs, and sections other than the SCs and STs. In 1991 the SC population was 138.2 million, which constituted 16.5 per cent of the total population. The SC population is predominantly rural. About 81 per cent of the SC population resides in the rural areas (GoI 2000: 2.217). Therefore, this paper attempts to examine the economic backwardness among the SCs in rural all-India. Agriculture, being the principal occupation in the rural areas, an important asset that matters is land. But majority of the SCs (77.1 per cent) are landless. Therefore, the paper seeks to examine the living conditions of the SCs vis-a-vis other social groups across size class of landholdings.

This paper attempts to address the following questions. How do the SCs compare with the STs and other social groups in terms of their economic profile? What is the extent of poverty and inequality among the SCs by different landholding classes and household types? How do the landless agricultural labourers compare with the rest? These questions are examined at a point of time for the entire population of rural all-India for the year 1993-94. As regards changes in poverty and inequality, the focus is restricted to the SC population by household type and landholding class for the period 1987-88 and

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1993-94. The paper is organised as follows. Section II provides a socio-economic profile of the rural all-India SC population. Section III deals with the data base and methodology for estimates of inequality and poverty among the SC, ST and other social groups. Section IV presents the results and the final section concludes the paper.

II Socio-Economic Profile

Indian population is predominantly rural (70 per cent). In 1993-94 rural households accounted for 119.5 million households. SC households constituted 25.5 million, that is, about 21.3 per cent of the total rural households. A significant subset of all rural households is labour households (38.3 per cent), of whom 79.2 per cent are agricultural labour households. As regards the SCs, labour households accounted for 59.5 per cent of the total. The SC labour households were virtually agricultural labour households (83 per cent) (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Rural Households by Social Groups and Types: All-India (1993-94)
(In Thousands)

	Rural Households	Rural Labour Households	Agricultural Labour Households
Scheduled Castes	25454	15134	12544
Scheduled Tribes	12756	6109	4823
Others	81320	24523	18895
All Social groups	119530	45766	36262

Source: GoI (1998a: 12).

The average size of SC rural labour households at the all-India level was 4.44 persons as against the average of 4.48 persons for all social groups. The average size of SC agricultural labour households was 4.40 as against the average of 4.44 persons for agricultural labour households of all social groups.

The human capital endowment of the SCs was also very limited. Majority (54.2 per cent for males and 82.4 per cent for females) of the adults was illiterate in 1993-94. The corresponding estimates for the STs were 58.8 per cent and 84.3 per cent and for social groups other than SCs and STs were 34.9 per cent and 65.5 per cent respectively (GoI 1999: 18). An important measure of social progress is rate of school attendance among children in the age group 5-14 years. Of course, there has been considerable progress among the SCs. Still it lags behind those for the other social groups. The estimated school attendance rates among children in 1993-94 were 64.3 per cent for male and 46.2 per cent for female SCs (GoI 1999: 19). These numbers compare favourably with those for STs (57.9 per cent and 40.9 per cent respectively) but lag behind those for other social groups (74.9 per cent and 61 per cent respectively).

In addition, their endowment of physical capital was also limited. Majority of the all-India rural SC households did not possess cultivated land. Landlessness was 52.81 per cent as against 38.7 per cent for all social groups. As regards labour households, 65 per cent of the SC households were landless (58.8 per cent for labour households of all social groups). Similarly, while 64 per cent of rural SC agricultural labour households did not possess any land, the corresponding number for the all rural agricultural labor households was 57 per cent (Table 2). Even the land-owning SC households had limited endowment of this asset. The average size of land cultivated per cultivating household was 0.17

hectare for the SCs and 0.23-hectare for the rural cultivating households as a whole (GoI 1998a).

Table 2: Land ownership by Social Groups and Household Type: All-India Rural (1993-94)

	All Rural Households			Rural Labour Households			Agricultural Labour Households		
	With Land*	With -out Land	Total	With Land	With -out Land	Total	With Land	With -out Land	Total
SC	47.19	52.81	100.00	35.05	64.95	100.00	36.06	63.94	100.00
ST	69.90	30.10	100.00	54.07	45.93	100.00	54.18	45.82	100.00
All	61.26	38.74	100.00	41.20	58.80	100.00	43.03	56.97	100.00
Social Groups									

Source: GoI (1998a: 38-40).

As regards the occupational profile, majority (56.4 per cent) of the members of the SC households was Without any Job (WOJ). Of the rest, 33.9 per cent were Agricultural Labourers (AL), 2.6 per cent were Non-Agricultural Labourers (NAL) and seven per cent were employed in Other Occupations (OO) (The corresponding numbers for all social groups were 56.6 per cent (WOJ), 31.4 per cent (AL), 3.4 per cent (NAL) and nine per cent (OO). A similar picture held good for the class of agricultural labour households too (Table 3). The structure of SC agricultural and non-agricultural labour force in terms of men, women and children classification was similar to the average picture for all the rural households (Table 4).

Table 3: Occupational Profile of Households: All-India Rural (1993-94)
(Average Number of Members Per Household)

	Agricultural Labour	Non-Agricultural Labour	Other Occupations	No Occupation	All
Rural Labour Households					
Scheduled Castes	1.51 (34.00)	0.12 (2.70)	0.31 (6.98)	2.50 (56.30)	4.44 (100.00)
Scheduled Tribes	1.63 (36.22)	0.10 (2.22)	0.51 (11.33)	2.26 (50.22)	4.50 (100.00)
All Social Groups	1.41 (31.47)	0.15 (3.34)	0.40 (8.93)	2.52 (56.25)	4.48 (100.00)
Agricultural Labour Households					
Scheduled Castes	1.69 (38.40)	0.03 (0.68)	0.24 (5.45)	2.44 (55.45)	4.40 (100.00)
Scheduled Tribes	1.88 (42.34)	0.02 (0.45)	0.32 (7.21)	2.22 (50.00)	4.44 (100.00)
All Social Groups	1.63 (36.71)	0.04 (0.90)	0.31 (6.98)	2.46 (55.41)	4.44 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses refer to percentage share of each occupation.

Source: GoI (1998a: 49-54).

Table 4: Number (Thousands) of Labourers by Sectors: All-India Rural (1993-94)

	Rural Labour Households							
	Agriculture				Non-Agriculture			
	Men	Women	Child -ren	Total	Men	Women	Child -ren	Total
SC	14365 (63.00)	7742 (33.95)	695 (3.05)	22802 (100.00)	1315 (75.45)	353 (20.25)	75 (4.30)	1743 (100.00)
ST	5808 (58.25)	3805 (38.16)	358 (3.59)	9971 (100.00)	499 (78.83)	127 (20.06)	7 (1.11)	633 (100.00)
All Social Groups	39811 (61.95)	22491 (35.00)	1963 (3.05)	64265 (100.00)	5332 (75.87)	1398 (19.89)	298 (4.24)	7028 (100.00)
	Agricultural Labour Households							
	Agriculture				Non-Agriculture			
	Men	Women	Child -ren	Total	Men	Women	Child -ren	Total
SC	13427 (63.28)	7141 (33.65)	651 (3.07)	21219 (100.00)	278 (68.81)	89 (22.03)	37 (9.16)	404 (100.00)
ST	5294 (58.30)	3466 (38.17)	321 (3.53)	9081 (100.00)	85 (79.44)	22 (20.56)	0 (00.00)	107 (100.00)
All Social Groups	36881 (62.22)	20579 (34.72)	1816 (3.06)	59276 (100.00)	1072 (68.89)	348 (22.37)	136 (8.74)	1556 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses refer to percentage shares.

Source: Gol (1998a: 67-78).

Finally, one may also look at the earning strength (number of earners) of the SC households and their relative status in this respect. The average earning strength of SC agricultural labour households and rural labour households as a whole was less, though marginally, than those of other groups (Table 5). However, the average daily earnings of all categories- men, women and children – of SC workers in agriculture were the highest among the three social groups considered here (Table 6). As regards non-agricultural activities, the average earnings of children were the highest. The earnings of the males were marginally less than those of groups other than SCs and STs. The evidence on occupational distribution, earning strength and average earnings presented above broadly throws up a profile of the SCs comparable to those of the rest of the population. However, their main handicap seems to be in terms of resource endowments. Majority of the rural SC households is without any cultivated land and literacy.

Table 5: Average Earning Strength of Rural Households: All-India Rural (1993-94)

	Agricultural Labour Households			Rural Labour Households		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Scheduled Castes	1.28	0.69	1.97	1.27	0.66	1.93
Scheduled Tribes	1.34	0.88	2.22	1.34	0.89	2.23
All Social Groups	1.28	0.71	1.99	1.28	0.68	1.96

Source: Gol (1998b: 50-57).

Of course, the Government has made efforts to focus on the SDGs in different poverty alleviation programmes and these households have benefited. For instance, while 8.6 per cent of the SC households and 9.7 per cent of the ST households benefited from

the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) assistance, it was only 5.5 per cent for households belonging to other categories during the five years preceding 1993-94 (GoI 1998d: 70). Similarly, 7.5 per cent of the SC households and 8.8 per cent of the ST households participated in public works during the '365 days preceding the date of survey' in 1993-94.; it was less at five per cent for other households (GoI 1998d: 74).

In order to make an unambiguous assessment of the economic status of the SCs, we may look at their levels of living and health status, which is done in the following sections.

Table 6: Average Daily Earnings: All-India Rural (1993-94)

	Rural Labour Households					
	Agriculture			Non-Agriculture		
	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children
Scheduled Castes	21.79	15.74	13.20	30.62	18.09	17.48
Scheduled Tribes	18.54	14.93	10.88	27.24	18.99	15.52
All Social Groups	21.52	15.33	12.32	32.48	17.45	15.13
	Agricultural Labour Households					
	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children
	Scheduled Castes	21.67	15.73	13.39	25.79	17.16
Scheduled Tribes	18.51	14.88	11.03	22.39	16.59	11.40
All Social Groups	21.34	15.18	12.45	26.95	16.21	15.00

Source: GoI (1998b: 58-69).

III Data and Methodology

The National Sample Survey (NSS) data for the 50th round (1993-94) is available by socio-economic categories. The households are classified into socio-economic categories as per three characteristics. They are: (i) social group; (ii) household type and (iii) size class of land possessed by the household. As regards rural India, the households are classified into five different types. They are: (i) self-employed in non-agriculture, agricultural labour, other labour, self-employed in agriculture, and other households. The classification of households across these five categories is based on the predominance of different income sources. A household is classified as "agricultural labour" if this source accounts for more than half of its total income. As regards social categories, three categories are considered, viz., ST, SC, and other households.

Published NSS data are available in the form of distribution of persons across expenditure classes corresponding to each size class of landholding. The reports do not provide any information on per capita consumer expenditure. In addition there is also the problem of groping bias. Hence, we have obtained estimates of poverty by (i) specifying and estimating parameterized Lorenz Curves and (ii) calculating poverty measures in terms of the parameters of the Lorenz Curves. This approach permits estimation of distributionally sensitive poverty measures like the Foster-Greer-Thorebecke (FGT) (1984) index. Two most important are the General Quadratic Lorenz Curve (Villasenor

and Arnold, 1984, 1989) and Beta Lorenz Curve (Kakwani, 1980). Between the two specifications of the Lorenz Curve, choice is made on the basis of goodness-of-fit criterion¹.

The FGT class of poverty measures given by

$$P_{\alpha} = \int_0^z \left[\frac{z-x}{z} \right]^{\alpha} f(x) dx \quad \alpha \geq 0 \quad \dots(1)$$

where x is the household consumption expenditure, $f(x)$ is its density, z denotes the poverty line, and α is a non-negative parameter. We consider the FGT measures for values of $\alpha = 0, 1$ and 2 , that is, measures of incidence, depth and severity of poverty respectively. These three different estimates show similar results. Hence, in this paper, we have reported the FGT estimates for value of $\alpha = 0$, that is, the headcount ratio. The poverty estimates are made with reference to the poverty lines estimated as per the methodology recommended by the Expert Group (GoI 1993a). The poverty lines for rural all-India work out to be Rs. 115.43 per capita per month at 1987-88 prices and Rs. 205.84, at 1993-94 prices (GoI 1993a: 36 and 2000: 1.29).

Estimate of poverty based on consumer expenditure data collected in a semi-monetised economy has its own shortcomings. Its information content is ambiguous (Suryanarayana, 2000). Therefore, one may also assess the relative economic status of the SCs in terms of outcome variables like measures of health status (anthropometric indicators, infant and child mortality rates). Such estimates are readily available from National Family Health Survey (NFHS) co-ordinated by the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) during 1992-93 and 1998-99².

¹ This note has made estimates of poverty using the software called Povcal available in the World Bank web site, at <http://www.worldbank.org/research/povmonitor/index.htm>.

² This is a nationwide survey, covering virtually the entire population. The NFHS has collected statistical information on 'fertility, nuptiality, family size preferences, knowledge and practices of family planning, the potential demand for contraception, the level of unwanted fertility, utilization of antenatal care services, breast-feeding and infant and child mortality at the national and state levels'. It has collected information on the demographic and socio-economic determinants of fertility, family planning and maternal and child health.

The sample design for the rural sector is two-stage stratified; villages are selected in the first stage followed by households in the second stage. In the first stage, each state is divided into different regions on the basis of geophysical characteristics. Villages in each region are further stratified on the basis of variables like village size, distance from the nearest town, proportion of non-agricultural workers, proportion of the population belonging to SCs/STs, and female literacy. From such strata, villages are selected systematically with probability proportional to size. From each selected village, on an average 30 households are chosen for interview. As regards the urban sector, the sample design provided for three/multi stages: cities/towns in the first stage followed by urban blocks and households in the subsequent two stages. The first stage stratification is into (i) self-selecting cities, that is, cities with large population; (ii) towns that are district headquarters; and (iii) other towns. In the next stage, urban blocks are stratified according to geophysical characteristics. However, the number of stage differed between self-selecting cities and the other two strata. As regards the former, the sample design is two-stage that provided for selection of urban blocks followed by households. The survey design is a three-stage one for district headquarters and other towns. The three-stage sample design provided for selection of towns with probability proportional to size, two census blocks per selected town and on an average, 20 households (30 households in all states, except Jammu & Kashmir and Mumbai where it was 20, during the second NFHS) from each selected urban block. Further details on sampling, estimates and their limitations can be obtained from IIPS (1995) and IIPS and ORC Macro (2000).

IV Deprivation

Measures Based on Input Variable: Consumption

Tables from 7.a to 7.c provide estimates of poverty and inequality based on consumer expenditure distribution for social groups by household type for rural all-India for the year 1993-94.

(i) *Rural Households by social categories:* Among the different social groups, incidence of poverty was the highest among the STs (51.2 per cent), followed by SCs (47.4 per cent), and Other Social Groups (OSGs that is, households other than SCs and STs) (31.2 per cent). SCs were more deprived than the population as a whole (36.72 per cent). As regards inequality in consumption distribution, it is the least among the SC population (Table 7.c). Within the SC population, poverty was highest among land-poor households, that is, those with land less than 0.40 hectare, who constitute the largest segment (66 per cent) of the SC population (Table 8.c). Incidence of poverty seems to be somewhat inversely correlated with the size of land possessed for all the social groups taken separately and together (Table 7.c). This result would emphasise the importance of land

Table 7.a: Poverty and Inequality Across Socio-Economic Categories: All-India Rural (1993-94)

(Poverty Line: Rs 205.84 at 1993-94 Prices)

Household Type	Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	SC Population		ST Population		Others		All		
		Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	
Self-employed in Non-agriculture	< 0.01	36.58	27.03	52.89	27.82	30.43	25.91	33.10	26.47	
	0.01-0.40	39.42	23.26	41.10	27.67	30.99	26.28	33.13	26.01	
	0.41-1.00	33.90	23.68	53.88	25.52	27.37	25.62	30.25	25.59	
	1.00-2.00	38.91	24.60	44.89	26.48	26.35	27.92	29.62	27.84	
	2.01-4.00	33.61	23.48	29.27	36.48	19.24	26.25	22.60	27.50	
	4.01 & above	45.09	35.73	9.56	28.40	7.18	23.16	11.65	25.45	
	All	38.13	24.31	44.41	28.95	29.39	26.34	31.86	26.28	
	Agricultural Labour Households	< 0.01	58.62	23.25	60.18	23.22	52.70	25.50	56.18	24.44
		0.01-0.40	58.87	23.77	60.88	24.71	52.21	23.99	55.77	23.99
0.41-1.00		61.55	23.22	64.04	23.05	50.53	23.14	56.31	23.40	
1.00-2.00		63.46	20.57	68.77	22.61	49.62	25.11	57.87	24.13	
2.01-4.00		57.47	21.05	75.64	24.30	49.18	23.91	56.29	23.90	
4.01 & above		79.53	23.56	100.00	NP	33.06	31.86	53.58	31.94	
All		59.29	23.47	62.83	23.75	51.67	24.23	56.04	23.98	

Source: Author's estimates based on Gol (1998c: 138-139).

Table 7.b: Poverty and Inequality Across Socio-Economic Categories: All-India Rural (1993-94) (contd.)

(Poverty Line: Rs 205.84 at 1993-94 Prices)

Household Type	Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	SC Population		ST Population		Others		All	
		Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)
Other Labour	< 0.01	46.27	23.81	41.73	22.40	32.86	25.35	38.47	24.95
	0.01-0.40	38.56	22.65	46.70	24.48	35.96	25.96	37.93	25.01
	0.41 - 1.00	41.03	20.74	53.89	18.81	33.83	25.18	41.27	23.45
	1.00 - 2.00	44.02	24.37	60.60	18.28	35.97	26.94	43.79	25.38
	2.01 - 4.00	50.62	22.62	38.61	27.88	31.98	25.54	39.53	25.53
	4.01 & above	36.05	14.56	72.16	31.85	24.60	NP	38.97	24.49
	All	41.08	22.69	49.53	22.64	34.99	25.85	38.86	24.90
	Self-employed in Agriculture	< 0.01	31.06	28.93	69.60	NP	34.20	26.30	34.32
0.01-0.40		38.30	23.55	50.41	27.53	32.62	24.90	34.54	24.99
0.41 - 1.00		39.76	23.67	43.75	22.79	31.00	24.38	33.43	24.35
1.00 - 2.00		38.94	23.46	45.63	24.40	27.73	24.43	31.35	24.68
2.01 - 4.00		32.14	23.70	52.51	23.87	21.90	24.88	27.22	25.66
4.01 & above		31.12	26.05	39.24	23.90	16.48	26.01	19.41	26.41
All		37.36	24.06	46.56	24.09	25.83	25.30	29.24	25.55

Source: Author's estimates based on GoI (1998c: 140-141).

as an endowment factor in alleviating poverty in rural India. This is an aggregate picture. It may not be valid across all occupation types. Therefore, it would be worthwhile, from the point of view of policy dynamics, to examine the poverty across social groups by household type also, which is attempted below; (ii) *Self-employed in non-agriculture*: About 11 per cent of the SC population were dependent on this occupation as the major source of income. Incidence of poverty was the highest among the STs (44.4 per cent), followed by SCs (38.1 per cent) and others (29.4 per cent). Incidence of poverty among the STs and OSGs declined with increase in size of land possessed. In other words, this inverse association would imply that land possession mattered as regards the extent of deprivation of the STs and OSGs self-employed in non-agriculture. But not so for the SC households self-employed in non-agriculture. As regards the SCs, headcount ratio was the highest among the highest size class of land possessed. Inequality in consumer expenditure distribution was also the highest among the ST households, followed by OSGs and SCs. The ranking varied across size class of land holdings (Table 7.a); (iii) *Agricultural labour households*: Almost half of the SC population depended on this activity as the major source of income for livelihood. By comparison across rural SC

Table 7.c: Poverty and Inequality Across Socio-Economic Categories: All-India Rural (1993-94) (conclude.)

(Poverty Line: Rs 205.84 at 1993-94 Prices)

Household Type	Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	Schedule Caste Population		ST Population		Others		All	
		Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)	Head Count Ratio (%)	Lorenz Ratio (%)
Other Households	< 0.01	29.57	28.46	41.74	32.01	21.98	29.20	26.17	29.82
	0.01-0.40	29.38	27.55	21.48	27.85	21.39	29.36	22.81	29.22
	0.41-1.00	26.16	25.57	35.88	28.71	17.42	25.72	20.35	26.20
	1.00-2.00	25.95	24.62	35.14	25.93	21.49	26.23	23.71	26.34
	2.01-4.00	45.03	31.24	22.33	24.11	25.17	29.79	23.29	28.89
	4.01 & above	47.89	23.87	25.11	22.81	19.11	27.41	21.65	27.55
	All	30.55	27.57	31.39	28.43	20.74	28.34	23.10	28.51
	All Households	< 0.01	49.65	26.04	53.59	26.49	36.94	28.44	42.98
0.01-0.40		49.76	24.80	52.19	26.79	37.48	27.59	41.97	27.24
0.41-1.00		46.46	24.39	53.02	23.81	32.69	25.26	37.45	25.47
1.00-2.00		42.83	23.78	50.32	24.61	28.81	25.22	33.49	25.54
2.01-4.00		36.31	24.56	50.98	25.45	22.58	25.54	27.98	26.32
4.01 & above		36.23	26.53	39.33	24.60	16.62	26.15	20.05	26.69
All		47.40	24.91	51.22	25.43	31.23	26.75	36.72	26.92

Source: Author's estimates based on Gol (1998c: 142-143).

household types, incidence of poverty (59 per cent) was the highest among the agricultural labour households. Across social groups, deprivation was the highest among the ST agricultural labour households (62.8 per cent), followed by SCs (59.3 per cent) and OSGs (51.7 per cent). Land endowment made material difference to the extent of deprivation among the OSG agricultural labour households but not so for the SCs and STs. For the STs, poverty even increased with the size class of land holding. About 60 per cent of the SC agricultural labour households were landless and an equal per cent of them were poor. Mere 0.27 per cent of the SC agricultural labour households belonged to the highest size class of 4.01 ha and above; but about 80 of them was poor. Incidence of poverty does not show a monotonic pattern across size class of landholdings among the SC agricultural labour households; (iv) *Other labour households*: SC households belonging to this category constituted about ten per cent of the total rural SC households. Incidence of poverty (41 per cent) among this type of SC households was less than that among the STs (49.53 per cent); yet it was higher than the average for all households belonging to this category ((39 per cent). About 83 per cent of the SC 'other labour households' possessed land less than 0.40 hectare. There is no clear association between land possessed and poverty for this category of SC and OSG households. This is different from the one seen for the STs (positive association). Inequality in consumption was also

less than that observed for the OSGs; (v) *Self-employed in agriculture*: In keeping with the overall profile, SC households self-employed in agriculture were also more deprived than the average. At least for this category of SC households, land possession did matter to their economic status. There is some negative association between incidence of poverty and size of land possessed for all social groups. About 22 per cent of the SC population depended on this source of income; (vi) *Other households*: For this category of SC households too, land possession did not make any material difference. For the bottom three size classes of land possessed, there was virtually no improvement and poverty increased with size class for the top three groups. The SC households were almost as deprived as the STs, both of whom were more deprived than the OSGs.

Table 8.a: Poverty and Inequality Among Scheduled Caste Population Across Economic Categories: All-India Rural

Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	Self-employed in Non-agriculture					
	Proportion of Population (%)		Head Count Ratio (%)		Lorenz Ratio (%)	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
< 0.01	16.96	19.73	46.27	36.58	25.12	27.03
0.01-0.40	58.26	60.71	41.30	39.42	25.80	23.26
0.41-1.00	15.35	13.35	42.02	33.90	23.40	23.68
1.00-2.00	5.88	4.12	34.29	38.91	29.50	24.60
2.01-4.00	2.11	1.45	47.74	33.61	28.85	23.48
4.01 & above	1.44	0.64	28.45	45.09	20.74	35.73
All	100.00	100.00	41.52	38.13	25.68	24.31

Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	Agricultural Labour Households					
	Proportion of Population (%)		Head Count Ratio (%)		Lorenz Ratio (%)	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
< 0.01	15.79	20.14	55.54	58.62	26.65	23.25
0.01-0.40	63.62	61.78	57.57	58.87	26.40	23.77
0.41-1.00	14.28	13.05	62.28	61.55	24.04	23.22
1.00-2.00	4.70	3.73	59.18	63.46	23.15	20.57
2.01-4.00	1.13	1.03	54.74	57.47	21.15	21.05
4.01 & above	0.49	0.27	44.09	79.53	25.65	23.56
All	100.00	100.00	57.90	59.29	24.91	23.47

Note: Poverty Line: Rs 115.43 at 1987-88 prices & Rs 205.84 at 1993-94 prices.

Source: Author's estimates based on GoI (1993b: S-65 & S-67 and 1998c: 138-139).

The preceding discussion points out the following important features of the rural SC population of all-India:

Majority (about half) of the rural SC population is land-less and dependent on 'agricultural labour' as the main source of income for livelihood. In keeping with picture, about half of the population is poor. Land possession mattered only for those SC households, which are self-employed in agriculture.

Would this mean that policies for endowing the SC households other than those self-employed in agriculture would not fructify? Does this call for targeting policies for endowing the SC households with additional land only for those self-employed in agriculture? This may be verified further by examining the temporal changes in incidence of poverty among SC households by type and size class of land possessed for the years 1987-88 and 1993-94 for which data are available. Tables 8.a to 8.c provide some relevant estimates for this purpose:

Table 8.b: Poverty and Inequality Among Scheduled Caste Population Across Economic Categories: All-India Rural

Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	Other Labour Households					
	Proportion of Population (%)		Head Count Ratio (%)		Lorenz Ratio (%)	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
< 0.01	17.97	22.29	40.70	46.27	27.49	23.81
0.01-0.40	56.42	60.66	45.97	38.56	24.13	22.65
0.41-1.00	13.27	10.07	49.35	41.03	24.32	20.74
1.00-2.00	6.97	3.58	53.50	44.02	20.88	24.37
2.01-4.00	3.37	1.94	52.63	50.62	21.42	22.62
4.01 & above	2.01	1.48	43.07	36.05	23.92	14.56
All	100.00	100.00	45.55	41.08	24.89	22.69

Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	Self-employed in Agriculture					
	Proportion of Population (%)		Head Count Ratio (%)		Lorenz Ratio (%)	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
< 0.01	0.51	1.47	28.27	31.06	22.05	28.93
0.01-0.40	10.58	13.04	46.34	38.30	26.72	23.55
0.41-1.00	31.20	31.49	45.53	39.76	25.42	23.67
1.00-2.00	29.90	29.64	39.43	38.94	23.76	23.46
2.01-4.00	18.14	16.86	38.78	32.14	26.45	23.70
4.01 & above	9.67	7.51	27.78	31.12	25.69	26.05
All	100.00	100.00	40.97	37.36	25.54	24.06

Note: Poverty Line: Rs 115.43 at 1987-88 prices and Rs 205.84 at 1993-94 prices.

Source: Author's estimates based on GoI (1993b: S-69 and S-71 and 1998c: 140-141).

(i) One disquieting feature that stands out is that there was an increase in the extent of landlessness, that is, the proportion of landless households of SC households of all types (Table 8.c). There was a marginal decrease in the incidence of poverty in the rural SC population as a whole from 49.4 per cent to 47.4 per cent (Table 8.c). Poverty increased among the landless SC households and those belonging to the highest size class. There was a decline in poverty among households in the intermediate size classes; (ii) Poverty decreased among those SC households self-employed in non-agriculture (table 8.a). This was because poverty declined among the landless and small landowners, which account for the bulk of households of this type; (iii) Poverty increased from 57.9 per cent to 59.3 per cent among the SC agricultural labour households (Table 8.a). The increase was almost universal across size class of landowners; (iv) Poverty decreased from 45.6 per

cent to 41.1 per cent among other labour households (Table 8.b). The decrease was uniform across landowning classes. But, it increased among the landless population. This could be because land-ownership permits supplementary sources of income and promotes economic access to food; (v) Poverty declined among those self-employed in agriculture from 41 per cent to 37.4 per cent (Table 8.b). Here again only the population belonging to the intermediate size classes experienced the reduction; (vi) As regards 'other households', poverty remained virtually constant (Table 8.c). The pattern of change was not uniform across size classes.

Table 8.c: Poverty and Inequality Among Scheduled Caste Population Across Economic Categories: All-India Rural (1993-94) (conclude.)

(Poverty Line: Rs 115.43 at 1987-88 Prices)

Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	Other Households					
	Proportion of Population (%)		Head Count Ratio (%)		Lorenz Ratio (%)	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
< 0.01	18.91	23.35	27.35	29.57	30.01	28.46
0.01-0.40	54.27	49.25	31.66	29.38	30.86	27.55
0.41-1.00	13.43	12.35	26.17	26.16	26.82	25.57
1.00-2.00	7.35	7.68	32.59	25.95	31.82	24.62
2.01-4.00	4.71	5.15	22.63	45.03	24.71	31.24
4.01 & above	1.32	2.23	39.10	47.89	NP	23.87
All	100.00	100.00	29.67	30.55	30.04	27.57

Size Class of Land Possessed (hect.)	All Households					
	Proportion of Population (%)		Head Count Ratio (%)		Lorenz Ratio (%)	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
< 0.01	12.74	16.49	47.38	49.65	27.39	26.04
0.01-0.40	49.16	49.75	52.67	49.76	26.10	24.80
0.41-1.00	18.23	16.77	50.74	46.46	25.35	24.39
1.00-2.00	11.18	9.79	43.64	42.83	24.97	23.78
2.01-4.00	5.70	5.00	40.70	36.31	26.20	24.56
4.01 & above	2.98	2.20	30.41	36.23	26.03	26.53
All	100.00	100.00	49.43	47.40	26.21	24.91

Note: Poverty Line: Rs 115.43 at 1987-88 prices and Rs 205.84 at 1993-94 prices.

Source: Author's estimates based on Gol (1993b: S-73 and S.75 and 1998c: 142-143).

Thus, incidence of poverty among the SCs declined marginally largely because of the reduction experienced by the SC households self-employed in 'agriculture', 'non-agriculture', and 'other' occupations. The estimates presented above do not provide any unambiguous evidence for the hypothesis that the landowning SC households are food secure and non-poor. On the other hand, poverty among the SC households could be due to inadequate endowment of both human and physical capital and hence their inability to utilise the available land resources efficiently. This requires further analysis of correlates.

Measures Based on Outcome Variable: Health Status

Infant and child mortality rates indicate the level of socioeconomic development in the country. They, in some sense, serve as proxy for quality of life. As per the NFHS conducted during 1998-99, the infant mortality rates among the rural SCs was 88.1 per 1000 live births as against 79.7 for the rural population as a whole (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000: 186). Child mortality rate was 43 per 1000 live births for the rural SCs but only 34.6 per 1000 live births for the rural population as a whole. Incidence of under-five mortality was the highest among the SCs (127.3 per 1000 live births) when the average for all rural households was 111.5 per 1000 live births.

As per the anthropometric indicator (weight-for-age), 53.5 per cent of the SC children were underweight and 21.2 per cent, severely underweight. The corresponding estimates for STs were 55.9 per cent and 26.0 per cent and for the all-India population, 47 per cent and 18 per cent respectively (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000: 269). Similarly, 78.3 per cent of SC children (age 6–35 months) were anaemic while it was 74.3 per cent for the corresponding child population as a whole (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000: 272).

The NFHS reports provide information on the nutritional status of women also. The results show that 42.1 per cent of the SC women folk (in India as a whole) suffers from chronic energy deficiency. This does not compare well with the estimate of 35.8 per cent for the rural women as a whole (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000: 245). In addition, 56 per cent of SC women had any anaemia; it was 64.9 per cent for STs and 47.6 per cent for social groups other than SCs, STs and other backward classes (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000: 249).

The estimates of parameters of health status show how dismal is the health status of the SC population in both absolute and relative terms.

V Conclusion

The SCs continue to remain relatively backward even after five decades of targeted efforts at their development. The incidence of illiteracy among the SCs is more than that in Other Social Groups. Their endowment of physical capital is also limited. Majority of the SCs is landless agricultural labourers and is poor. The available limited evidence, however, do not provide any firm evidence in support of the hypothesis about land endowment promoting economic security and empowerment of the SCs. This could be because of lack of complementary factors like capital, both human and physical. There is a need for concerted efforts at improving the asset-base and human capital endowment of the SC households.

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Land Ownership Structure and Literacy among Scheduled Castes in Rural India: An Exploratory Data Analysis

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The review of issues that bring out the historical and regional dimensions complements the analysis on land ownership structure and literacy among Scheduled Castes (SCs) in rural India in early 1990s. The various scenarios help us better understand the composite index that combines inequality in land distribution (Gini) and illiteracy. If literacy is a potent tool and an alternative to landlessness then from the correlation exercise one can infer that it has been less effective for SCs than for total population. While giving policy prescription, a little detour is inevitable, rather necessary. Given the limits to land, propagating literacy a tool with intrinsic and instrumental value and providing alternative income generating assets in the rural non-farm sector becomes essential. Till that materialises one proposes the need to work out the viability and modality of giving illiterate, landless, and assetless agricultural labourers (females and males) property rights to water.

I Introduction

Today, unlike physiocratic economic thinking, one does not consider agriculture as the only productive activity¹, but its relevance for all those involved in its production and in providing food to all persons still remains. This central role increases in agrarian societies and with it the emphasis on land or as Robb (1997, p. xi) points out "for much of human history" what mattered is "the manner in which land is controlled - that is, in accordance with local power, rural property or taxation and agriculture." In the Indian context the control of land to a large extent brings in the caste dimension - the landowning dominant castes and the landless agricultural labourers dominated castes - thus, making land-based hierarchies intertwined with caste-based hierarchies².

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The author thanks an anonymous referee for comments. Discussions and comments from participants at the workshop on "Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers" held at GIPE, Pune during March 16-17, 2001 were of help. The author thanks V. S. Chitre, Bibhuti Mohanty, R. Nagarajan, R. Radhakrishna, G. Niranjana Rao and Shovan Ray for discussions and encouragement. Nandini not only had to manage things alone in the weekdays but also saw to it that this work continued during weekends. Lapses that remain are the authors.

¹ In fact, such a position was also not evident in the writings of ARJ Turgot, contemporary of Quesnay who was the main proponent of physiocracy; Adam Smith had also pointed out the problem with physiocrats considering manufacturing as sterile (Hollander, 1987).

² Intertwining of land and caste hierarchies in rural India is put succinctly in *The Remembered Village* surveyed in 1948 by Srinivas (1976, p. 211) where it is mentioned that: "There was a two-way relationship between landownership and caste rank. Traditionally, ownership of land conferred respectability and prestige, and this was translated into caste rank in course of time, and contrariwise, high ritual rank unaccompanied by landownership produced anomalous situations. As mentioned earlier, the secular Brahmin commanded more prestige than the priestly Brahmin who was frequently poor and dependent upon gifts from those who were better off." In fact, Srinivas (1987B) considers a dominant caste of a locality/region to be one that owns land, has a numerical strength and takes to education - numerical strength becomes relevant in a post-colonial democratic India and education, besides its intrinsic value, opens up avenues for new opportunities. The intrinsic and instrumental role of literacy/education has been put forth in a very convincing manner in Sen (1998A). For intertwining of class and caste in early twentieth century along with an analysis of literacy and gender see Chaudhry (1998).

A reading of Prakash (1992B) is very useful in getting a broader picture in a historical perspective³. It mentions about the numerous village studies that point out the interdependent relationship between various caste groups in self-sufficient villages. Could this imply that, as Patel (1992) based on 1871-72 to 1931 census argues, the category of landless agricultural labourers is a creation of colonial policies. Kumar (1992; elaborated in 1965) questions Patel's hypothesis on the premise that landless agricultural labourers are the ones that have traditionally been the 'argestic serfs' and 'servile castes', and this holds even if one gives allowance for the fact that they were relatively better off in the eighteenth century (Washbrook, 1993)⁴. Utsa Patnaik (1985) in her 'Introduction' in Patnaik and Dingwaney (1985) suggests that even if the category itself is not a colonial creation, its proportionate increase still remains, not withstanding the fact that after combining landless labourers and small peasants one does not see much of a variation in their proportion (Krishnamurty, 1992). Thus, there seems to have been some continuity of the existing caste-based and land-based hierarchies in pre-colonial times to colonial times. Such a transition would have been made easier by the fact that dominant-dominated caste relationship was also evident in the cultural domain - cosmological beliefs, rites and cults, ritual ranking and other aspects (Prakash, 1992C).

The colonial policies that brought about private property (as against customary rights) in land, monetisation and commercialisation helped redefine existing hierarchies that led to increase the disparities (Robb, 1997; also mentioned in Gough, 1960) or create bonded labourers (Prakash, 1990) to the detriment of the dominated castes⁵. That such bondages were a continuation of the patron-client relationship, but during the later part of colonial regime in the early twentieth century, the process of de patronisation and casualisation of labour had already set in (Bremar, 1992).

The last phase of colonialism was also significant for the underprivileged classes/castes from another two aspects. First, there were a number of self-respect and secular movements among some specific castes in Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country (Awaya, 1999; Kannan, 1988; Mendelsohn and Vicziany,

³ Prakash (1992A) also has a very useful annotated bibliography on rural labourers.

⁴ Karashima (1999) looking into information based on inscriptions and other sources during the *Chola* period, c.1000 AD, is of the following opinion: that though it is not clear who the untouchables were, but as a category they existed; that some of the latter day untouchable, now Scheduled castes like *Paraiyas* were involved in cultivation, grass mowing, leather works and other handicrafts like weaving; and that two present day Scheduled Castes (SC) *Paraiyas*, *Pulaiyas* as also *Vellalas* that is not a present day (SC) have been sold as slaves. Also note that the observations of Washbrook (1993) need not be the case in north India, particularly Uttar Pradesh, as mentioned in Lerche's (1993) reference to Habib (1984) and Siddiqi (1973).

⁵ The fact that the bonded labourers are mostly from the dominated castes/tribes, that is SCs or Scheduled Tribes (STs) also comes out from a survey conducted in 1978 (Marla 1981, Tables 1 and 2, pp. 154-155). The survey also suggests that the proportion of SC and ST bonded labourers in India happened to be 61.5 per cent and 25.1 per cent respectively. The figures for the states where the survey was conducted is as follows: Andhra Pradesh (SC: 69.5 per cent, ST: 17.8 per cent), Bihar (SC: 80.7 per cent, ST: 9.9 per cent), Gujarat (SC: 32.8 per cent, ST: 62.2 per cent), Karnataka (SC: 64.7 per cent, ST: 9.6 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (SC: 31.2 per cent, ST: 52.8 per cent), Maharashtra (SC: 50.0 per cent, ST: 43.1 per cent), Orissa (SC: 61.5 per cent, ST: 34.9 per cent), Rajasthan (SC: 58.8 per cent, ST: 25.0 per cent), Tamil Nadu (SC: 90.0 per cent, ST: 0.0 per cent), and Uttar Pradesh (SC: 74.0 per cent, ST: 0.9 per cent).

2000; Naito, 1999A and 1999B; Varshney, 2002; and Velaskar, 2000 among others)⁶. Second, they obtained a legal status because of Government of India (GoI) Act 1919 identifying depressed classes, GoI Act 1935 that notifies about Scheduled Castes (SCs) and temple entry Acts in 1930s by various state Governments (Kotani, 1999B).

In post-colonial India, some of the changes that may be mentioned are agrarian/tenancy reforms, emergence of a land market, education that opened up opportunities in urban areas. In the Tanjore delta where land was being sold by Brahmins, the original owners either because they were migrating to urban areas or for some other reasons, the purchasers also happened to be from middling peasant castes and to a lesser extent even SCs (Béteille, 1965; and Gough, 1960). Such transfer from dominant peasant community to other peasant communities and SCs is also evident in a dry village of Tamil Nadu (Mizushima, 1999)⁷. This might explain the decline in the proportion of non-cultivating landlords by mid 1970s in Tanjore delta, but this is contrasted by an increase in the proportion of casual labourers (Gough, 1977). Comparing two villages in Karnataka where land ownership were with peasant communities, Epstein (1962) observes that traditional landowner-labour relationships of patron-client got redefined in the village where source of change was unilinear – irrigation, but in the other village, which did not benefit from irrigation and continued with dry cultivation, made the inhabitants look to opportunities outside the village and the traditional patron-client relationship became redundant. Further, the re-study by Epstein (1998) shows that village introversion in the former and village extroversion in the latter continues even after forty years, the economic growth and diversification over the years has not benefited the SCs much, education has brought about some economic gains to SCs, but limited to few households that is more evident in the dry village, one also observed downward mobility among peasant and service castes who have joined the category of labourers. Or, in other words, as village economies get increasingly linked

⁶ Also note that wherever the peasant struggle during this period, 1920-1950, took a somewhat violent form, as against the non-violent Gandhian method, the struggle was taken up by the landless and poor peasants (Dhanagare, 1983). In contemporary Bihar the Indian Peoples Front is the voice of struggle for justice, equality and change (Hauser, 1993). Integrating caste-class discourse (Lerche, 1995) observes that resistance from below by agricultural labourers is collective in eastern Uttar Pradesh (UP) where some form of patronage still continued, but it is not to be the case in western UP where patronage did not exist and agricultural labour was completely casual. Of course, in eastern UP the patron-client relation is between upper caste *Thakur* landowners and SC *Chamar* labourers where the former have lost out, post agrarian reforms, to the numerically and now politically dominant *Yadavas*; whereas in western UP the landowning *Jats* are not only numerically and politically dominant but the landless labourers are from three SC groups – *Chamars*, *Jogis*, and *Jhimars*.

⁷ Such trends were also there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Yanagisawa, 1996). Also see Rajasekhar (1988) on a village in Rayalseema, Andhra Pradesh for land transfer during 1882-1981 from *Brahmins* to *Reddys* and *Yadavas*, but there was not much gain by SCs, as they did not have money to buy lands that were being sold. Srinivas (2002) looks into caste-wise landownership structure for a village in Krishna district of coastal Andhra Pradesh in five time points: 1866, 1903, 1932, 1970 and 2001 comprising four phases of analysis. He shows that *Brahmins* have been selling land from the beginning. In the first phase it was the *Kammas*, a peasant community, that gained; in the second phases there was not much of change, but for some proportionate increase by *Reddys*, another peasant community, and *Yadavas*, a backward community; in the third phase *Kammas* proportion started reducing and the major gain was of the *Reddys*; the final phase saw a proportionate increase among *Yadavas* and to some extent *Mulas*, an SC community. Another remarkable feature of the last phase is that in 2001 females own about one-third of the total land, this proportion was less than ten per cent in 1970; of course there are variation across castes, but the trend is by-and-large true for all castes.

with larger economies, unfree labour becomes free⁸, the process of de patronisation and casualisation gains momentum (Breman, 1993; Michie, 1981), increasing proportions join the labour force and over time labour attains a migratory character such that they are referred to as *Wage Hunters and Gatherers* (Breman, 1994), they circulate from rural-to-rural or from rural-to-urban-to-rural, thus, becoming *Footloose Labour* (Breman, 1996)⁹. Even if labourers are pushed out from rural areas and end up in the urban casual sector, their search for jobs is characterised as 'industrial nomadism' (Vidyarthi, 1970).

This, however, does not mean that labour is free - landlessness, poverty, inequality and absence of democratic practices in the villages act as constraints on their so-called freedom (Ramachandran, 1990). The landowner like the Stackelberg leader is a first mover and labourer has no choice but to follow, more so, if triadic relationships allow the landowner to restrict labourer's interaction with other agents (Basu, 1986). It is this that also provides incentives for the higher castes to continue with the system that can possibly be broken only when there is a strong coalition with a sub-section who will all stand to gain (Akerlof, 1976). Or when high land-abundant economies because of population growth give way for labour-surplus economies or because of other techno-economic changes (Platteau, 1992). But the landowner still might have an incentive by using the patron-client relationship to maintain one set of labourers that would be different from the casual labourers (Eswaran and Kotwal, 1985).

Despite rigidities in caste configurations there have always been some fluid element to it. Traditionally, marriage outside caste lines, a deviation rather than a rule, could have led to caste persons becoming outcastes; or acquiring of wealth, mostly through land or even trade, is a stepping stone for upward mobility in the caste hierarchy - the process of sanskritisation, a term coined by M N Srinivas (note its difference with that of 'dominant caste' discussed in footnote 2 above). Even in recent years there are evidences of some members of small/marginal land holding communities who become landless (Breman, 1993) and thus obtain a lower status economically, as well as, culturally from members of their own community owning land. At the same time there are others even from among lower castes and outcastes who have been obtaining land and going up in the hierarchy¹⁰. In fact, most of the contemporary SC leaders are from families that are in their second/third generation of their progress that could be made possible through landownership or education (Mendelsohn and Vicziany, 2000)¹¹. There is also an

⁸ For a discussion on broad types of free and unfree labour during 1950s see Daniel and Alice Thorne (1962B). It is observed that free labour can be of four types differing in the duration of contract: a year or more, a season, few days or a single operation, and daily. They also identify three broad types of unfree labour: working for someone else for a year or more, attending to someone else's beck and call, and work for someone else for some specified number of days and this could be mostly during the peak agricultural season. In the last two cases the labourer can look for alternative jobs when he/she is not working as an unfree labourer. Rao (1999) discussing on the notion of free-unfree labour is of the view that indebted attached labourer need not be unfree, but one who is free *albeit* in an unequal position to the creditor-cum-landowner and without rights to limited liability.

⁹ Note that all of Jan Breman's work is based on intensive fieldwork for over thirty years in South Gujarat. It is true that caution has to be taken when we generalise his observation for the whole of India, but his scholarship suggests that what is happening in South Gujarat is neither specific nor isolated.

¹⁰ One of the earliest writings on caste in Orissa based on the village study of Bisipara in Phulbani district by Bailey (1957) mentions that the low castes (*Pano*) have traditionally been working in the farms of caste Hindus. During the time of survey in mid-1950s some of them have become rich and started owning land. In fact there was a low caste person dealing with hides who had no land to begin with but at about sixty years of age he owned so much land that it was more than the total land owned by all the other households of his caste group. In other words, the process of polarisation even within low castes was visible in mid-1950s in one village of Orissa, but political mobilisation of the low castes in the state is not evident even today. Intensive fieldwork in tribal regions of Orissa that led to Mishra (1993 and 1999) where the present author sees that in a tribal *Saora* village in Rayagada district situated in southern part of Orissa the SC *Domb* community households are mostly landless agricultural labourers. Most of the *Dombas* have over the years migrated to this village from neighbouring areas after advent of irrigation led to more areas coming under paddy cultivation.

¹¹ In *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, Naipaul (1990) describes various narratives of individuals from different backgrounds indicating their path of progress to higher economic state.

emancipatory process from below that is not free from a counter action of oppression from above, but it is the role of the state that can make a difference by giving an impetus to the emancipatory process – Kerala; subsuming it with middle/rich peasant movements – Haryana, or by being a tacit supporter of oppression (Byres, 1999)¹². However, the most remarkable is the rise to power of Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh (Duncan, 1999).

Notwithstanding such progress from a sub-section among them nearly 65 per cent of SCs as illiterate (1991 Census) and an equal proportion of SC rural/agricultural labourers are landless, 1993-94 - 50th round National Sample Survey (NSS), they constitute about 35 per cent of the total agricultural labourers when their population share as per 1991 census is less than 17 per cent. This situation would differ from state to state and before analysing that it would be pertinent to mention that 1990s, the year of liberalisation and globalisation, saw a reversal of the favourable trends observed in the 1980s with regard to poverty reduction, real wages and workforce structure (Radhakrishna and Sharma, 1998B; Kapadia and Lerche, 1999).

This paper, as the title suggests, is an exploratory data analysis on land ownership structure and literacy among SCs in rural India for the early 1990s¹³. It proposes to analyse the attempts to do away the land-based hierarchies through agrarian reforms (probably the most successful are West Bengal and Kerala, see discussions below). There have also been attempts that emphasise on literacy/education (the most successful being Kerala, also see the discussions below on the relatively better performance of SCs in Assam and Gujarat): this not only has an intrinsic value in doing away with unfreedom that is inherent in caste-based hierarchies, but also has an instrumental value in bettering human life¹⁴.

For analysis on land ownership structure, the paper relies on data provided by Labour Bureau (1998) on 50th round of NSS conducted during 1993-94. The exploration tried analysing the proportion of landless rural agricultural labour households among SCs and tried to contrast the scenario with that of total population. Subsequently, by making use of information available for all rural labour (agricultural plus non-agricultural) households it tried to analyse the relationship between landlessness, inequality in land

¹² This piece by TJ Byres and that of Kapadia and Lerche (1999) are sort of introductory pieces to the special issue on "Rural Labour Relations in India" in *Journal of Peasant Studies*. The articles in this issue, notwithstanding their focus on emerging class relations, do point out the diversities in experience and the specificities of caste and gender. There are seven papers: one is on the notion of free/unfree labour, Rao (1999), also see footnote 8 above; there are two papers at a broader state level by Bhalla (1999) on Haryana and Kannan (1999) on Kerala; and four papers based on fieldwork, one on Andhra Pradesh by Corta and Venkateshwarlu (1999), one on Bihar by Wilson (1999), and two on Uttar Pradesh – one by Lerche (1999) and another by Srivastava (1999).

¹³ The inspiration for the second part of the title is from Tukey (1977) that has led to three interesting books that, my preliminary impressions suggest, does not require strong mathematical understanding. The present paper does not make use of these techniques, but their references are given (Hoaglin, Mosteller and Tukey, 1985; 1991 and 2000) for the benefit of those who might be interested. The paper, however, does make use of two-by-two classification tables that can serve as proxy for scatterplot/chart. Its importance can be gauged from parts of the concluding paragraph of *Causality in Economics* (Hicks, 1979, p. 122) that reads as follows: "...when the observations are derived ... from different countries, or localities ... about which we may well have relevant information ... let us plot the points on a chart, and try to explain them; but it does not help in explaining them to suppress their names." It is this that will help us identify outliers in the relationship between landless and proportion of SC Agricultural Labourer Households (SC AgrLab HHs) to All AgrLab HHs and between inequality in land distribution (Gini) and illiteracy.

¹⁴ Literacy *per se* has an intrinsic value towards better life because illiteracy is one form of unfreedom, but literacy/education also has the instrumental value through capability improvement that can help to further enhance better life (Sen, 1998A). It is education that led to a spurt of creative writing among SCs in Maharashtra and Karnataka (Mendelsohn and Vicziany, 2000). Of course, the writer need not be himself/herself an SC; for instance, one of the first writers to do it in Hindi was Premchand (Upadhyay, 2002). However, what is unfortunate, as Drèze and Kingdom (2001) based on primary data from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh point out, is that SC children face an 'intrinsic disadvantage' and have a low chance of going to school even after controlling for household wealth, parental education and motivation, school quality and related variables, thus, indicating that there might be a bias against SC children in the schooling system.

distribution (Gini coefficient) and average area owned per household. Further, one also analyses the relationship of these three variables with that of proportion of agricultural labourers and literacy rate of 1991 Census. We take Gini coefficient for land distribution as a representative for land ownership structure and literates as a proxy for, say, capability building to construct a composite index from these. We then compare the two variables with the composite index to arrive at a comparative picture. This exercise should be considered somewhat in line with Deshpande (2001) in the sense that it will help us understand some regional variation that can be effective for designing policies at a disaggregated level. Finally, some concluding remarks and policy implications are given.

II Landlessness among Rural SC Agricultural Labour Households

At the outset one would like to discuss the extent of landlessness among rural SC Agricultural Labour Households (SC AgrLab HHs) based on 1993-94 NSS estimates (Table 1). There are five geographical regions (states or union territories of India, hereafter referred to as states only) where no SC AgrLab HHs have land. However, it is of greater relevance in Pondicherry where almost two-thirds of All AgrLab HHs are SCs, the proportion in Goa is one-eighth and in the states of Mizoram, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Meghalaya the NSS estimated SC AgrLab HHs is negligible (not enough to be rounded off to 1, indicating 1000 households), and hence, are not mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Landlessness among Rural SC AgrLab HHs and Proportion of Rural SC AgrLab HHs among Rural All AgrLab HHs across States/Union Territories of India

Per cent of Rural SC AgrLab HHs with Land	Rural SC AgrLab HHs as proportion of Rural All AgrLab HHs							
	7-13 per cent	16-22 per cent	24-27 per cent	33-34 per cent	43-45 per cent	55-60 per cent	61-67 per cent	72-74 per cent
Nil	GO						PO	
0-10 per cent						HA		PU
10-20 per cent		GU			TN			
20-30 per cent		KE			BI			
30-40 per cent	MA		TR	AP				
40-50 per cent	AS		OR, MP	KA	WB			JK
50-60 per cent					RA			
60-70 per cent						UP		
70-80 per cent								
80-90 per cent							HP	
90-100 per cent		SI						

Note: (1) SC denotes Scheduled Caste, AgrLab HHs denotes Agricultural Labour Households. (2) AP denotes Andhra Pradesh, AS denotes Assam, BI denotes Bihar, GO denotes Goa, GU denotes Gujarat, HA denotes Haryana, HP denotes Himachal Pradesh, JK denotes Jammu and Kashmir, KA denotes Karnataka, KE denotes Kerala, MA denotes Maharashtra, MP denotes Madhya Pradesh, OR denotes Orissa, PO denotes Pondicherry, PU denotes Punjab, RA denotes Rajasthan, SI denotes Sikkim, TN denotes Tamil Nadu, TR denotes Tripura, UP denotes Uttar Pradesh, WB denotes West Bengal. (3) As we move down the rows from top to bottom in each column the landlessness increases and as we move across the columns from left to right in each row the proportion of SC AgrLab HHs from All AgrLab HHs increases.
Source: Bureau (1998), Statements 2.1 (1), 2.1 (2), 3.1 (1) and 3.1 (2), pp. 29-30 and 38-39.

The data in Table 1 are presented in such a way that a row below indicates less landlessness (more proportions of HHs having land) and a column to the right indicates more proportion of SC AgrLab HHs from All AgrLab HHs. In other words, Table 1 can be used as a scatterplot that is not to scale. One finds a somewhat positive relationship, that is, the states with more proportions of SCs having land will also have more proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs in rural India. However, there are

notable exceptions and it would be worthwhile to look into some of these. Punjab situated in the top right cell is the worst-case scenario and that of Haryana is slightly better. Also note that the highest concentration of SCs from among all states based on 1991 Census is in Punjab, nearly 30 per cent, and the proportion of SCs in Haryana is about 20 per cent. The situation in Punjab is interesting not only because it is a state that has witnessed agricultural prosperity and industrial growth but, rather more importantly, because it is a state where the *Varna* system and the *Brahminical* ideology has been weak (Jodhka, 2000).

When it comes to landlessness the situation in Tamil Nadu (81.07 per cent), Gujarat (80.63 per cent), Kerala (79.24 per cent) and Bihar (76.08 per cent) is somewhat similar. But proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs in Bihar and/or Tamil Nadu is more than twice that in Gujarat and/or Kerala, indicating that the former are somewhat different from the latter. Further, comparing landlessness between SC AgrLab HHs and All AgrLab HHs one observes that SCs in Gujarat, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are worse off by 20, 14, 6 and 4 percentage points respectively. Again, the proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to SC AllLab HHs in Bihar at 95 per cent is the highest among all states; it is 85 per cent in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu and 75 per cent in Kerala. In other words, from a different perspective and by not looking into landlessness the relative situations of SC AgrLab HHs in Kerala is better than Gujarat and that of Tamil Nadu is better than Bihar and between Gujarat and Tamil Nadu the former seems to have some advantages¹⁵. Regarding Gujarat the relatively better scenario among SCs stems from the fact that the proportion of Scheduled Tribe (ST) AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs is one of the highest at about 35 per cent.

Landlessness is 70 per cent in Tripura and about 65 per cent in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, but proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs is low in Maharashtra (12 per cent)¹⁶, in fact, it is higher only from Assam (7 per cent) where landlessness is at 60 per cent. Low proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs in Assam and Maharashtra make these two states outliers in another sense. In Orissa,

¹⁵ The relatively equitable scenario in Kerala that historically had strong caste hierarchies could be because of, as mentioned earlier, a combination of land reforms, education leading to occupational mobility away from agriculture, and, of course, self-respect movements. Speaking on land reforms it may be mentioned that the rentiers were losers and the major beneficiaries were the rich peasants and not the middle and small peasants, but it is also important to note that the landless, mostly SCs, benefited by acquiring property rights to dwelling units, a right that they did not have earlier (Herring, 1983).

There is some SC assertion in Tamil Nadu and as Pandian (2000) points out it incorporates identity politics with land-struggle by *Parayars* or *Paraiyas* of northern Tamil Nadu or integrates denial of demands in sacred and secular domain to non-cooperation in agrarian sphere by *Devendra Kulla Vellalars* (DKV) of southern Tamil Nadu. However, it needs to be pointed out that the *Parayars* and DKV's conflicts are with *Vannlars* and *Thevars* respectively and the latter two are from among less advanced sections of the backward castes. Caste conflicts in Tamil Nadu, as Bêteille (2000) points out, have also been mentioned in the *Report on the Census of India, 1931* by J Hutton and subsequently in his book (Hutton, 1961).

Gujarat is a state that has seen remarkable economic and industrial growth, this is a state that can boast of Mahatma Gandhi - father of the nation - who fought against social ills such as untouchability, but unfortunately such practices are still existing (Shah, 2000).

In Bihar, as Jha (2000) suggests, there has emerged from among SCs a group of elite different from masses.

¹⁶ Maharashtra has seen political awakening among SCs initiated by Ambedkar, but even today large proportions of rural poor from among SCs remain assetless and are exploited in multiple spheres. Further, as in Bihar, there exists an elite-mass polarisation not only between various SC groups but also within each major group (Velaskar, 2000).

Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal¹⁷, and Karnataka, landlessness is about 55 per cent, but SC AgrLab HHs proportion to All AgrLab HHs is lower in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. This could be such because, as in Gujarat, proportion of ST AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs is substantial in Orissa (33 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (36 per cent).

Between Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir with 45 per cent landlessness the proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs is relatively higher in the latter by 28 percentage points. Comparing Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh is interesting because the former has larger proportion of landless whereas the latter has a larger proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs¹⁸. Along with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tripura are the three states where the proportion of SC AgrLab HHs having land is greater than the proportion of All AgrLab HHs having land.

It has already been mentioned that proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to SC AllLab HHs in Bihar at 95 per cent is the highest across all states in India. It is at about 75 per cent for Kerala and the other states are in the range 75-95 per cent but for six states¹⁹. Thus, with the absence of data on average land size and land distribution for SC AgrLab HHs one makes use of data for SC AllLab HHs.

¹⁷ Even though many SC households benefited from land reforms through Operation Barga (Sengupta and Gazdar, 1998), the proportion of SC AgrLab HHs to All AgrLab HHs at 43 per cent in West Bengal is still quite high (SCs constitute 24 per cent of the population, 1991 census). Further, it is intriguing that even within the Left it is the *bhadralok* (upper castes) that dominated the political scenario (Dasgupta, 2000).

¹⁸ Pai (2000) shows that there has been an increasing political mobilisation of low castes in Uttar Pradesh since 1980s and their party Bahujan Samaj Party through alliance they have ruled the state under Ms Mayawati thrice: June 3-October 17, 1995; March 21-September 20, 1997; and now since May 3, 2002 (also see Duncan, 1999; and Mendelsohn and Vicziany, 2000). Further education has also brought about non-agricultural employment opportunities. However, it is the *Chamars* from among SCs who benefited most. Also note that Himachal Pradesh is a state that is recently doing well in terms of literacy aspects (PROBE 1999; and Drèze and Kingdom, 2001)

¹⁹ The proportions for the six states are the following: Jammu and Kashmir (26 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (26 per cent), Tripura (41 per cent), Assam (46 per cent), Rajasthan (50 per cent) and Haryana (53 per cent). To analyse these states the closest that one could do is look into nine-fold classification of industrial category of main workers for SCs in rural India from 1991 census as a proxy (India 1994, pp. 4-43) This can not be done for Jammu and Kashmir, as 1991 census was not conducted there. In Himachal Pradesh activities comparable to agricultural labourer (5.65 per cent) are other than household industry (3.63 per cent), constructions (4.84 per cent), and other services (7.03 per cent), thus one can infer that a substantial proportion of labourers could have been employed in these sectors. There was nothing comparable to agricultural labourer category in Tripura (31.59), but other services (12.74 per cent) and trade and commerce (6.91 per cent) were relatively much higher if one excludes cultivators (35.23 per cent). The proportions in Assam for trade and commerce (8.07 per cent), other services (7.69 per cent), and livestock, forestry and allied activities (5.33 per cent) were not far behind from agricultural labourers (15.16 per cent). For Rajasthan with cultivators (57.93 per cent) and agricultural labourers (24.33 per cent) the rest seem to be distributed among other categories with the highest proportion being that of other services (4.61 per cent). Haryana with cultivators (35.23 per cent) and agricultural labourers (31.59 per cent) one can get a feeling that other services (12.74 per cent) and trade and commerce (6.91) are the categories that would involve non-agricultural labour.

III Land Distribution among SCs Across States

It seems that average land size (AvgLnd) figures have been calculated by taking into consideration landless and landowning households²⁰. It is possible to visualise the direction of relationship between AvgLnd and landless. But, as landless is likely to contribute to a grater inequality in land distribution²¹, one is likely to expect high correlation between these two variables. To ensure some robustness, it would be interesting to see the relationship of inequality in land distribution with the proportion of agricultural labourers taken from another source, 1991 census. Another variable that we would like to bring in is the proportion of literates as per 1991 census. We propose to explore the linear relationship for average land size (AvgLnd), proportion of labourers without land (Landless), inequality in land distribution through Gini coefficient, proportion of agricultural labourers (AgrLab) and proportion of literates (Literates). The first three variables are based on 1993-94 NSS estimates and the last two variables are from 1991 census. This cross sectional analysis will be based on 15 major states²². Further, we will also compare this relationships for SCs with that of total population (Table 2).

It is seen that AvgLnd has a negative relationship for all the other four variables. Lower AvgLnd implies higher Landless, higher Gini, higher AgrLab and higher Literates. The first two relationship can be somewhat expected and we do not probe further as it is similar for SCs as well as total population. The third relationship is also in the expected direction, but it is somewhat stronger for SCs. We take up the discussion on Literates after looking at the relationship between other variables.

²⁰ The NSS estimates that we have for average land size have been indicated to represent that of cultivating households. However, most average land size figures are in the size-class of 0.01-0.2 hectares that is not statistically feasible. Thus, for each size-class of land in hectares we assume the mid-point as average land size for that size-class and calculate a proxy for the overall average land size that is not very different from NSS figures, and hence, conclude that the NSS estimates for average land size are not for cultivating households, but for all rural labour households.

Note that the mid-point for each size-class in hectares is as follows: (landless, 0), (0.01-0.2, 0.1), (0.21-0.4, 0.3), (0.41-0.6, 0.5), (0.61-0.8, 0.7), (0.81-1, 0.9), (1.01-2, 1.5), (above 2, 3). It is true that this assumption will deviate from reality, but this should not prevent us from making some inferences. Further, if we stick to inferences based on ranks across states then there should not be much of a problem.

²¹ Land distribution data for SC AllLab HHs that show proportion of HHs across size-class of holding also exists. One estimates the proportion of area by taking the mid-point of each size-class (for details on mid-point see footnote 20 above) and then obtains a measure of inequality for land distribution by calculating Gini coefficient.

Gini coefficient, $G=1-(\sum_{i=1}^n p_i(z_i+z_{i-1}))$, where p_i denotes percentage of households for the i^{th} size-class, z_i denotes cumulative percentage of area owned for the i^{th} size-class and $z_0=0$. For details see Nagar and Das (1983, sec. 14.5, pp. 377.385).

²² The NSS estimates for the above mentioned variables for SC HHs is available for the 15 major states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The six other states for which data are available are Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Dadar and Nagar Haveli. From these 1991 Census was not conducted in Jammu and Kashmir and there are no census figures for SCs in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (as no caste is scheduled by order). Further, one can state that Himachal Pradesh is an extreme observation in the general trend observed in the sense that large proportions of SCs have land and SC AgrLab HHs constitute a large proportion of All AgrLab HHs (Table 1). Also note that Sikkim has no landless among SC and SC AgrLab HHs constitute a smaller proportion of All AgrLab HHs, Tripura's SC AgrLab HHs constitute only about 26 per cent of All AgrLab HHs and estimated SC AgrLab HHs in Dadra and Nagar Haveli is negligible (could not be rounded to unity to denote a thousand households).

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient between Average Land Size (AvgLnd), Proportion of Labourers without Land (Landless), Gini Coefficient of Land Distribution (Gini), Proportion of Agricultural Labourers (AgrLab) and Proportion of Literates (Literates) for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Total Population across 15 Major States.

		AvgLnd	Landless	Gini	AgrLab	Literates
For SCs across 15 major states	AvgLnd	1.00				
	Landless	-0.64	1.00			
	Gini	-0.61	0.98	1.00		
	AgrLab	-0.53	0.65	0.65	1.00	
	Literates	-0.35	0.41	0.33	-0.03	1.00
For Total population across 15 major states	AvgLnd	1.00				
	Landless	-0.68	1.00			
	Gini	-0.65	0.99	1.00		
	AgrLab	-0.35	0.33	0.31	1.00	
	Literates	-0.50	0.55	0.44	0.12	1.00

Note: The 15 major states are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (also see footnote 22 in text).

Source: Appendix 1.

One also sees a high correlation, almost close to unity, between Landless and Gini. This is expected because higher landless will contribute to higher Gini. It is for this that one deliberately looked into their relationship with a different source of data, agricultural labourers from 1991 census. One does see a somewhat good positive relationship (0.65) for both Landless and Gini with AgrLab among SCs, but this is much lower for total population. As we are not dealing with household level data and are combining NSS and Census data one should be cautious in drawing conclusion, but one can definitely state that there does exist a stronger relationship between Landless/Gini and AgrLab for SCs than for total population.

The relationship of not only AvgLnd with Literates but also of Literates with Landless, Gini, and the other two NSS data used is interesting. It is negative with AvgLnd and positive with Landless and Gini. This may be explained by the fact that states like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have greater AvgLnd and less Landless/Gini and states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have lower AvgLnd and more Landless/Gini²³. The backward status of the first two and the advanced status of the latter two in literacy measures are well known. Having said that, one would not have much of a problem with the relationship between literacy and other variables. However, what is interesting is that the relationships are less obvious for SCs than for total population. Are we getting such a relationship because the data analysed are from two different sources - NSS and census? Hence, analysis of Literates with AgrLab, another variable from census has been done.

²³ The highest/lowest ranking of states are in the same order for AvgLnd, but for Landless/Gini, states like Punjab and Haryana would be worse than Kerala and Tamil Nadu, but one would also get Uttar Pradesh, another state with literacy status that is one of the lowest from among states of India. Regarding Uttar Pradesh, it may also be mentioned that rural SC female literacy rate for 1991 census was 8.47, higher only to Rajasthan 4.73 and Bihar 5.54 (India 1994). In fact, in the village of Palanpur in 1993 the female literacy rate varies from zero for *Jatabs* (the main SC community also known as *Chamars*) to 100 per cent among *Kayasthas*. In the 6-10 age group the variation is from zero for *Jatabs* to 46 per cent for *Thakurs*, note that there were a total of only eight *Kayasthas* in the whole population and none in age group 6-10 (Drèze and Gazdar, 1998).

The correlation coefficient is neither strong for SCs nor for total population, but the signs show that it is negative for SCs when it is positive for total population. Thus, strengthening the earlier observation that relationship for Literates with other variables is weaker for SCs than for total population. We would like to discuss a little more on some aspect of landownership structure, particularly Gini, and Literates, but before that we take a digression on another aspect of literacy.

IV Literacy: A Necessary Digression

As there are limits to land, an alternative to land distribution is literacy/education that can bring about occupational mobility from farm to non-farm sector. This is not to deny the positive aspects of literacy in returns from the farm sector. For instance, a literate farmer can understand and follow the pamphlets with regard to agricultural extension work (Basu and Foster, 1998). Of course, as mentioned earlier, it is more important to see literacy/education as one having an intrinsic value that better human life and that it also has an instrumental value that can foster material progress is another matter (Sen, 1998A). It is the intrinsic value in basic education that also fits into the larger agenda of *Development as Freedom* (Sen, 1999). An increase in overall literacy can also increase the consciousness and subsequent involvement in democratic participation, as in Kerala (Drèze and Sen, 2002; Ramachandran, 1998; and Varshney, 2002 among others)²⁴. However, some startling facts of basic education in India are that achievement is low, there are high disparities, slow progress and there exists state inertia (PROBE, 1999)²⁵. Besides, there are four important myths on basic education: that parents do not want children to go to schools, that child labour is an obstacle, that elementary education is free, and that schools are available²⁶.

As per the 1991 Census Kerala has about one-fifth of its SC population as illiterate

²⁴ Educational, medical and social backwardness can also be linked to lower self-perceived morbidity in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh that have high mortality in contrast to Kerala's high self-perceived morbidity but lower mortality (Sen, 1998B).

²⁵ Some facts from 2001 census (India 2001A and 2001B) also confirm some of these observations. They are as follows: Low achievement: nearly one-fourth of males (24.15 per cent) and half of the females (45.84 per cent) are illiterate (India, 2001A, ix). Large disparities: male literacy in Mahe district, Pondicherry is 97.59 per cent and female literacy in Kishanganj district, Bihar is 18.49 (India 2001B, Statement 27), after SC/ST literacy figures are made available then one would get a greater disparity, as shown for 1991 census in PROBE (1999). Slow progress: it is only in 2001 that for the first time since independence when absolute number of illiterates in India declined and this holds true for all major states, but Bihar where it increased by 9.33 per cent (India 2001A, Statement 27). Regarding state inertia the PROBE (1999) finding for the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh points out declining teacher-pupil ratio, under utilisation of central grants, chaotic implementation of centrally-sponsored schemes, and increasing reliance on second-track education facilities even when those are known to be ineffective and unsustainable.

Introducing *Elementary Education in India: A Grassroots View* that comprises studies from various parts of the country Vaidyanathan and Gopinathan Nair (2001) do mention that at micro level economic, caste and gender explain differentials attainments in literacy. But, looking across space it can be said that SC/ST and female literacy is higher where general/male literacy is higher.

²⁶ Contrary to the myths the PROBE (1999) study points out the following: That there is a desire of parents to educate their children. That a small proportion of children are labourers and most of these are family labourers and even those who work as full time wage labourers their work status would be an outcome of not going to school rather than work being a hindrance to school attendance. That the parents have to spend a substantial amount of money on fees, books, slates, clothes, etc to send their children to school. And that schools are not available because of social distance (caste tension within village), absence of primary (more so for upper-primary) schools within villages, inaccessibility due to difficult terrain in some Himalayan villages, and where available they would be inadequate in terms of both quality and quantity as it is likely to be overcrowded, or with a single teacher or without basic facilities like blackboard. Nambissan and Sedwal (2002) point out that these problems are more pressing for *Dalit* (another term for SC) children in India. On the point that school education is not free the various studies in Vaidyanathan and Gopinathan Nair (2001) substantiate Tilak (1996).

and the second-best scenario is in Manipur that had a little more than two-fifth of its SC population as illiterate. The proportion SC illiterates are really high in Bihar (four-fifths), Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh (about seven-tenths). In these states where more than seventy per cent of the persons are illiterate, it is likely that a large proportion of SC illiterates would not be in proximity to a literate SC person even at the village level²⁷.

At this juncture, it may be worthwhile to mention that there will be many advantages to an illiterate if she/he is in proximity to a literate person either within the household or even among her/his own community in the village. Again, proximity to a female literate member will have its own advantages that will not be obtained from being proximate to a male literate. Having talked about proximity it would be interesting to look at some data. It is difficult to obtain information for SC AgrLab HHs. Nevertheless, one does have some information for All AgrLab HHs in rural India for 50th round of NSS that has been given in Table 3²⁸. It is seen that more than four-fifths of the AgrLab HHs in rural India do not have an adult (≥ 15 years of age) female literate more than half of the AgrLab HHs do not have any adult literate member. Now, let us get back to our analysis between Gini and Literates.

Table 3: Proportion of Agricultural Households with No Female Literate Members and with No Literate Members in Rural India, 1993-94

Occupations	Households with No Female Literate Members (Age ≥ 15)	Households with No Female Literate Members (Age ≥ 5)	Households with No Literate Members (Age ≥ 15)	Households with No Literate Members (Age ≥ 5)
Agricultural Labourers	81.1	68.8	54.3	39.8
All Households	67.8	55.7	37.0	26.3

Source: Organisation (1996), Table 13, pp. S14-S19.

V Gini and Illiterates: A Composite Index

We consider Gini for land distribution as a representative for land ownership structure and Literates as a proxy for, say, capability building. The two variables given separately for SCs and total population are represented in Table 4 in such a way that a row below indicated more illiterates and a column to the right indicates more inequality in land distribution. Note, as in Table 1, one can also consider Table 4 as a proxy for scatterplot that is not to scale. The relationship, as pointed out in Table 3, seems to be somewhat positive that is less obvious for SCs. Further, literacy rates are lower and Gini is relatively higher among SCs than total population for almost each and every state²⁹. How

²⁷ For discussions on isolated and proximate illiterate see Basu and Foster (1998); Basu, Foster and Subramanian (2000), Mishra (2001) and Subramanian (2000).

²⁸ For the same NSS round, as already mentioned, SC AgrLab HHs to SC AllLab HHs is more than 75 per cent in all but for six states (see footnote 19 above).

²⁹ Gini for SCs is lower than total population in Uttar Pradesh and literacy rates for SCs is higher than total population in Assam and Gujarat (see Table 5). Note, as per NSS estimates, Uttar Pradesh is the only major state where proportion of landless rural HHs among SCs is lower than total population. Assam is the only state where literacy for SCs is highest among all social groups (SCs, STs and Others), but in rural Gujarat literacy rate for SCs is lower than 'Others'.

does one compare the relative movements in the two different spaces - Gini and illiteracy?³⁰ A possible way out is to develop composite indices with these two variables for SCs and total population and then look into the difference in rankings between the two population groups³¹. To develop the composite index we give equal weight to both the variables. In the extreme cases when weight of unity is given to one variable and zero to the other then we have either Gini or illiteracy. Comparing the composite index to the two extreme cases could also be illustrative.

Table 4: Gini of Land Distribution across Literates among Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Total Population for 15 Major States

SCs/Total Population	Proportion of Literates	Gini of Land Distribution				
		0.66-0.67	0.73-0.77	0.80-0.82	086-0.90	0.98
SCs	18-23 per cent	RA			BI	
	25-32 per cent	UP	MP, KA	AP		
	35-43 per cent		WB, OR		TN	PU, HA
	50-56 per cent			AS, MA	GU	
	79 per cent				KE	
Total Population	30-34 per cent	0.66-0.69	0.72-0.77	0.79-0.82	084-0.87	0.94-0.97
	36-37 per cent	RA		BI		
	45-50 per cent	UP, MP		AP		
	53-56 per cent	OR	WB, KA, AS			HA
	89 per cent		MA	GU	TN	PU
					KE	

Note: (1) See note 2 of Table 1 for short form of states and the note in Table 2 for the 15 major states. (2) As we move down the rows from top to bottom in each column the proportion of literates increases and as we move across the columns from left to right in each row the inequality in land distribution increases. (3) Note that literacy rates are higher and Gini is relatively lower among total population than SCs in an overall sense for almost each and every state (for some deviations see footnote 29 in text).

Source: Appendix I.

The values for Gini, composite index, and illiteracy and their relative rankings for SCs and total population across 15 major states have been given in Table 5. From this one can know two things for each of the states: the difference in ranking between SCs and total population for each of the three measures and the change for each population group between any of the two measures. The rankings for Gini show that the relative situation for SCs is better in states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal and it is worse in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. With illiteracy, as expected, Assam and Gujarat with SCs literacy higher than total population have done well, but there has been a decline for Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, most of the other states have changed by a single position with Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan improving and that of Bihar, Haryana and Karnataka declining, whereas Kerala and West Bengal have retained their positions³².

When we compare the changes in rankings for SCs between Gini and Illiteracy the

³⁰ We deliberately choose illiteracy over literacy so that it compares with Gini in the sense that a lower value is better than a higher value. Further, we divide proportion illiterates with 100 to keep it in the range (0, 1).

³¹ We standardise the two variables using the global/theoretical minimum and maximum at zero and unity respectively so that what we get is the actual values. This standardisation is done as follows: $[(\text{Actual value} - \text{Global minimum}) / (\text{Global maximum} - \text{Global minimum})] = \text{Actual value}$. Further, this would also help us compare the values for SCs and total population.

³² Agrarian reforms could have helped the SCs in Kerala and West Bengal that shows in their relatively better rankings in Gini, but Kerala has shown remarkable progress in literacy that is not evident in West Bengal (Ramachandran, 1998; and Sengupta and Gazdar, 1998).

Table 5: Gini of Land Distribution, Composite Index and Illiteracy for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Total Population across 15 Major States

States	Gini					Composite Index				
	SC	Rank	All	Rank	(5)-(3)	SC	Rank	All	Rank	(10)-(8)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
A P	0.822	8	0.800	10	2	0.777	12	0.722	12	0
Assam	0.800	7	0.764	7	0	0.640	2	0.636	6	4
Bihar	0.878	11	0.813	11	0	0.851	15	0.737	15	0
Gujarat	0.886	12	0.797	9	-3	0.665	4	0.633	5	1
Haryana	0.984	14	0.944	14	0	0.803	14	0.723	14	0
Karnataka	0.773	6	0.749	6	0	0.730	10	0.636	7	-3
Kerala	0.858	10	0.845	12	2	0.536	1	0.478	1	0
M P	0.757	5	0.690	3	-2	0.727	9	0.666	10	1
Maharashtra	0.822	9	0.771	8	-1	0.659	3	0.608	2	-1
Orissa	0.745	4	0.692	4	0	0.695	6	0.618	4	-2
Punjab	0.984	15	0.972	15	0	0.794	13	0.722	13	0
Rajasthan	0.666	1	0.663	1	0	0.723	8	0.679	11	3
Tamil Nadu	0.904	13	0.876	13	0	0.739	11	0.665	9	-2
U P	0.668	2	0.689	2	0	0.710	7	0.661	8	1
W B	0.731	3	0.727	5	2	0.666	5	0.611	3	-2

States	Illiteracy				
	SC	Rank	All	Rank	(15)-(13)
(1)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Andhra Pradesh	0.732	12	0.643	13	1
Assam	0.481	3	0.507	8	5
Bihar	0.825	15	0.662	14	-1
Gujarat	0.444	2	0.469	4	2
Haryana	0.623	8	0.501	7	-1
Karnataka	0.686	10	0.523	9	-1
Kerala	0.215	1	0.111	1	0
Madhya Pradesh	0.698	11	0.641	12	1
Maharashtra	0.497	4	0.445	2	-2
Orissa	0.646	9	0.545	10	1
Punjab	0.605	7	0.472	5	-2
Rajasthan	0.779	14	0.696	15	1
Tamil Nadu	0.575	5	0.454	3	-2
Uttar Pradesh	0.752	13	0.633	11	-2
West Bengal	0.600	6	0.495	6	0

Note: (1) Composite Index=[(Gini+Illiteracy)/2]; (2) Illiteracy=[100- (Literacy Per cent/100)].

Source: Appendix 1.

states that have done relatively better in the latter are Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Maharashtra and Assam and the states that have done relatively bad are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka

and West Bengal. All the states that did better, excluding Gujarat and Assam, show a greater improvement in ranking for the total population, Gujarat showed a lower improvement but Assam showed a decline. From the states that showed a decline there was a lower decline for total population, but for Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. This is in line with the observation of a positive relationship between Gini and Literacy (Table 2) being less obvious for SCs than for total population.

The composite index is to take the positive aspects of both Gini and illiteracy. Thus, Assam and Gujarat where SCs literacy is greater than total population have done well. In fact, the better performance of the former two also explains the relative decline of SCs in Maharashtra, West Bengal and Orissa. Uttar Pradesh, where SCs inequality in land distribution is lower than total population, has also done well, so also have Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan that also did improve their ranking in literacy by one place but also had much better absolute value/ranking in Gini. These three states also explain the relative decline in ranking of SCs compared to total population in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

VI Conclusions

To begin with, a review of issue suggests varied experiences and forces that have historical and regional dimensions. Keeping these in the background the paper analysed land ownership structure and literacy among Scheduled Castes (SCs) in rural India. The paper makes use of two-by-two classification tables that serve as proxy for scatterplot/chart to analyse two kinds of relationships. One is the relationship between rural Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour Households (SC AgrLab HHs) with land and proportion of SC to All AgrLab HHs. The other is the relationship between inequality in land distribution (Gini) and literates for Schedule Caste, as well as, total population. From these, different scenarios for each state with regard to SC AgrLab emerge.

Green revolution regions of Punjab and to a lesser extent Haryana does not seem to have benefited SCs much. Some densely populated regions like Kerala and West Bengal have witnessed agrarian/tenancy reforms and literacy achievements in the former being a folklore, but keeps one wondering with the sorry state of affairs in Bihar, another densely populated region. Landlessness is also quite bad in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu but they do somewhat better in literacy, following the impressive strides in Kerala, however, literacy attainment is not a regional pattern as this is not so with the other southern states, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Himachal Pradesh with the least landless (of course, Sikkim has none) is doing well in literacy, but states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan that also do well in landownership fare very badly in terms of literacy. The situation of SCs in Gujarat seems to be good in literacy, but it is to be noted that the worse off there are the STs. One also needs to take note that STs constitute a sizeable proportion (one-third) of AgrLab in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Assam and Maharashtra have very low proportion (around 10 per cent) of agricultural labourers among SCs and they have reasonably good levels of literacy, but the former scores in the sense that literacy among SCs is better than 'Others' in that state. These divergent experiences help us better understand the composite index that combines inequality in land distribution (Gini) and illiteracy.

The study also does a correlation exercise using agricultural labourers and literates from 1991 census and average land size, landless and Gini from 1993-94 NSS one gets two, rather three, interesting relationships. First, the relationship of agricultural labourers (1991 Census) with the three variables taken from 1993-94 NSS is stronger for SCs than

for total population. Second, and in contrast to the first, the relationship of literates (1991 Census) with the three variables of 1993-94 NSS is weaker for SCs than that for total population. Third, and a food for thought for the first two relationships, is that there is no significant relationship between agricultural labourers and literates, but it is negative for SCs and positive for total population. In other words, literacy as a potent tool and alternative to landlessness has been less effective for SCs than it has been for total population. Overall, the various relationships and contrasting results support the divergent patterns and experiences highlighted in the review of issues and the two-by-two classification tables.

Dissecting the analysis across states has been quite revealing and would be of help in implementing policy programmes, but at the same time, it would have been better if one could have identified the differences within SCs and across gender within each SC group in each region/state. One way of answering this is to have a greater emphasis on the (anthropological) fieldwork without losing sight of economic dimension. Or, as Robb (1993B) suggests one should break away from the conventional mode of posing questions and it would be interesting to see the fusion of cultural and economics discourse.

For the purpose of indicating some policy suggestions, a little detour is inevitable, rather necessary. Given the limits to land rights/agrarian reforms, a point that was also echoed by Professor Nilakantha Rath in his address in the workshop where an initial version of this paper was read, it is pertinent to look at other possibilities. Of course, the present emphasis on literacy is a very potent one, because besides having an intrinsic value it also has an instrumental value (Sen, 1998A). Providing alternative income generating assets in the rural non-farm sector becomes essential (Lanjouw, 2001). Till that materialises and to squarely address the question of hunger for the illiterate, landless and assetless agricultural labourers (female and male), one proposes the need to probe into the viability and modality of giving them property rights to water, at least on a temporary and partial basis.

Appendix 1: SC and All Data for Rural India

States	SCAgrLabHHs 1993-94 NSS		Schedule Caste				
	As per cent of All Agr Lab HHs	Per cent with Land	Rural Labour Average Land Size	HHs, 1993-94, NSS Landless	Gini of Land Distribution	Rural India, 1991 Census Per cent of Agr Lab	Per cent of Literates
Andhra Pradesh	33.71	35.81	0.17	64.19	0.82	77.48	26.80
Assam	6.99	41.88	0.20	58.12	0.80	15.16	51.95
Bihar	44.57	23.92	0.06	76.08	0.88	75.64	17.49
Gujarat	16.23	19.37	0.09	80.63	0.89	57.88	55.59
Haryana	59.07	6.56	0.09	93.44	0.98	63.18	37.67
Karnataka	33.35	46.44	0.31	53.56	0.77	56.70	31.42
Kerala	21.42	20.76	0.02	79.24	0.86	57.80	78.55
Madhya Pradesh	26.41	45.98	0.33	54.02	0.76	43.57	30.22
Maharashtra	11.76	35.48	0.42	64.52	0.82	62.30	50.27
Orissa	24.41	46.91	0.19	53.09	0.74	49.45	35.45
Punjab	73.94	3.34	0.01	96.66	0.98	69.71	39.55
Rajasthan	44.44	55.98	0.92	44.02	0.67	24.33	22.06
Tamil Nadu	42.94	18.93	0.07	81.07	0.90	71.77	42.50
Uttar Pradesh	55.96	64.23	0.18	35.77	0.67	41.34	24.76
West Bengal	43.11	45.12	0.09	54.88	0.73	46.04	39.98
Arunachal Pradesh	0.00	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.41	55.29
Goa	12.50	0.00	NA	100.00	NA	17.13	56.05
H P	61.54	89.65	0.21	10.35	0.55	5.65	52.00
J & K	72.73	56.47	0.25	43.53	0.65	NA	NA
Manipur	0.00	NA	NA	NA	NA	11.74	56.69
Meghalaya	0.00	0.00	NA	100.00	NA	23.20	37.11
Mizoram	0.00	0.00	NA	100.00	NA	3.84	75.76
Nagaland	0.00	Na	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sikkim	20.00	100.00	0.61	0.00	0.14	9.52	47.53
Tripura	26.32	31.73	0.06	68.27	0.86	31.59	55.24
A & N Islands	0.00	50.00	0.30	50.00	0.85	NA	NA
Chandigarh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.79	16.71
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.00	0.00	0.13	100.00	0.71	26.68	77.17
Daman & Diu	0.00	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.54	82.22
Delhi	0.00	NA	NA	NA	NA	10.71	55.50
Lakshadweep	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pondicherry	66.67	0.00	NA	100.00	NA	85.91	50.07
India	34.59	36.06	0.17	63.94	0.84	55.12	33.25

Contd...

Appendix 1: SC and All Data for Rural India

States	All				
	Rural Labour HHs, 1993-94, NSS			Rural India, 1991 Census	
	Average Land Size	Landless	Gini of Land Distribution	Per cent of Agr Lab	Per cent of Literates
Andhra Pradesh	0.21	58.09	0.80	47.50	35.70
Assam	0.13	49.05	0.76	13.30	49.30
Bihar	0.13	62.19	0.81	40.20	33.80
Gujarat	0.25	60.87	0.80	30.70	53.10
Haryana	0.14	85.03	0.94	23.40	49.90
Karnataka	0.34	52.37	0.75	35.90	47.70
Kerala	0.04	75.70	0.85	30.60	88.90
Madhya Pradesh	0.44	43.32	0.69	27.00	35.90
Maharashtra	0.42	57.84	0.77	36.60	55.50
Orissa	0.27	42.00	0.69	31.40	45.50
Punjab	0.04	94.59	0.97	30.70	52.80
Rajasthan	0.72	48.15	0.66	11.50	30.40
Tamil Nadu	0.09	75.11	0.88	44.70	54.60
Uttar Pradesh	0.20	37.86	0.69	21.50	36.70
West Bengal	0.10	50.72	0.73	32.20	50.50
Arunachal Pradesh	0.09	100.00	0.87	5.50	37.00
Goa	0.15	57.75	0.81	13.30	72.30
Himachal Pradesh	0.21	27.73	0.60	3.50	61.90
Jammu & Kashmir	0.34	42.04	0.62	NA	NA
Manipur	0.15	64.35	0.75	6.50	55.80
Meghalaya	0.12	50.30	0.72	NA	41.10
Mizoram	1.78	16.25	0.39	NA	72.50
Nagaland	0.55	0.00	0.39	1.40	57.20
Sikkim	0.24	3.14	0.50	8.50	54.40
Tripura	0.09	73.67	0.89	26.50	56.10
A & N Islands	0.11	64.04	0.92	7.50	69.70
Chandigarh	NA	100.00	NA	3.10	59.10
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.45	18.61	0.48	10.80	37.00
Daman & Diu	0.15	80.48	0.85	5.90	61.60
Delhi	NA	100.00	NA	6.40	66.90
Lakshadweep	NA	100.00	NA	0.00	78.90
Pondicherry	0.03	84.99	0.90	56.00	65.40
India	0.23	56.97	0.80	31.60	44.70

Note: (1) All data are for rural India.; (2) SC denotes Scheduled Castes, AgrLab denotes Agricultural Labour and HHs denotes Households

Source: Bureau (1998), India (1994) and India (1998).

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Caste and Economic Discrimination: Theory and Evidence on Rural Labour Market

Sukhadeo Thorat*

This paper examined the situation of the wage labour belonging to the schedule caste household with respect to their magnitude, employment, wage earning, consumption expenditure and poverty and compared with the non-SC/ST group. The results brings out that magnitude of wage labour households among the schedule caste is almost two time higher than the non-scheduled group. The employment rate and the wage rate for them is also low as compared with other groups. The low employment coupled with low wage rate led to less income and consumption expenditure and ultimately in high poverty as compared with other groups. The high incidence of wage labour household without land or little land among the schedule caste signifies the historical impact of restrictions on the ownership of the capital assets, particularly the agricultural land. The paper also argued that the low employment and wage rate may also be due to discrimination in labour market in hiring and wage earning. The less access to capital assets and low employment and wage earning may also be due to continuing discrimination in the factor markets, particularly the labour markets. With the help of the theoretical literature the paper argued that economic relations involved in the caste system implied labour market discrimination in hiring and wage earning and also other factor markets and their exclusion from access to capital assets. This caused income loss and high poverty among the schedule caste. The paper also provided some evidence to show that schedule caste indeed suffered from discrimination in the labour markets and other factor markets. However the author urged that in order to provide full evidence on the caste discrimination in various markets there is a need to undertake studies on the nature and forms of discrimination suffered by the scheduled caste in various markets, namely labour, land, capital, product and consumer in order to suggest appropriate policy to improve the access to sources of income by overcoming the market discrimination.

Introduction

The "Hindu Society" has been characterized by high degree of inter-group economic inequality. Whether we consider access to capital assets, employment, education, or income, wide differences are observed across the caste groups and these differences closely corresponds to economic rights prescribed in the classical form of caste system. One of the essential features of economic organization of the caste system is the unequal and hierarchal ordering of castes in term of economic rights. Hierarchal ordering essentially means that as we go down from the high caste to low caste the economic rights reduce drastically such that the caste located at the top of the caste order, namely the Brahmin have overwhelming rights

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and the untouchable who are placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy practically have nothing except to serve the castes above them. (Thorat, 1996; Ambedkar first published 1987). Thus, not every caste suffered in the same degree from the scheme of economic distribution under the caste system. Among them the untouchables suffered the most, as they are deprived of ownership rights to property and hence the lack of access to all possible source of economic mobility¹. The manner in which the caste based customary rules related to right to property, occupation, employment, wage, education were devised, the untouchables had no alternative except to serve the high caste as labour. The main occupation of the untouchables, therefore turn out to be wage labour (Thorat, 1996; Thorat and Deshpande, 1999).

The caste-based customary laws relating to property right, employment, wage, education has been now replaced by a more egalitarian legal framework, under which the untouchables supposed to have an equal access. However, despite this change in property rights the access to untouchables to the income earning assets, such as agricultural land and other capital assets has not improved much. The lack of access to physical capital assets led to continuing dependence of the untouchables on the wage labour as a main occupation². Why do the untouchables still suffers from the lack of access to the capital assets and therefore depend on wage labour in much greater magnitude than other groups in Indian Society? To what extent this lack of access is historical- a legacy of the past associated with restrictions on ownership of capital assets and to what extent it is conditioned by continuing economic discrimination in exchange in land, capital, and other markets and exchange outside market? These are some of the questions, which are important to understand the economic situation of the schedule caste. The study of caste-based market discrimination and its impact on access to sources of income and poverty has been one of the most neglected areas in Indian economics. Therefore, although the economists have recognized the economic inequality associated with caste system but when it comes to explaining the issue of why proportionately more low caste persons are still wage labour (without much access to the capital assets) and poor, not only the theoretical cupboard is nearly empty but also the empirical works are too scanty. Infact, Indian economists have paid much less attention to the nature and role of the caste based economic discrimination as compared to their counterpart who have done extensive research on inequality and economic discrimination associated with race, ethnicity, gender and other institutions³. Consequently we known much less about (caste based) discrimination induced economic deprivation particularly of the untouchables in Indian society.

In this paper we propose to discuss some of these neglected aspects of the wage labour households belonging to the scheduled caste. Non-availability of the data prelude serious discussion on caste discrimination in the rural labour market but never the less, existing data allows us to capture the inequality in the incidence of the wage labour, employment, wage rates and the level of poverty between them and wage labour households belonging to non-scheduled groups and thus, indirectly provide some insight in to the impact of the historical impact of discrimination and wherever possible its continuation in the present time. The analysis is based on the data from Rural Labour Inquiry Reports for magnitude of wage labour and wage rates, and National Sample Survey data for employment

¹ See Thorat, 1996; Thorat and Deshpande, 2001 for detail discussion on the economic rights of four castes prescribed in Manu Smurti.

² One of the example where the customary right related to agricultural land were converted into formal law is Punjab, where untouchables did not have right to own agricultural land for nearly a century.

³ See for exhaustive compilation of literature on "Economic and Discrimination", William Darity, 1995.

and poverty of the wage labour households. Based on the limited evidence we also discuss the nature of market discrimination faced by the scheduled caste in occupation, employment and wage rates. And lastly we review the efforts of the theoretical economists to capture the economic discrimination involved in the working of the caste system with a particular focus on the labour market and highlight the implications for economic development, and income distribution or equity.

Accordingly the discussion is divided into few sections. Firstly, we discussed the differences in the magnitude of wage labour among the scheduled caste and others (net of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes) and their land ownership background, and also the differences in the employment/unemployment rate, wage rate and level of poverty between them. Secondly based on our results and the earlier we present the evidence on caste based discrimination in labour market and we reviewed the efforts of economists to understand the theoretical underpinning of the caste system and pose issues for further research

Magnitude of Wage Labour

We begin with the discussion on the disparities in the magnitude of the wage labour households between the scheduled caste and others (category of others has been derived by subtracting the figures of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe from the total so that we get the net of SC/ST) based on the data from the Rural Labour Inquiry (RLI) and National Sample Survey (NSS). The RLI provide data on the number of wage labour households in the total rural households and help us to have an estimate of percentage of wage labour among the scheduled caste and the other households. The same reports also gives the division of rural labour households without land and those with land, and of the latter by their land ownership background. This helps us to get insight in to the magnitude of the wage labour households without land and with land and in the case of those with land the extent of land possessed.

In the early nineties about three-fourth of scheduled caste lived in rural area where the main sources of income are either self-employment in farm or (rural) non-farm sector, regular salaried jobs or wage labour. Table 1 presents the percentages of rural wage labour households (agricultural and non-agricultural combined) at all India and state level for 1974-75 and 1993-94. These data indicate that an inadequate access to agricultural land and other capital assets due to customary restrictions on the scheduled castes on the ownership of capital assets and to take occupation other than wage labour has left no option for them except to resort to manual wage labour, and therefore this created among them an enormously high level of wage labour.

In 1993-94 (latest year for which the data are available) at all India level nearly 60 of the total rural Scheduled Caste households were wage labour households. As against this among the others (non-SC/ST) the wage labour households constitute only about 30 per cent of the total rural households. Thus the proportion of wage labour households among the SC's was twice the level of others households. This ratio was high among the SC in all the states in 1993-94. But what is sticking is the inter-state variations in the magnitude of wage labour in scheduled caste households. The ratio of labour household was higher than 75 per cent in seven states, which include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The ratio was close to seventy percent in Punjab. It was lower in Himachal Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh but even in these states level was much higher as compared with the other groups.

Table 1: Magnitude of Wage Labour: Percentage of Rural Labour Household to Total Rural Household

States	SC			Non-SC/ST		
	1974-75	1983-84	1993-94	1974-75	1983-84	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	72.87	79.29	78.44	32.56	39.2	42.25
Assam	37.08	25.97	36.85	21.57	31.98	35.25
Bihar	78.73	75.65	77.63	27.06	29.69	30.23
Gujarat	74.67	75.05	63.80	20.73	30.18	35.54
Haryana	56.41	72.84	64.60	7.77	15.65	16.60
Himachal Pradesh	11.45	17.24	27.85	1.73	3.65	11.22
Jammu and Kashmir	13.16	27.54	29.52	3.89	16.04	7.72
Karnataka	69.24	75.27	69.35	30.04	35.25	32.61
Kerala	84.59	81.48	81.65	36.86	44.75	43.68
Madhya Pradesh	39.20	48.94	58.90	16.72	25.74	30.00
Maharashtra	68.18	64.10	68.81	32.03	40.08	45.04
Orissa	60.77	54.58	36.57	16.51	31.03	22.67
Punjab	67.96	69.71	63.70	6.52	13.34	16.71
Rajasthan	18.99	42.28	46.35	2.78	9.79	14.58
Tamil Nadu	77.36	82.58	83.03	34.31	42.93	44.50
Uttar Pradesh	45.51	48.78	39.51	10.42	13.62	11.74
West Bengal	49.66	59.33	53.61	59.74	37.59	33.47
India	57.41	62.55	59.45	22.69	29.14	30.15

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report of General Characteristics of Rural Labour households, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

Table 2: Disparity Index: Rural Labour Household

States	1974-75	1983-84	1987-88	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	0.47	0.43	0.36	0.34
Assam	0.27	-0.11	-0.04	0.00
Bihar	0.62	0.54	0.51	0.54
Gujrat	0.71	0.35	0.38	0.35
Haryana	1.01	0.83	0.97	0.72
Himachal Pradesh	0.84	0.71	0.48	0.45
Jammu and Kashmir	0.55	0.26	0.38	0.61
Karnataka	0.48	0.45	0.40	0.44
Kerala	0.51	0.38	0.37	0.38
Madhya Pradesh	0.43	0.34	0.37	0.36
Maharashtra	0.43	0.27	0.32	0.32
Orissa	0.69	0.31	0.37	0.31
Punjab	1.18	0.87	0.88	0.78
Rajasthan	0.87	0.72	0.46	0.59
Tamil Nadu	0.48	0.41	0.38	0.40
Uttar Pradesh	0.73	0.64	0.62	0.61
West Bengal	-0.11	0.26	0.22	0.26

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report of General Characteristics of Rural Labour households, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

Infact, "the Disparity Index", given in Table 2 above capture the extent of gap in the level of rural labour household among the scheduled caste and other. In 1993-94 the incidence of rural labour is higher than other in all the states. The disparity is around.26 at all India level. The disparity index is the highest in the two agriculturally advanced states of Punjab and Haryana, and they are closely followed by Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in that order. At the other end the index is relatively low in West Bengal Maharashtra, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Table 1 also capture the change in the percentage of the rural labour households between 1974-75 and 1993-94. During this twenty years period the percentage of the rural labour households has increased moderately from 57.4 per cent to 59.4 in 1993-94 at all India level. At the state level the percentage has increased in eight states (i.e., Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal) and declined in the remaining nine states. In the case of other household however, the percentage of rural labour household has increased sharply from 22.69 per cent in 1974-75 to 30.15 per cent at all India level and also in all the state except West Bengal where it showed a substantial decline. (For the Schedule Caste, however, the percentage of rural labour household in West Bengal increased fairly substantially).

Table 3 also gives the changes in the number of the rural labour households .It indicate that between 1974-1994 like the ratio of rural labour household their absolute number has also increased among the schedule caste at all India level and in all the states. The same trend is observed for other household as well. At the all India level the number has increased at the rate of 8 per cent per annum.

Table 3: Annual (Compound) Growth Rate Change in Number of Rural Labour Households

States	SC			NON SC/ST		
	1974-75	1974-75	1983-84	1974-75	1974-75	1983-84
	to	to	to	to	to	to
	1993-94	1983-84	1993-94	1993-94	1983-84	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	6.79	4.80	8.61	7.14	4.64	9.43
Assam	4.83	-13.13	24.15	12.58	7.62	17.23
Bihar	7.56	1.79	13.02	6.91	3.51	10.06
Gujarat	6.84	2.31	11.09	9.23	5.78	12.43
Haryana	13.01	17.74	8.91	12.97	14.87	11.29
Himachal Pradesh	18.92	9.87	27.70	25.07	12.37	37.73
Jammu and Kashmir	17.20	10.22	23.86	9.38	20.40	0.32
Karnataka	8.65	3.80	13.22	6.32	2.95	9.45
Kerala	4.20	1.72	6.49	6.12	3.29	8.73
Madhya Pradesh	10.45	3.96	16.64	10.22	6.23	13.93
Maharashtra	4.64	0.95	8.08	8.91	6.35	11.26
Orissa	6.90	1.72	11.78	6.99	1.86	11.83
Punjab	8.61	2.91	14.01	11.66	10.59	12.63
Rajasthan	14.89	12.71	16.89	19.30	17.65	20.80
Tamil Nadu	6.05	2.62	9.24	6.42	4.37	8.31
Uttar Pradesh	10.27	1.63	18.68	11.36	4.60	17.81
West Bengal	8.45	5.92	10.78	7.95	6.41	9.37
All India	8.01	3.42	12.32	8.70	5.03	12.12

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report of General Characteristics of Rural Labour households, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

The per annum increase (compound) in the case of SC, is higher than all India average in Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The rate of increase was the highest in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and lower in Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat. It is important to note that the level of the rural labour household was already very high in two of these states, namely Haryana and Punjab and they had experienced a further increase in the incidence of labour households. In the case of other household also the number has increased by about 8 per cent per annum. The rate of increase was relatively high for Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Another way to look at the predominance of wage labour among the SC is to see the percentage share of Scheduled Castes and other rural household vis-à-vis their share in the total rural household for the states. In 1993-94, the Scheduled castes, and the non-SC/ST household account 33.06 per cent, and 53.60 per cent of the total labour households in the country respectively. The share of Scheduled Caste in total rural labour households is much greater than their share in total rural households in 1993-94. On the other hand the share of other group in total rural labour households is less than their share in total rural households. In Haryana (59 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (44 per cent), Punjab (72 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (54 per cent), W B (41 per cent), and Jammu and Kashmir (63 per cent) the share of SC's rural labour households in the total rural labour households was in fact more than 50 per cent, which is much greater than their share in the total rural household.

Land Ownership Background

Table 4 (a), 4 (b) and 4 (c) gives the break up of labour household into those with land and without land. Further, it also gives the distribution of labour households with land by size of land possessed. This helps us to know the size-specific incidence of labour household. It must be mention that not all wage labour households are landless. Some of them do owned some land but the size of the land is so small that their major source of income still remained wage earning. Table 4 (a), Table 4 (b) and Table 4 (c), shows the division of the wage labour household in those without land and with land and the latter by the size of land possessed. Table 4 (a) indicate that in 1993-94 among the other households, at all India level about 81 per cent of rural labour households owned some land and only 19 per cent are without land. Among the schedule caste household, on the other hand the percentage of rural labour households with land is only 30 per cent and the remaining 70 per cent do not owned any land. The ratios of land owning labour household is particularly low in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh which indicate the high incidence of landlessness among the schedule caste households in these states. By comparison the percentage of labour households with land was much higher among the other groups, about 81 per cent of them owned some land at all India level. The proportion of the landowning labour households was higher than all India average in as many as ten states.

Table 4 (b) also showed the land possessed by the rural labour household by size of land possessed and throw some light on the reason as to why the large section of the land owning household turn in to wage labour household rather than pursuing the activity as self employed cultivating household. In 1993-94 of the total landowning labour households about three-fourth of them owned less that 0.40 hectre (or less than 1 acre) of land. Thus there is major concentration of rural labour households in the size category of less than 0.40 hectares (or less than 1 acre) in the case of Scheduled Castes. The proportion get reduced to 22 per cent for 0.40-1.00 hectare size category and further down to 10 per cent for more than 1-hectare size category for Scheduled Caste. The incidence of rural labour household among

the Scheduled Caste in the less 0.40 hectare size category is relatively high in Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and the less in Rajasthan, Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. It should be noted that the incidence of rural labour households is also relatively high in the low rainfall and drought prone states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra and Rajasthan, in one hectare and above size category. The low agricultural productivity and the low income pushed these households in these states to the wage employment as main occupation.

Table 4(a): Rural Labour Households With Land and Without Land

(in percentage)

States	Non-SC/ST				Schedule Caste			
	With Land		Without Land		With Land		Without Land	
	1974-75	1993-94	1974-75	1993-94	1974-75	1993-94	1974-75	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	41.78	85.13	57.6	14.87	35.23	34.82	64.77	65.18
Assam	54.81	90.43	45.18	9.57	55.63	41.59	44.37	58.41
Bihar	62.01	83.67	37.98	16.33	51.34	23.90	48.66	76.10
Gujarat	37.30	80.05	62.89	19.95	30.80	10.24	69.20	80.76
Haryana	13.48	97.2	86.51	2.80	18.18	4.05	81.82	95.95
Himachal Pradesh	71.42	62.68	28.57	37.32	73.33	80.43	26.67	19.57
J & K	72.72	61.09	27.27	38.01	30.00	57.72	70.00	42.28
Karnataka	45.23	80.92	54.76	19.08	44.67	43.80	55.33	56.20
Kerala	83.88	96.64	16.11	3.36	80.46	16.63	19.54	81.37
Madhya Pradesh	54.78	67.93	45.21	32.07	48.72	44.49	51.28	65.51
Maharashtra	50.57	90.63	49.49	9.37	45.88	34.46	54.12	65.54
Orissa	66.03	67.43	33.96	32.57	51.34	45.88	48.66	54.12
Punjab	20.00	90.87	80.00	9.13	07.03	02.72	92.97	97.28
Rajasthan	55.55	52.70	44.44	47.30	48.92	59.90	51.08	40.10
Tamil Nadu	38.11	92.68	61.88	7.32	31.81	18.11	68.19	81.89
Uttar Pradesh	51.65	66.06	40.34	33.94	56.11	60.97	43.89	39.03
West Bengal	46.76	76.41	53.23	23.59	39.75	41.86	60.25	58.14
India	55.97	81.19	44.02	18.81	44.38	35.05	55.62	64.95
ALL INDIA								
	Non SC/ST				Schedule Caste			
	1974 -75		1993		1974 -75		1993	
	With Land	Without Land	With Land	Without Land	With Land	Without Land	With Land	Without Land
With Land	55.97	81.19	44.38	35.05				
Without Land	44.02	18.81	55.65	64.95				
Total	22.69	30.15	57.41	59.48				

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report of General Characteristics of Rural Labour households, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

Thus, as compared with the other groups, the percentage of rural labour household from less than 0.40 size category was comparatively high among the Scheduled Caste partly because the large proportion of the Scheduled Caste household are marginal holdings and due to the small size of the holding they have to resort to wage employment in a much greater magnitude than the non SC/ST.

Table 4 (b): Percentage Distribution of Rural Labour Households with Land by Size of Land Cultivated (size in hectares): 1993-94

States	All Households			SC Households		
	<0.4	0.4-1	>1	<0.4	0.4-1	>1
Andhra Pradesh	63.50	25.00	11.50	65.90	24.00	10.10
Assam	80.80	15.50	3.70	68.20	25.20	6.60
Bihar	76.40	17.30	6.30	87.00	9.10	3.90
Gujarat	44.60	38.40	17.00	56.60	36.30	7.10
Haryana	55.50	22.90	21.60	66.10	20.60	13.30
Himachal Pradesh	33.00	14.90	52.10	84.80	13.90	1.30
Jammu and Kashmir	55.50	31.20	13.30	59.10	35.50	5.40
Karnataka	40.50	40.20	19.30	48.40	35.10	16.50
Kerala	93.60	5.20	1.20	97.20	2.60	0.20
Madhya Pradesh	34.10	33.00	22.90	37.70	42.70	19.60
Maharashtra	28.50	34.40	37.10	32.90	27.70	39.40
Orissa	59.40	32.80	7.80	63.00	33.70	3.30
Punjab	56.90	29.40	13.70	62.10	30.70	7.20
Rajasthan	32.00	42.50	25.50	25.90	38.40	45.70
Tamil Nadu	69.10	24.50	6.40	68.90	24.40	6.70
Uttar Pradesh	77.30	18.20	4.50	79.90	17.10	3.00
West Bengal	86.40	12.80	0.80	89.60	9.90	0.50
India	59.60	27.10	13.30	68.00	21.90	10.10

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report of General Characteristics of Rural Labour households, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla

This discussion bring out quite clearly the historical impact of the customary restrictions on the ownership of agricultural land on the scheduled caste in so far as a large section of them did not have enough access to the agricultural land and other capital assets and therefore, even today continued to depend on wage labour for earning the major portion of household income. The incidence of wage labour among the Scheduled Caste is twice that of non-SC/ST. Significantly higher dependence of the schedule caste on the wage labour is also reflected in their higher share in total rural household as compared with their share in total rural households in all the states. Only one third of them owned some land and this ratio was two times less as compared to the other household. Of these SC rural labour households (that is one third) who own some land about three-fourth of them come from the size category of less than 0.40 hectare (or 1 acre), this ratio was higher compared to the other household. What is disturbing is that between 1974-75 and 1993-94 both the percentage, as well as, the number of the rural labour household has increased for both Scheduled Caste and the other household.

Table 4 (c): Percentage of Rural Labour Households with Land by Size of Land Cultivated (size in hectare): 1974-75 (in percentage)

State	All Households			Sc Households		
	<0.4	0.4-1	>1	<0.4	0.4-1	>1
Andhra Pradesh	28.93	64.80	13.10	50.00	36.80	13.20
Assam	35.13	68.60	4.90	69.20	26.00	4.80
Bihar	54.83	76.50	4.90	82.50	15.50	2.00
Gujarat	22.82	58.62	29.20	42.40	37.60	20.00
Haryana	47.04	75.10	9.10	64.70	25.50	9.80
Himachal Pradesh	46.34	74.30	10.90	80.00	18.90	1.10
Jammu and Kashmir	46.31	70.70	3.50	48.20	45.10	6.70
Karnataka	19.04	59.50	29.80	92.90	5.30	1.80
Kerala	73.50	83.30	1.50	32.40	46.10	21.40
Madhya Pradesh	29.60	62.60	25.20	41.30	37.90	20.80
Maharashtra	27.31	53.70	36.80	49.10	28.10	22.80
Orissa	36.78	69.70	9.60	67.10	27.70	5.20
Punjab	34.97	71.40	19.60	48.80	29.70	21.40
Rajasthan	15.91	52.70	38.80	20.10	39.60	40.30
Tamil Nadu	34.81	65.80	8.50	63.50	30.70	5.70
Uttar Pradesh	39.70	65.20	3.50	71.00	25.80	3.10
West Bengal	63.39	78.50	1.20	82.60	17.10	0.30
ALL-INDIA	42.35	68.60	12.10	66.80	25.50	7.70

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report of General Characteristics of Rural Labour households, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

Employment and Wage Rates

The above discussion indicate that more than sixty percent of the Scheduled Caste households depend more on wage employment as a main source of income. The wage-income of these households obviously is determined by the level of wage employment and the wage rate. In this section, we, therefore, discuss the employment and the wage earning of the schedule caste labour households in the rural area. We use the NSS data on employment/unemployment rates and the Rural Labour Inquiry data on wage rates to bring out the disparities between the schedule caste and non-schedule caste labour households. The employment and unemployment rates are given for usual principal status, usual principal and subsidiary status, current weekly and current daily status. While the usual statuses capture the open employment/unemployment the current weekly and currently status capture the underemployment of the rural labour. [See Table 5(a) to 5(g)].

Table 5(a) presents the employment rate at all India and state level for 1993-94. We begin with the comparison with respect to employment rate or participation rate based on usual principal status and usual principal and subsidiary status and this status measure the employment base on the whole year. We observed that the employment rate based on Usual Principal Status (UPS) and Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS) for Scheduled Caste and non-SC/ST are nearly the same at all India level for the male. In the case of female, however, the employment of schedule caste female is generally higher as compared with the female belong to other households. There are however differences in the employment rate at state level. For instance in six states for UPS (Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab) and equal number of the states (that is six)

for UPSS (Assam, Hariyana, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu) the rate are lower for the Scheduled Caste male worker. In the case of the female the rate based on UPS are higher for Schedule caste female in all the states except Rajasthan. On the basis of UPSS status however the employment rate are lower in at least four states. In the remaining states that is the states other than the one mentioned above the employment rate based on the UPS, and UPSS for both schedule caste male and female are either higher or equal to the non schedule caste households.

Table 5 (a): Employment Rate (Participation Rate)-1993-94 – Rural

States	Usual Principal Status				Usual Principal & Subsidiary Status				Current Weekly Status				Current Daily Status			
	SC		Others		SC		Others		SC		Others		SC		Others	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
AP	60.9	51.6	61.8	43.5	53	54	44.9	39.1	57.7	45.6	59.9	42.1	52.6	38.2	57	36.6
Assam	51.2	10.3	49.5	9	36.3	10.4	40.5	13.5	51.8	12.5	50	13.1	48.5	9.5	46.7	9.8
Bihar	52.4	20.1	49.1	9.1	46.1	24.9	39.9	11.2	51.6	21.5	48.8	9.9	48.3	17.9	46.6	8.7
Gujarat	54.8	26.5	56.4	21.5	39.8	30.1	39.1	33.5	53.8	29.8	56	30.9	48	23.1	53.9	23.1
Haryana	43.6	7	45.1	5.3	21.9	23	30.5	26	41.7	18.2	45.1	21.6	38.4	12.4	43.8	13.7
HP	52.8	31.2	50.2	37.2	34.2	43.7	39.9	51.1	56.1	42.9	53.3	46.7	53	33	50.8	36.4
J & K	48.7	9.4	50.7	9.5	26	30.8	34.4	40.4	48.7	19.8	50.8	29.3	47.9	14.3	50.2	19.2
Karnataka	55	38.3	59.1	31.2	46.8	41.4	47.5	35.3	54	38.9	59.2	35.6	49.7	32.5	56.1	29.4
Kerala	55.2	29.3	51.1	13.6	39.7	24.3	27.2	13.9	52.6	31	51.6	18.4	42.9	23.3	45.9	13.4
MP	55.5	32.1	54.1	24.7	47.1	37.8	46.8	32.4	53.6	32	53	26.9	51.5	27.2	51.9	23.5
Maharashtra	51.9	42.7	53.4	39.5	36.5	40.9	40.8	42.9	51.8	40.8	52.4	39.3	47.7	34.8	50	34.5
Orissa	54.3	25.8	53.5	12.5	44	29.3	41.2	17.6	51.5	24.8	52.6	14.5	47.5	20.5	50.3	12.3
Punjab	51.9	5.4	55.8	2.8	32.7	18.3	40	21.4	51.3	18.1	55.9	20.7	49.8	11.8	55.6	11.6
Rajasthan	53.1	24.7	51.4	27.2	33.3	41.1	39.4	40.9	52.3	35.9	51.3	36	50.8	30.1	50.8	31
Tamil Nadu	59.2	47.8	58.7	37.8	24.8	49.3	35.2	33.2	56.9	46.5	56.7	38.9	45.8	34.2	51.6	31.8
UP	52.4	18.4	50	11.3	42	27.8	39.3	17	51.4	23	49.9	15	48.7	18	48.6	11.9
West Bengal	54.1	9.8	53	5.8	39.8	12.6	33.2	7.3	52.8	14.7	53	11.3	48.7	10	49.9	7.4
All India	54	25.2	53.2	20.9	42	31	39.4	25.2	52.6	28	52.7	24.5	48.6	22.1	50.4	20.1

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1993-94.

We now look at the differences in the employment rates between the schedule and non-schedule group based on the currently and current daily status, these status generally capture the under-employment of the employed worker.

In the case of current weekly status the employment rate for the SC households are similar to those of non-SC household at all India and in eleven states, but lower in six states as compared with non-SC households. In the case of female the rates are higher at all India level and in most of the states except Haryana, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir for the SC female.

Table 5 (b): All India Unemployment Rate – Percentage of Unemployed (Age 5 years and above)

Category/ Year	Male				Female			
	Usual Principal Status	Usual Status	Current Weekly Status	Current Daily Status	Usual Principal Status	Usual Status	Current Weekly Status	Current Daily Status
Rural								
Schedule Caste								
1993-94	0.9	0.6	1.9	4.3	0.3	-	1.1	2
1987-88	1.3	0.9			1.4	1.1		
1983	1.1	0.76	3.22	7.16	0.4	0.23	2.16	2.23
1977-78	1.1	0	2.93	6.73	2.2	0	1.9	4
Others								
1993-94	1.2	0.9	1.6	2.7	0.44		0.8	1.11
1987-88	1.7	1.1	-	-	0.48	0.7	-	-
1983	1.3	1.9	2.15	4.03	0.43	0.29	0.91	1.72
1977-78	1.57	0	2.15	3.9	1.53	0	0.97	0.97

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1977-78, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94.

In case of current daily status the situation is clearly different from that of the other status Both at all India level and in about 12 out of 17 states the employment rates are lower for the Scheduled Caste male worker as compared with other household. Even in the case of female worker the employment rate are lower at all India level and in nine out of seventeen. Thus, on the basis of usual status and currently weekly status we do not observe much difference in the employment rates of the SC and non SC households at all India level and in majority states, although we must hasten to add that in some states the employment rate for SC household are lower. The disparities, however, clearly emerged between the two groups in the case employment rate based on the current daily status, as the employment tend to lower for the SC as compared to non-SC households by a significant margin.

Table 5 (c): Disparity Index: Unemployment Rate per cent of Unemployed (Age 5 Years and above)

Category/ Year	Male				Female			
	Usual Principal Status	Usual Status	Current Weekly Status	Current Daily Status	Usual Principal Status	Usual Status	Current Weekly Status	Current Daily Status
1993-94	-0.13	-0.18	0.08	0.21	-0.17	-	0.14	0.26
1987-88	-0.12	-0.09	-	-	0.47	0.20	-	-
1983.00	-0.07	-0.40	0.18	0.26	-0.03	-0.10	0.38	0.11
1977-78	-0.16	-	0.14	0.24	0.16	-	0.29	0.62

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1993-94, 1987-88, 1983, 1977-78.

This pattern of disparities between the two groups with regard to employment status is also reflected in the unemployment rate based on three status. [Tables 5(a) to 5(g)]. In 1993-94 in the case of usual status (UPS and UPSS) there are no significant difference in the unemployment rate between the Scheduled Castes and others both for male and female at all

India level and in the majority of the states, (although there are few exception at the state level. In the case five to six states the unemployment tend to be either equal or somewhat less for SC male and female as compared with the non-SC households). In fact the unemployment rate of Scheduled Caste worker is slightly lower than that of others. (The only exception are Gujarat, Punjab and Tamil Nadu for UPS and Gujarat Tamil Nadu and Jammu and Kashmir for UPSS where the rates are high foe SC male).

Table 5 (d): Unemployed Rate 1993-94 (Rural)

States	Usual Principal Status Ups				Usual Principal Including Subsidiary Ups				Current Weekly Status				Current Daily Status			
	SC		Other		SC		Other		Schedule Caste		Other		SC		Other	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Andhra Pradesh	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.9	2.3	1	1	4.7	4.3	3.4	2.3
Assam	3.2	0.8	3.3	1.4	2.8	0.8	2.5	1.3	3.4	1.5	3	1.7	3.8	1.2	3	1.4
Bihar	0.7		1.4	0.1	0.6		1.2	0.1	1.5	0.4	1.8	0.2	0.9	1.1	3.1	0.4
Gujrat	2.1	0.2	0.7	1.1	1.5	0.2	0.7	0.1	3.1	0.4	1.4	0.4	7.6	1.9	2.9	1
Haryana	0.2	0.5	1.4	0.3	0.2		0.9	0.2	2.3	1.2	2.1	2	5.2	1.2	2.8	0.2
Himachal Pradesh	0.9		1.3	0.3	0.4		0.6	0.1	0.4		0.8	0.2	1.5		1.4	0.2
J & K	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.4	0.2	1.2	0.1	1	0.3	1.4	0.1	1	0.3
Karnataka	0.8	0.1	0.8	0.2	0.4		0.6	0.2	1.7	0.7	1	0.4	4.1	2.3	2.4	1
Kerala	2.4	2.5	4.2	2.9	1.5	2.1	3.3	2.6	3	2	4.1	2.9	8.8	4.6	6.7	3.2
Madhya Pradesh	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.2	0.8	1.1	0.5	2.1	1.3	1.4	0.7
Maharashtra	0.9	0.3	1	0.3	0.7		0.7	0.2	1.5	1.4	1	0.7	2.9	2.3	2.3	1.3
Orissa	1.7	0.1	1.7	0.4	1.2	0.1	1.2	0.3	3.5	1.7	2.2	0.6	5.5	1.6	3.3	0.6
Punjab	0.8	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.4	1.5	0.1	0.8	0.4	2.3	0.1	0.1	0.4
Rajasthan	0.2		0.3	0.1	0.2		0.2	0.1	0.8		0.5	0.1	2	0.3	0.6	0.1
Tamil Nadu	2.6	0.6	1.4	0.5	1.4	0.2	1	0.4	3.111.55	2.6	1.2	11.3	6.7	6.1	3.3	
Uttar Pradesh	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.2	1.2	1	0.8	2.2	0.9	1.3	0.5
West Bengal	1.4	0.4	1.8	0.4	0.8	0.3	1.2	0.4	2.7	1.3	2.1	0.6	1.5	1.7	4.1	0.7
India	0.9	0.3	1.2	0.4	0.6	0.1	0.9	0.3	1.9	1.1	1.6	0.5	4.3	2	2.7	1.1

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1993-94.

However, as soon as we move on to the current weekly and current daily, particular the latter which capture the underemployment of the worker, the unemployment rate turn out to be much higher for SC compared to other workers. At all India level in 1977-78, 1983-84 and 1993-94 the unemployment rates based on daily status for SC male workers are 6.73 per cent, 7.16 per cent and 4.30 respectively, significantly higher than 3.90 per cent, 4.03 per cent and 2.70 for male worker belonging to other households. A similar disparities prevailed for female worker too. The unemployment rate for SC females on daily status basis are 1.90 in 1977-87, 2.16 per cent in 1983, and 2.00 1993-94 which are higher than the 0.97 per cent, 0.91 and 1.10 per cent respectively for other females. The pattern is fairly uniform across the states, as nearly 15 out of 17 states showed higher unemployment rate for SC male and female worker under current daily status. (Table 5(e)).

Table 5 (e): Disparity Index: Unemployment Rate 1993-94 (Rural)

States	Usual Principal		Usual Principal Including Subsidiary		Current Weekly Status		Current Daily Status	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Andhra Pradesh	-0.37	0.48	-0.40	0.00	0.28	0.36	0.14	0.28
Assam	-0.01	-0.24	0.05	-0.21	0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.07
Bihar	-0.30	-	-0.30	-	-0.08	0.30	-0.54	0.44
Gujrat	0.48	-0.74	0.33	0.30	0.35	0.00	0.43	0.28
Haryana	-0.85	0.22	-0.65	-	0.04	-0.22	0.27	0.78
Himachal Pradesh	-0.16	-	-0.18	-	-0.30	-	0.03	-
J & K	0.07	-0.48	0.24	-0.30	0.08	-0.48	0.15	-0.48
Karnataka	0.00	-0.30	-0.18	-	0.23	0.24	0.24	0.36
Kerala	-0.25	-0.07	-0.35	-0.09	-0.14	-0.16	0.12	0.16
Madhya Pradesh	-0.10	0.30	-0.22	0.00	0.04	0.20	0.18	0.27
Maharashtra	-0.05	0.00	0.00	-	0.18	0.30	0.10	0.25
Orissa	0.00	-0.60	0.00	-0.48	0.20	0.45	0.23	0.43
Punjab	0.20	-0.60	0.00	-0.60	0.27	-0.60	1.37	-0.60
Rajasthan	-0.18	-	0.00	-	0.20	-	0.53	0.48
Tami Nadu	0.27	0.08	0.15	-0.30	0.08	0.11	0.28	0.32
Uttar Pradesh	-0.24	0.00	-0.22	0.00	0.08	0.18	0.23	0.26
West Bengal	-0.11	0.00	-0.18	-0.13	0.11	0.34	-0.44	0.39
India	-0.13	-0.13	-0.18	-0.48	0.08	0.34	0.21	0.26

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1993-94.

This discussion indicate that there is much less disparity in the employment or unemployment rate of schedule caste households and non-SC household based on the usual status, infact the employment rate for the SC household tend to be on marginally on higher side for some states . But opposite is the case for the employment/unemployment rate based on the current weekly and currently daily status, particularly the latter. What do these results signify? The higher employment or low unemployment of the SC as compared with the non SC households based on usual status is partly due to the way the concept of employment based on the usual status is defined under the NSS conceptual framework. The NSS treats a worker to be employed if he/she is usually engaged in gainful economic activities for more that half of the days in a year irrespective of intensity in term of duration of time .In the case of current daily statuses the time disposition of the worker is taken in to account. In other word daily status concept measure the employment time of the employed worker on weekly and daily basis and capture the full/or underemployment of the worker. Since the schedule caste person lack access to the land or capital the only alternative for them is to take any type of wage employment, full or part time and keep engaged in some kind of income earning activities through out the year to acquire at least minimum income and as a result the employment rate based on the usual status would be on the higher side. But it is not necessary that when they are engaged (or appeared to be engaged) in some kind of work through out the year, that they are fully employed for larger days of the year. They may be working for tesser numbers of hours in a week or days in a week. They may be infact

Table 5 (f): Unemployment Rate – Usual Status (Rural)

State	1977-78		1983				1987-88			
	P.S		P.S.		PS & SS		P.S.		PS & SS	
	S.C	Other	S.C	Other	S.C.	Other	S.C.	Other	S.C	Other
Andhra Pradesh	1.32	1.60	0.84	1.07	0.30	0.77	1.50	1.60	0.40	1.00
Assam	0.44	1.11	1.71	1.68	6.85	1.25	1.80	-2.50	1.00	1.80
Bihar	0.87	1.16	0.74	1.62	0.39	0.93	0.50	1.60	0.30	0.90
Gujarat	0.22	0.71	1.12	0.65	0.95	0.39	1.10	1.40	0.90	0.60
Haryana	1.86	2.23	1.70	2.22	1.92	1.90	2.10	3.50	1.30	2.00
Himachal Pradesh	0.91	1.28	0.96	1.51	0.70	0.92	2.10	2.40	0.90	0.70
Jammu and Kashmir	1.04	0.96	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.39	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.20
Karnataka	0.76	0.96	0.84	0.71	0.63	0.56	1.00	1.00	0.90	0.90
Kerala	10.88	7.38	5.25	6.16	2.54	4.43	6.70	6.70	5.60	5.10
Madhya Pradesh	0.11	0.24	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.22	0.60	0.60	0.30	0.40
Maharashtra	0.89	0.94	0.71	0.92	0.59	0.68	1.30	1.20	1.00	0.60
Orissa	0.98	1.84	1.14	1.54	1.08	1.26	2.30	2.50	1.60	1.60
Punjab	0.96	1.24	1.77	2.16	2.24	1.46	1.70	1.50	1.00	1.10
Rajasthan	0.32	0.52	0.51	0.54	0.44	0.37	0.30	1.60	0.90	1.20
Tamil Nadu	1.36	2.14	1.93	2.41	1.21	1.76	2.60	2.30	1.50	1.70
Uttar Pradesh	0.82	1.02	0.80	0.77	0.43	0.46	0.60	0.90	0.50	0.60
West Bengal	1.91	2.37	1.93	2.89	1.16	1.77	1.10	1.90	0.60	1.20

Source: Employment Survey 1977-98, 1983, 1987-88, NSSO New Delhi.

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1977-78, 1983-84, 1987-88.

Notes: P,S = Principle and Subsidiary Status; S.C. = Schedule Caste

Others = Non-S.C, S.T, PS= Principal Status. PS & SS= Principal and Subsidiary Status.

Table 5 (g): Unemployment Rate : Rural

State	Current Weekly (Rural Male)				Current Daily (Rural Male)				Current Weekly (Rural Female)				Current Daily (Rural Female)			
	1977-78		1983		1977-78		1983		1977-78		1983		1977-78		1983	
	S.C.	Other	S.C	Other	S.C.	Other	S.C	Other	S.C.	Other	S.C	Other	S.C	Other	S.C	Other
AP	3.94	2.65	3.03	2.34	7.98	5.20	7.48	4.65	5.94	3.30	4.27	1.51	10.00	4.79	8.54	3.12
Assam	0.49	1.09	1.25	1.55	0.49	1.10	2.39	2.08	0.10	0.07	0.31	0.45	0.11	0.08	0.40	0.61
Bihar	3.16	2.36	3.06	1.80	7.14	4.01	7.54	3.51	2.23	0.48	2.85	0.58	4.15	0.92	4.93	1.22
Gujrat	1.44	1.35	1.50	0.63	6.47	2.78	5.56	2.55	1.13	0.30	1.67	0.19	3.05	0.90	2.92	0.71
Haryana	3.92	2.17	3.98	2.40	7.21	2.91	5.76	2.97	0.37	0.24	0.00	0.17	0.82	0.24	0.65	0.28
HP	0.99	1.10	1.21	1.27	1.35	1.62	1.36	1.36	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.39	0.14	0.05	0.00	0.39
J&k	0.94	2.70	1.17	4.75	1.53	4.01	1.78	5.61	0.00	0.30	0.14	0.15	0.00	0.31	0.14	0.16
Karnataka	2.44	1.76	2.15	1.31	8.76	4.97	7.56	3.45	3.15	1.38	1.08	1.06	7.33	3.09	4.57	2.26
Kerala	9.87	6.53	9.02	7.29	20.89	12.50	19.80	12.9	6.77	3.20	7.55	3.86	14.38	5.36	11.99	5.40
M.P	1.35	0.89	1.26	0.68	2.59	1.26	2.28	1.06	1.46	0.62	0.83	0.31	2.56	0.90	1.48	0.50
Maha- rashtra	2.77	1.69	3.20	1.71	6.03	3.16	6.44	3.29	2.67	1.47	2.24	0.83	6.30	3.02	4.33	2.22
Orissa	2.75	2.41	3.11	2.27	5.79	4.10	6.51	4.41	1.72	0.73	1.59	1.01	2.89	1.09	3.40	1.57
Punjab	2.40	1.26	3.81	1.95	5.98	1.90	8.14	2.87	0.23	0.19	0.97	0.49	0.39	0.25	1.26	0.53
Rajasthan	2.48	1.30	2.06	1.54	4.00	1.66	3.41	1.91	1.53	0.39	0.67	0.31	2.10	0.47	1.57	0.41
T. N.	5.36	3.60	3.26	4.95	15.87	8.00	17.29	9.76	3.64	1.69	5.77	2.71	0.37	4.68	13.40	5.74
UP	2.05	1.29	2.13	0.69	3.95	1.85	3.87	1.64	0.66	0.10	0.76	0.12	1.45	0.19	1.13	0.19
W. B.	2.84	2.67	3.89	3.69	6.78	4.99	9.67	7.89	0.25	0.31	2.37	0.96	1.11	0.60	3.87	1.37
All India	2.93	2.15	3.22	2.15	6.73	5.96	7.16	4.03	1.90	0.97	2.16	0.91	4.09	0.50	4.23	1.72

Source: National Sample Survey, CSO, 1977-78, 1983-84; Employment Survey 1977-98, 1983, NSSO New Delhi.

working for less hours in day and hence, remain underemployed. Infact it is the employment based on daily status which capture the under-employment of the worker. The low employment or higher unemployment rate of scheduled caste worker based on current weekly status and current daily status particularly the latter compared with the non SC worker indicate that they suffered from higher degree of under-employment on the weekly and daily basis. This obviously has implication for income and poverty of the SC persons. Higher unemployment on daily basis among the Schedule caste would create less wage income for them. Whether higher unemployment among the Schedule caste is due to discrimination in hiring or due to other factors is an issue which need examination.

After having analyzed the disparities in employment between the SC and non- SC, we now examine the differences in wage rate during 1974-75 and 1993-94 .The RLI is the only source on daily wage rate for the Schedule caste wage labour. Even the RLI does not generate data on the wage rate for non SC/ST group. Therefore we can only compare the daily wage earning of the SC wage labour with the over all average, that is all India, or state average. Since the over all wage rate also include the wage earning of the SC labour, the differences between the their wage rate and overall wage rate if any will not come quite clearly. In the absence of the separate data on the wage rate of the SC and non SC/ST labour we only compare the wage earning of the SC wage labour with the overall wage rate. [See Table 6(a) and 6(b)].

Table 6(a): All India--Wage Rate of Rural Labour in Agriculture (Current Price)-1993-94

Year		(in Rs)					
		Men		Women		Children	
		Ag	No-Ag	Ag	No-Ag	Ag	No-Ag
1974-75	All	11.26	14.21	7.56	10.33	7.12	7.93
	SCs	11.38	13.53	8.83	11.21	6.98	8.18
1993-94	All	21.52	32.48	15.33	17.45	12.32	15.13
	SCs	21.79	30.62	15.74	18.09	13.20	17.48

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report on Wage Earning, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

In 1993-94 at all India level the real wage rate of SC male and female in agriculture is fairly close to national average and with the exception of Assam, and Gujarat, Kerala (where wage rate of SC's labour are lower than national average) in rest of the states the deviations from all India average are small. However in these three states the wage rate received by the SC wage labours are lower than the national average by substantial margin. In the case of (rural) non-agriculture wage rates however the difference are quite clear. In 1993-94 the wage rate received by Scheduled Caste male labour are lower than the national average. As against the national average of Rs. 33, the daily wage rate received by the Scheduled Caste labour is Rs. 30. In nine states, out of 17 states wage rate received by Scheduled Castes male labour are also lower than the national average. These include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, J & K, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh Thus, in 1993-94, agriculture wage received by Scheduled Caste wage labour did not differ much from the national average for male and female labour. In the case of non-agricultural sector, however, the wage rates received by Scheduled Caste are lower than the national average at India level and in more than half states. Whether the lower wage rate for the SC wage labour in rural non-farm activities is due to wage discrimination or due to differences in productivity is another issue which need examination.

Table 6 (b): Wage Rate of Rural Labour in Agriculture (Current Price)-1993-94 (in Rs)

States	Agriculture				Non-Agriculture			
	1974 -75		1993 -94		1974 -75		1993 -94	
	All	SC	All	SC	All	SC	All	SC
Andhra Pradesh	7.85	7.38	19.12	18.30	9.62	8.85	25.22	22.87
Assam	14.15	13.63	26.19	23.71	12.82	12.00	34.53	30.92
Bihar	10.04	10.10	10.93	16.98	11.97	10.48	24.04	25.30
Gujarat	10.56	11.29	20.06	18.40	10.20	10.66	35.34	28.68
Haryana	18.70	19.21	30.56	30.21	19.44	17.23	41.05	40.38
Himachal Pradesh	19.47	18.82	30.95	31.21	18.43	17.70	36.52	36.55
J & K	20.13	71.35	35.40	35.55	19.28	18.38	34.11	31.01
Karnataka	9.25	9.60	19.20	19.58	12.75	12.71	28.47	30.45
Kerala	20.54	21.92	43.18	41.45	19.33	16.50	52.64	47.67
Madhya Pradesh	6.84	7.08	17.04	17.84	7.93	8.30	22.43	22.57
Maharashtra	8.45	7.99	19.56	19.66	11.84	8.93	33.31	34.61
Orissa	7.60	7.66	16.30	38.24	7.83	7.98	20.75	16.42
Punjab	24.83	24.95	41.98	42.55	23.70	22.43	43.18	40.78
Rajasthan	12.60	13.06	27.66	29.23	13.09	12.67	34.88	34.41
Tamil Nadu	9.70	9.47	25.11	24.63	11.68	10.60	30.71	28.45
Uttar Pradesh	11.14	10.76	21.59	20.07	13.70	13.01	30.26	28.14
West Bengal	11.45	11.78	24.20	23.08	15.95	15.75	29.97	29.11
India	11.26	11.38	21.52	21.74	14.21	13.53	32.48	30.62

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry, Report on Wage Earning, 1974-75, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla.

Magnitude of Poverty

Discussion in the preceding section indicate that due to historical restrictions on the ownership of capital assets a very large section of the schedule caste rural household (about sixty percent) depend on the wage employment for the earning. We have also observed that the under employment rate among the schedule caste worker is high but the daily wage earning tend to be on the lower side, particularly in rural non-farm sector. With high under-employment, and low wage rate, the Scheduled Castes wage labour are likely to suffer from low income and consumption and hence the high level of poverty. In this section therefore we capture the difference in the monthly per capita expenditures and in poverty of the rural labour household, separately for agricultural and non agricultural labour.

Table 7(a) and 7(b) present the Monthly Per capita Expenditure (MPE) total, food and non-food items for SC and non-SC/ST agricultural and non-agricultural labour households in 1993-94. Total MPE incurred by Scheduled Caste agricultural labourer household in 1993-94 is Rs. 139.52 which is low as compared to Rs. 150.14 for non SC/ST labour household. With the exception of gram the per-capita expenditures are also low on all items of food. Similar differences are visible between the SC and non-SC/ST labour household in the case of non-agriculture labour household. For instance, the MPE on the food items of non-SC/ST non-farm wage labour household is Rs. 157.91 which is higher as compared to the Rs. 128.82 for SC non-farm labour household engaged. The per capita expenditure incurred by Scheduled Caste non-farm labour households is low as compared with other labour labour on all the items. The gap is particularly wide in the case of expenditure on the meat, egg and fish and fruits.

Similar pattern of disparity emerged in the case of MPE on non-food items. The MPE of Scheduled Caste agricultural labour is Rs. 70.09 as compared to Rs. 77.50 for non SC/ST agricultural wage labour households. The differences are particularly large in the case of miscellaneous, goods, services and durable goods. In the case of items such as, *pan*, tobacco, intoxicants, fuel and light, clothing, and foot ware the differences are minimal.

Table 7 (a): Monthly Per-capita Consumption Expenditure on Food Items for Each Type (in Rs)-1993-94: All-India Rural

Social Group	Value of Consumption of Food Items (Rs)														
	Cereals	Gram	Cereals & Substitutes	pulses & Products	Milk & Milk Prods.	Edible Oil	Meat, Egg & Fish	Vegetables	Fruits (fresh)	Fruits (dry)	Sugar	Salt	Spices	Beverage Refreshments etc.	Food Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Agricultural labour															
SC	64.87	0.30	0.14	8.60	11.61	9.56	6.34	14.53	1.90	0.35	5.92	0.51	6.43	8.46	139.52
Others	66.18	0.26	0.32	8.95	13.19	10.55	8.27	15.42	2.95	0.59	6.42	0.50	6.74	9.80	150.14
All	65.41	0.27	0.22	8.77	11.82	10.16	7.50	15.07	2.35	0.47	6.11	0.51	6.46	9.03	144.17
Other labour															
SC	63.19	0.37	0.25	9.39	18.04	11.44	8.19	15.71	2.88	0.53	8.33	0.51	6.80	12.28	157.91
Others	66.13	0.39	0.68	9.71	19.29	12.96	12.18	17.00	5.24	0.84	8.11	0.51	7.65	18.12	178.82
All	65.10	0.41	0.48	9.44	18.04	12.13	10.54	16.34	4.11	0.69	7.90	0.51	7.22	15.37	168.29
All households															
SC	66.64	0.37	0.14	9.36	17.42	10.72	7.98	15.65	2.50	0.49	7.06	0.51	6.51	9.49	154.83
Others	68.55	0.63	0.33	11.41	31.86	13.25	9.62	17.62	4.81	1.02	9.43	0.51	7.20	12.77	189.01
All	68.13	0.54	0.28	10.72	26.72	12.43	9.37	17.01	4.04	0.85	8.57	0.52	6.91	11.69	177.78

Source: 5th Quinquennial Survey Consumer Expenditure Survey NSS Delhi 1993-94. Report No. 422.

Table 7 (b): Monthly Per-Capita Consumption Expenditure on Non-Food Items (in Rs)-1993-94: All - India Rural

Social Group	Pan, Tobacco and Intoxicants	Fuel and Light	Clothing	Footwear	Misc. Goods and Services	Durable Goods	Non-Food Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Agricultural labour							
SC	8.70	17.58	8.33	1.09	31.51	2.89	70.09
Others	8.03	18.25	10.66	1.10	35.23	4.23	77.50
All	8.53	18.07	9.63	1.07	32.43	3.51	73.24
Other labour							
SC	11.41	19.99	9.63	2.12	41.31	5.78	90.23
Others	10.55	20.14	13.59	1.99	49.60	10.74	106.62
All	11.06	19.94	12.13	2.00	45.16	8.17	98.44
All households							
SC	9.26	18.83	11.01	1.73	38.20	5.04	84.08
Others	8.49	21.49	17.04	2.84	54.21	9.00	113.07
All	8.97	20.69	15.13	2.48	48.71	7.67	103.65

Source: 5th Quinquennial Survey Consumer Expenditure Survey NSS Delhi 1993-94. Report No. 422.

In the case of non-farm SC wage labour the MPC on the non-food items is Rs. 90.23 which is lower than Rs.106.62 for non SC/ST non farm wage labour households. Like the agricultural labour, the differences are pronounced in the case of expenditure on clothing, miscellaneous, goods, services and durable goods.

Thus the MPE of the SC farm and non-farm wage labour household total and for the food and non-food items taken separately is lower than their counterparts from non SC/ST group by a significant margin. Since, the level of monthly per capita expenditure among the SC wage labour household itself is low, the proportion of those with minimum level of consumer expenditure or what is called poverty line is also low. Table 8(a) and Table 8(b) presents the poverty ratio for Scheduled Castes and others labour for 1987-88 and 1993-94 at the all-India level for agricultural and other labour. In 1993-94 about 48.00 of Scheduled Caste household are below the poverty line in rural area, as compared to 31.29 per cent for the general population. What is striking is the variation in poverty ratio across household types and high incidence of poverty among the wage labour belonging to schedule caste households. The incidence of poverty is about 60 per cent among agricultural labour households followed by 41.44 per cent among non-agricultural labour. The level of poverty is low among the labour engaged in rural non-farm activities. The level is relatively low for persons engaged in self-employed activities in agriculture (37.71 per cent) and in the non-agricultural sector (38.19 per cent). For each of these household types, however, the proportion of poor among the SC household is much higher compared to their counterparts among the non-SC/ST group. Thus the incidence of poverty is very high among wage labour households who constitute about 65 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste household in rural area.

Table 8 (a): Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Line by Household Type- Rural

Social Groups	Self Employed in Agriculture		Self Employment in non-agriculture		Agriculture Labour		Non-agriculture Labour		Others		All	
	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94
	SC	41.21	37.70	41.60	38.19	59.77	60.00	46.49	41.44	29.98	29.00	50.07
Others	25.57	25.57	31.42	29.49	53.30	52.34	34.45	35.59	19.26	20.19	34.37	31.29

Source: National Sample Survey, Consumption Expenditure.

Table 8 (b): Disparity Index: Rural Poverty

Social Groups	Self Employed in Agriculture		Self Employment in Non-Agriculture		Agriculture Labour		Non-Agriculture Labour		Others		All	
	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94	87-88	93-94
	SC	0.25	0.20	0.15	0.14	0.07	0.06	0.16	0.08	0.22	0.18	0.21

Source: Based on Table 9(a).

Others-Non-SC/ST.

Caste and Labour Market Discrimination – Empirical Evidence

This comparative account of the economic situation of Scheduled Caste and non- SC/ST wage labour households with respect to employment/unemployment, wage rates, consumption expenditure and poverty level do provide a convincing evidence on the continuing economic inequalities between Scheduled Caste labour and other wage labour households. With respect to each of these economic variables the scheduled caste labour

household are far behind their counterpart from non-SC/ST background. The Scheduled Caste household's access to agriculture land and capital is extremely low and as a result the level of manual wage labour among them is astonishingly high. High incidence of wage labour among the Scheduled Castes however, is not matched by favourable employment and wage earning. The unemployment rate among them is more than double but the daily wage earning generally tend to be low particularly in rural non-farm sector. With high level of unemployment and lower daily wage earning the annual wage income is low as a result the consumption expenditure is low and the poverty level is high.

To what extent the high incidence of wage labour among the SC household is historical and to what extent it is due to continuing discrimination in land and capital market is a question which need further inquiry. Similarly to what extent low employment and wage rate among the Scheduled Caste are due to discrimination in labour market and to what extent due to other factors is also an issue which require further study? Nevertheless high incidence of wage labour (with no land or small land) as compared with the non-SC/ST household indicate the continuing historical impact of caste based restriction on the ownership of capital assets like land. This high incidence may also be associated with continuing discrimination of the schedule caste in land and the capital market even today. But to draw such a conclusion we do require proper empirical evidence.

Only a limited number of studies have examined the phenomenon of caste based market discrimination. But these studies do point towards the existence of caste based market discrimination. For instance, Banerjee and Knight (1991), Deshi and Singh (1995) have brought out the significant presence of caste based economic discrimination in the job market. Banerjee and Knight in their study observed that "use of the standard methodology showed that there is indeed discrimination by caste", particularly job discrimination. They further observed that "Discrimination appears to operate at least in part through traditional mechanism, with untouchables disproportionately represented in poorly-paid" dead-end jobs. The discriminators are likely to be other workers and employers. Even if discrimination is no longer practised, the effects of past discrimination could carry over to the present, for instance in the choice of occupation. The economic function, which the system performs for favoured caste suggests "taste for discrimination is based, consciously, or unconsciously on economic interest, so making prejudice more difficult to eradicate". The study by Dhesi and Singh (1989) also observed, "labour market distortion arising out of caste and religious background of persons".

The studies carried out by the sociologists on Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Orissa also provided micro-level evidence on economic discrimination in occupation, employment, wages and credit market (Thorat, 2002). The study on Andhra Pradesh observed the social restrictions being faced by the untouchables when ever they tried to switch over from their traditional occupation to some other occupation in rural area (Nanchariah, 1988; Venkateswarlu, 1990). The Karnataka study revealed that nearly 85 per cent of the respondents continued with their traditional occupation and only 15 per cent could make a switch (Khan Mumtaz, 1995). The Orissa study observed discrimination in few economic spheres (Tripathy, 1994). Nearly 96 per cent of untouchables respondents in one village and all untouchable respondents in the second village were discriminated against in wage payment and 28 per cent in one village and 20 per cent in another faced discrimination in the share of rent. Discrimination in interest rate changed by the moneylender was found in both villages. Thus these studies from three different parts of the country bring some evidence of market discrimination against untouchables.

Caste Discrimination in Labour Market and Economic Theory

If the empirical studies on labour market caste discrimination are scanty, those on the side of theory are not too many either. There are only a few theoretical attempts which have tried to understand the economic principles underlying the caste system and their implications for growth and income distribution. Few economists have attempted a theoretical construct of the caste system in neo-classical mode. Akrolof's formal model (Akrolof, 1976) of caste equilibrium was the first among the few attempts to apply the neo-classical economic theory to the institution of caste system. The latter writers (Scoville James, 1991 and 1996; David Romar, 1984 and Deepak Lal, 1989) made some improvement in the Akrolof's theoretical formulations. In all these model the labour market figured quite prominently.

In the caste economy conceived by Akerlof, the occupations are treated as hereditary, compulsory and endogenous. These unique economic features of the caste system brings immobility of labour across the (caste) occupations and thus segmentation in labour market around the caste occupation. The immobility of labour result in to the lack of competition in the labour market. The model also yields discriminatory outcomes. In Akrolof's view the caste system imposed penalties for workers, employers, and customers for violating caste employment rules and results in workers being segregated into their caste specific occupation or job. In equilibrium no employer has an incentive to hire outside caste worker.

Scoville (1991) extended the Akrolof model, particularly with respect to the underling economic reasons for the maintenance and survival of the caste system. Scoville try to locate the economic factors which creates effective labour market barrier for mobility and hence lack of competition. Drawing from the theoretical works of Coase/North, Scoville argued that caste system (through the mechanism of penalties) creates enormous, virtually insurmountable transition costs to break the restrictions on labour or occupational mobility. The major difference between Akrolof and Scoville thus, is that, while the former argued that caste based labour segmentation is maintained through the system of penalties, while the latter goes behind the penalties and locate the reasons into enormous insurmountable transaction and enforcement cost to break the caste based occupation or employment rules.

With in the Akrolof's framework (1976 and 1980) Deepak Lal developed an economic model of the caste system. According to him "the caste system has been both unique and one of the most enduring...its direct effect is on the labour in terms of segmentation by occupationally segregated and imperfectly (though not completely) immobile endogenous groups". The division of labour by caste and its enforcement by local ostracism were central to the scheme" (Deepak Lal, 1988). The social ostracism involved in breaking the caste code, either as consumer or producers (at each level of caste hierarchy) would entail higher cost than any gains from performing any profitable arbitrage in the labour market that the castes-segmentation of labour might entail."

In India not many have applied their mind to this question. Ambedkar seems to be the only attempt in that direction. Beside analyzing the economic base of the caste system he also tried to highlight the role of social and religious ideology in the origin, perpetuation and sustenance of the caste system and capture the nature of interaction between economic structure involved in the caste system and the role of Hindu social/ religious philosophy in mutually enforcing each other. Ambedkar also indicated the economic consequence of the caste system on economic efficiency, development and income distribution (or equity). In Ambedkar's view the caste system in economic term is a type of producer's organization and scheme of distribution (Ambedkar, 1936 and 1987, first published). The relevant economic attributes of the caste system which makes it's a peculiar system of producer's organization

and a scheme of distribution are: (a) allocation of economic rights, particularly the property rights for each caste by birth and continuance thereof by heredity, (b) unequal distribution of economic and property rights among the caste groups, (c) the economic and property rights beside being pre-determined and unequal, each of these occupation or economic activity is treated hierarch ally in terms of status and dignity, some are treated superior and the others as inferior, and also carry the stigma of high and low, (d) provide for a comprehensive system of social and economic ostracism and penalties to enforce the caste based economic order and finally (e) I receive a support and justification from the Hindu religious philosophy. Let us elaborate each of these features more closely.

The first foremost principle of caste-based fixation of occupation and continuance thereof by heredity and birth implied that every member must follow the occupation assigned to the caste to which he belonged. It left no scope for change, individual choice and inclination. The second principal on which the caste system is based is that occupations and economic rights are not only pre-determined by birth but their division (across the castes) is highly unequal. In fact inequality in distribution of sources of income is the core of the caste system. The burden of this, however, loaded too heavily on low caste untouchable. The way economic rights are arranged leaves no scope for the low caste for economic improvement as they are deprived of rights to occupation, property and education. Their only occupation is to serve the higher castes as labour. The last but equality important feature of the Hindu social order is the mechanism of social and economic partialities developed to sustain and maintain the system. Among other the instrument of social and economic boycott is the main forms of penalties which are laid down in the social code book of Hindus against the violation of the system. To put in brief, Ambedkar's economic characterization of caste system is based on three interrelated elements, namely fixed and hereditary occupation and economic rights by birth, unequal and hierarchical (or graded) division of these economic/property rights across castes groups and provision of strong instrument of social and economic ostracism to sustain the rigid system with a ideological support from the religion.

Implications for Labour Efficiency and Income Distribution

The standard neo-classical model (on which the Akrolof – Scaville – Lal models are developed) brings out fairly clearly the implications of labour market segregation and discrimination involve in the caste system for profits, wages and efficiency in the allocation of labour. The neo-classical model implies that the economic discrimination will slow down the growth by reducing efficiency due to less than optimal allocation of labour among firms and economy, (employing fewer than optimal number of labour who are discriminated as they received lower wage than their marginal product), by reducing job commitment and efforts of workers who perceive themselves to be victims of discrimination and restrictions and by reducing the investment in human capital by discriminated group. At the macro level the caste based segmented nature of labour market would lead to the situation which will be less than optimal. These formulations also imply that since the system involve discrimination these groups suffer from income loss and economic backwardness.

Ambedkar's analysis of caste system, however, takes us beyond the labour market as he analyses the impact of other factors markets as well, such as land, capital, product etc. and argued that the manner in which the customary rules regarding the occupation, property rights, employment, wages, education dignity of labor are devised under the caste system it could not but produce vast economic inefficiency. The caste system as a production organization has produced gross economic inefficiency, economic stagnation and backwardness. Ambedkar indicated the economic consequences of factors immobility, of

restriction on individual choice and initiative, social status of occupation, and the dignity of labour involved under caste system.

Ambedkar argued that in dynamic industrial set up the restrictions on the mobility of factors of productions such as human labour, land, capital and entrepreneurship brings imperfection in each of these market. Thus, far from promoting competition, it creates monopolistic market situation in factor markets. Labour and capital fails to flow from one occupation to another even if the wage rate and rate of return (on investment) are higher in the alternative occupations. From the neo-classical's perspective this brings a high level of inefficiency in resource allocation in the economy.

The economic efficiency of labour suffers severely in another manner also. In so far as the division of occupations is not based on individual choice, the individual sentiment, preference and the natural aptitudes has no place in it. The social and individual efficiency require us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and make once own carrier. The principle of individual choice is violated in the caste system in so far as it involves an attempt to appoint a task to an individual in advance, selected not on the basis of training or capacities but on that of social status of parents. Further some of these occupations are considered socially degrading which reduce the social status of persons engaged in them. Forced into these occupations on account of their caste origin, people do not derive job satisfaction. In fact such occupations constantly provoke them to aversion, ill will and desire to evade. The caste system also disassociates intelligence from work and creates contempt for physical labour. The dignity of physical labour is nearly absent in the work ethic of caste system. The lack of dignity of labour thus affect the incentive to work adversely. Thus, Ambedkar's economic analysis of caste system clearly implies that the caste system (as an economic organisation) lacks all those elements which are required to satisfy the conditions for optimum economic outcome in the economy. By implication it also means that to begin with the economic organisation of the caste system was not devised to achieve economic efficiency of any sort but on the other hand the very purpose was rather different.

One of the negative impact of immobility and social status and stigma associated with occupation is on unemployment each which has been emphasized both by Akrolof (1976) and Ambedkar (1936). By putting restriction on mobility of labour from one occupation to other occupation and thereby not permitting readjustment of employment, caste becomes a direct cause of much of voluntary unemployment for higher caste and involuntary unemployment for low caste persons. The high caste Hindu would generally prefer to be voluntarily unemployed for some time than to take up an occupation not assigned to his caste and which is considered as inferior occupation. On the other hand for the low caste untouchables the restrictions to take other caste's occupation compel them to remain involuntarily unemployed.

This brings us to the income distribution or equity implications of the caste system. The consequences of the caste system in term of equity are more serious than for economic efficiency and growth. Akrolof – Scaville – Deepak Lal models generally implies that since the economic reward under the caste system are determined by job assignment, the result will be an income distribution generally skewed along caste line, and will not be Pareto Optimal, since in a Pareto Optimal, in equilibrium all workers would be employed on higher wage occupations or jobs and receive the same wage (Montgomery, 1995). Beyond this, recognition however, Akrolof-Scaville-Lal formulations failed to take serious note of the income distribution aspects. Deepak Lal, in fact in an apologetic tone provide reason for ignoring analysis of the caste system in term of equity. Lal writes "much of modern

abhorrence of the caste system is due to the legitimate dislike in my view of the system of economic inequality it perpetuates. The argument...might be construed as an apologetic for these inequalities...but as Dumont has stressed, this is to judge this system by an ethic, which is completely alien to its spirits". (Deepak Lal, 1989). Thus, Deepak Lal avoid the analysis of the sources and nature of economic inequalities associated with the caste system.

Ambedkar's on the other hand argued that what every may have been the original purpose behind the origin of the caste system but latter as it evolved in its classical form it certainly involved an economic motive. The manner in which the customary rules and norms regarding right to property, occupation, employment, wages, education, dignity of labour, rules governing slavery and other economic relations are framed and defined they involved immense exploitation of the low caste untouchables. In fact the caste system as an economic organization is based on the principle of hierarchy of economic rights and hence economic inequality. Economic inequality (as much as the social-cultural inequality) under the caste system has not emerged as matter of historical (or indirect) consequence but was a direct outcome of its governing principles, the core and centre being the doctoring of economic inequality and exploitation. What is important is that the religious, social, and philosophical elements of Hinduism all along lend justification in support of the caste system. Deepak Lal recognized the role of Hindu religion, he observed "obviously the religious, philosophical and ritual elements in Hinduism are equally (if not more) important in perpetuating the system, and added that "the relative privacy of one or other factor in originating or perpetuating the system is not of importance for my purpose. What is important is that the economic and non-economic aspects of the system mutually reinforced each other". (Deepak Lal, 1989).

Concluding Observations

In this paper we tried to understand the situation of the wage labour belonging to the schedule caste household with respect to their magnitude, employment, wage earning, consumption expenditure and poverty and compared with the non SC/ST group. We observed that the magnitude of the wage labour among the schedule caste is almost two time higher than the non scheduled group. The employment rate and the wage rate for them is also low. The low employment coupled with low wage rate lead to less income and consumption expenditure and ultimately in high poverty as compared with other groups. This raised few important questions, "Why is the magnitude of wage labour significantly high among the Scheduled Caste as compared with other castes?" Why is the employment and wage rate of Scheduled Caste labour tent to be low as compared to the wage labour from high caste? Why a relatively high proportions of Scheduled Caste wage labour are poor? As mentioned earlier these questions indeed required empirical analysis. With the help of the theoretical literature we mentioned that economic relations involved in the caste system implied labour discrimination in hiring and wage earning and also other factor markets and exclude them from acquiring the capital assets. This caused income loss and high poverty among the schedule caste in a much higher magnitude. We provided some evidence to show that schedule caste indeed suffered from discrimination in the labour markets as well as in the other factor markets. We therefore argued that there is necessity to undertake studies on the nature and forms of discrimination suffered by the scheduled caste in the various markets, namely, labour, land, capital, product and consumer in order to suggest appropriate policy to improve the access of the schedule caste to the source of income by overcoming the market discrimination.

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Social Stratification and the Agricultural Labourers: Evidence from Village Labour Market in Maharashtra

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Agricultural sector in India, after the phase of Green Revolution, is again witnessing major policy changes under the environment of liberalisation and globalisation. In the wake of arguments for and against these measures, it can not be denied that favourable benefits of the policy measures are likely to benefit primarily and initially (at least in the short run) the prime segments of the sectors/markets/the economy in general. In this case, attention needs to be focused on the large population of agricultural labourers and their current socio-economic status. This segment becomes extremely vulnerable to these adverse effects, if any, of the new policies, and affect their real economic status due to their peculiar characteristics. An important additional factor that is likely to affect the market access, remuneration paid and other terms of contract for the agricultural labourers is their social status. In a traditional, closed village economy, the working of deep-rooted traditional institution of caste can get affected due to the modern forces of growth, various developmental activities and policy changes. The present paper looks into the village level agricultural labour market after the change has taken place and relate it to the economic status of various category(caste) household at the micro level. It is observed that there is no discrimination based on caste in the sense of separate markets for various category(caste) casual labourers. However, decay of traditional occupations along with historically determined poor resource (capital and human) base, difficulties in occupational mobility, lower bargaining strength make it difficult for the Scheduled Caste (SC) agricultural labourers to respond to any new developmental change. The exercise carried out hints at limited participation of the community of SC agricultural labourers in the process of change and shows systematic variations and a hierarchy in the economic status of the labourers based on their caste.

Introduction

Agricultural sector in India, after the phase of Green Revolution, is again witnessing major policy changes under the environment of liberalisation and globalisation. Though the implications of these policy measures and their impact on various sections of the society has remained a debatable issue, it can not be denied that the favourable benefits of the policy measures are likely to benefit primarily and initially (at least in the short run) the prime segments of the sectors/markets/the economy in general due to the typical problems of existence of supply bottlenecks, imperfections in markets, rural traditional institutions etc. This follows that for an underdeveloped country like India, with dualism as the integral part of its economic structure, transformation of the traditional agricultural sector trapped at the output growth rate of 3 per cent p.a. and more than half the population still depending on it, is a long drawn process.

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In this case, attention needs to be focused on the large population of agricultural labourers and their current socio-economic status. It has been accepted widely that agricultural labourers constitute the lowest strata of the economy and that the incidence of poverty is higher among the agricultural labour households. At all India level, 49 per cent of the agricultural labourers had monthly per capita expenditure of less than Rs.190, which is roughly the level below which 30 percent of the rural population were found to be falling (Sarvekshana, 1998, p.17). The wage rates of agricultural labourers remained stagnant for a long period of time – nearly till mid-1970s. There are studies to indicate that the wage rates have failed to keep pace with the labour productivity (Nayyar, 1977; Bhalla, 1993). The results from the literature studying the trickle down effect of Green Revolution are rather mixed. It was pointed out that there were several mechanisms at work that counteracted the income generating forces for the labourers during that period, such as stagnancy in the wages due to the influx of labourers in the second phase of Green Revolution and increased bargaining power of the rich farmers leading to higher administered prices of food grains (adversely affecting real wages) (Bardhan, 1984). The evidence of the former phenomenon can be sighted in Punjab, wherein the percentage of agricultural labour households, as well as, incidence of poverty among them increased during the period of 1983 to 1987-88 (Kumar, 1994). The discussion of the determinants of poverty have gained new dimensions after 1990 on the background of the New Economic Policy, the structural adjustment programme and the move towards liberalisation of the economy and their likely effect on employment situation in the labour market. These include crowding of the labour market due to the decay of traditional village industries and contracting job opportunities in the capital-intensive industries. The recent literature points at halting pace of intersector (i.e., primary to secondary / tertiary sectors) shifts in the post reform period for male and female workers and rising proportion of the agricultural labourers (Chadha, 2001). This segment becomes extremely vulnerable to these adverse effects, of the new policies, and affect their real economic status due to their peculiar characteristics - firstly, labourers who are categorised as 'unskilled' face difficulties in mobility towards better employment opportunities. Secondly, labourers are a heterogeneous class of workers with differing asset position, socio-economic status. The labour market is fragmented, their bargaining power is weak and hence, organisation becomes difficult. Thirdly, the absence of comprehensive safety nets and imperfections in credit markets increase the risks faced by them.

Economic Implications of Social Stratification

An important additional factor that is likely to affect the market access, remuneration paid and other terms of contract for the agricultural labourers is their social status. Nearly 35 per cent of the labourers belong to the category of the 'Scheduled Castes' (SC) at all India level. It was reported that barring a few states, the monthly per capita expenditure position of the SC population in almost all the states was consistently poor than that of the general population in 1993-94 (Sarvekshana, 1998) and that the poverty estimates were uniformly higher for the them than the general population across the states (Meenakshi, J.V. *et al*, 2000). Among the various institutional factors, traditional institution of caste has stratified and segmented the Indian rural labour market. Though the institution is traditionally justified on the ground of occupational diversification, this leads to societal discrimination between SC and non-SC population of same economic class. This traditional labour institution and its attendant features of discrimination and stratification can be incompatible with the objectives of growth and distribution (Kannan, 1993). From the economic point of view, the discrimination against the scheduled caste population in terms of lower

wages, longer work hours, denied access to various opportunities etc. can have adverse impact on labour market in terms of productivity and development of demand side of output markets in the process of economic growth ultimately leading to widening economic inequality. This plays a major role in obstructing the market access, mobility and human/capital resource development of the SC population. A few things can be noted in this regard. It is generally observed that in the casual agricultural labour market, the labour belonging to any caste can participate and employers are willing to hire any able bodied person irrespective of his caste. Since daily rated market is mostly composed of scheduled caste labourers and since the casual workers are generally not entitled to loan or even advances in some cases, the access to credit is restricted / denied. Caste might play an important role sometimes in determining market access or entry to contracts. For example, in rural areas, in many places the SC labourers are found not to be participating in the market for attached labourers who are often engaged in domestic duties of the employers (Binswanger, *et. al.*,1984; Bardhan, 1984). Assuming that the SC labourers are resource (human and capital) poor (due to the historical reasons) and their mobility across occupations is limited, the elasticity of their supply with respect to the money wage and the bargaining power might be very low. This elasticity might determine the extent to which the employer might be able to exert monopsonistic power over the labourers and employ labour at a lower wage. The study by Bardhan finds negative relationship between lower caste of the labourers and the wage rate paid to them in casual labour market (Bardhan, 1984).

A traditional, closed village economy experiences change due to the modern forces of growth, various developmental activities and policy changes. However, the SC agricultural labourers may not be able to take advantage of these and break away from the caste based occupational structure due to their historically given inability to participate in the market processes. They might find it difficult to participate in and benefit from any process of change and development at macro and micro level. This might further affect / perpetuate the existing socio-economic status.

The Focus

The focus of the paper here is to analyse the implications of economic development for the scheduled caste agricultural labourers at the micro level. Here, the underlying implication of change is in a developmental perspective, affecting pricing and allocation of factors of production and leading to a change in the level of incomes of the participating agents. Development of the agricultural sector is expected to lead to expansion of markets for agricultural commodities, increasing level of commercialisation and monetisation, particularly in case of commercial crops. Such a change in the performance of the sector is expected to have impact on factor prices due to increasing demand, on employment generation depending on the type of technology used, on migration and on the labour contracts in operation and raise incomes of a section(s) of the society comprising of landowners and labourers. The extent to which the change would alter the real economic status of the labourers would depend upon the nature of the change, natural and structural factors such the land ownership pattern, techniques of production etc. We note here the nature of changes that the village has experienced due to the development of the agricultural sector after the availability of water. In the light of these changes, we observe the economic status of SC agricultural labourers in the village

selected and whether the development of agricultural has improved their socio- economic status vis-a-vis other labourers.

The village selected for the purpose the study belongs to agriculturally, as well as, industrially well developed district of Kolhapur in Maharashtra. The taluk and the village selected represent the characteristics of the district chosen. The selected taluk Shirol and village Nimshirgaon are the better off regions in terms of development and commercialisation of the agricultural sector. The village with a population of 3953 and 869 households (1991 census) is spread over 1064 ha and the area under cultivation is 801 ha. The major crop of the village is sugarcane. It is situated near the district place and the industrial centres of Kolhapur – Sangli – Miraj and is well connected with the outside world. The village has the basic socio- economic infrastructure such as school, health centre transport, electricity etc. The survey was conducted in the year 1996. Forty agricultural labour households in the village were selected randomly¹. Out of these, two (five per cent) were attached labour households (AL). Among the remaining (casual) labour households, 18 and 20 households were SC and other non-SC households (OT) respectively. Twelve SC households and 13 OT households were found to be landless (SCLL and OTLL respectively). Among the total 13 landed households, six were SC (SCLD) and seven were non-SC households (OTLD). The caste wise break-up of the casual labour households is given below in Table1.

Table 1: Caste Composition of the Sample Households in the Village

Caste	Schedule Caste		Dhangar	Muslims	Maratha	OBCs	Lingayat	Total
	Mahar	Mang						
% of	27.5	17.5	22.5	12.5	7.5	7.5	5	100
House- holds	(11)	(7)	(9)	(5)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(40)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis are the actual numbers.

The Change and the Nature of Village Labour Market

A change in the village can be traced back to starting of the lift irrigation scheme in 1980s, which led to increase in the area under irrigation (Table 2), a change in the cropping pattern towards more commercial, high value crops, set in motion nearly stagnant wages of agricultural labourers.

Table 2: Changes in the Area Irrigated in Village Nimshirgaon

Area		1971	1981	1991
Irrigated area (ha)	well	87	91(4.6%)	101 (235%)
	other*	-	-	204
Unirrigated area (ha)		614	605	367

Source: Census of India, GOM, various years.

Note: 1. * Includes irrigation from lift irrigation schemes; 2. Figures in the bracket are percentage change in the irrigated area. Area over the earlier decade.

Informal meetings with the village people revealed that there are only three to four landowners possessing nearly 50 per cent of the total land. It was revealed that the

¹ The paper was specifically prepared for the conference. However, as it is based on the past survey, the size of the sample remains a major limitation.

incidence of absolute landlessness is less in the village and majority of households possess land. The land ownership pattern in the village is dominated by a handful of landowners belonging to the upper caste (Jain community) owning large tracts of land, followed by a few middle landowners and a large number of marginal farmers with lower fertility of land. At the bottom of the structure, are the landless agricultural labourers. The landholding pattern in the village resembles that prevailing specifically in district Kolhapur and western Maharashtra in general - the dominance of small family based farms².

A few important observations were made regarding the sample households or the labour market in general. In the case of labour market, it was noted that firstly, the incidence of AL contracts is falling and the traditional patron - client relationship has been substituted by a more commercial relationship between landlords and the labourers thus exposing the labourers to higher risk. The dominant form of labour contract is daily wage based casual labour contract wherein all the labourers irrespective of their caste can participate. However, secondly, an interesting phenomenon was noted as far as the AL contracts are concerned. The theoretical literature on rural labour contracts explains the emergence and existence of contracts in terms of a hedge against labour market risks of the agents (ready and timely availability of labour for the employers and insurance against wage fluctuations for the labourers) and in terms of transaction costs for supervising casual labour force (Ray, 1998; Bardhan and Udry, 1999). Accordingly, AL contracts can be looked at as a better option for risk-averse poor labour selling households, as well as, for labour buying households which would like to hedge against labour market risks. However, it was noted that the subtly practiced system of untouchability prevents the upper caste employers to employ labourers belonging to the scheduled caste as AL, who are entrusted with the domestic chores also. For these households, on one hand, the option of reducing risk by accepting AL contract is closed. On the other hand, the process of decay of traditional occupation has reduced a source of income. The two AL sample households, were migrants to the village since 10-15 years, specifically from the drought-prone areas of the neighbouring state and belong to the non-SC Lingayat community. The process of change does not seem to have dismantled the traditional caste ties as far as the SC population is concerned.

Secondly, with a change in the crop pattern, labourers are in a position to bargain for higher wages irrespective of their caste. The bargaining strength was revealed from the individual initiative of the labourers in absence of any formal organisation and co-operation. A large majority of the households irrespective of their caste felt that the wage rate gets determined at a particular level (higher than the earlier) by the initiative of the labourers through the techniques of mild complaints or absenting from the work when the prevailing wage level fails to maintain pace with the rising inflationary pressure. The major factor determining bargaining capacity of the labourers was noted to be economic conditions in the village labour market - the labour intensive and commercial cropping pattern incorporating high value crops like sugarcane, groundnut requiring timely availability of labour.

Thirdly, most of the sample households reported that the practice of payment of wage rates in terms of harvest share had significantly declined particularly due to the dominance of commercial crops in the cropping pattern prevailing in the village. Similarly, higher value of the crops grown (wheat, groundnut) also inhibits the payment

² According to the Agricultural Census of Maharashtra (1991), for Kolhapur, the average size of landholding and, the % of number of operational holdings below one ha are 1.11 (State avg=2.21) and 66 per cent respectively.

of share of harvest. Out of the forty sample households, only eight households reported payment of share of harvest. It was noted that the monetary value of the harvest share was equal to or greater than the wage rate fully paid in cash, for the same operation. However, no specific bias in favour of receipt of harvest share was noted among various categories of labourers implying increasing monetisation of the economy and necessity of cash to satisfy consumption demands other than those relating to food.

Thus, the village exhibits a trend towards increasing commercialisation as manifested in labour employer relationship, monetisation of wage payments and structural changes such as increasing casualisation of the labour force. These can be called as the manifestations of the underlying process of change and development. For understanding the differential implications of these changes on various households i.e., Scheduled Caste and non-SC households, we compare here their earning and spending capacities.

Economic Status of Agricultural Labourers

Table 3 brings out the differences in the average earning capacities of various labour households and the hierarchy based on the same amongst themselves. Differences are observed not only between SC and OT households but also SCLL and SCLD households. The dominance of and dependence on income from hiring out labour in case of SCLL households is clearly observed from the values of income from hiring out labour (YAGL), per worker income from hiring out labour (PWRYAGL) and YAGL/E. Though the total yearly income (TYRY) is seen to be higher for the SC categories, the per capita total yearly income (PCTY) is seen to be lower than the corresponding non SC categories thus indicating the impact of family size. The lowest earning potential of SCLL labour households is also clearly brought out. It is observed from the table that the income from hiring out labour is grossly inadequate to satisfy the needs of the households except in case of attached labourers. For all the categories, the ratio of income to expenditure is very low in absolute terms. However, for the SC categories, it is seen to be higher than the OT categories indicating higher degree of occupational diversification for the latter.

Table 3 : Categorywise Economic Status of the Sample Households

Indicators	Schedule Caste			Other			AL
	LD	LL	All	LD	LL	All	
TYRY (Rs)	27164	16250	19888	23137	13863	16790	16300
PCTY(Rs)	4058	3213	3495	6494	3643	4641	6820
YAGL(Rs) (%)	10725 (46)	11071 (72)	10955 (55)	6566 (32)	7071 (53)	6727 (37)	16300 (100)
PWRYAGL(Rs)	3867	4251	4123	2925	3351	3332	8150
YAGL/E (%)	35	38	37	22	34	29	95

Note: TYRY = Total Yearly Income; PCTY= Per Capita Total Yearly Income; % YAGL = % Income (to TYRY) from hiring out labour; PWRYAGL = Per Worker Income from Hiring out Labour; YAGL/E = Income from Hiring out Labour / Total Expenditure.

The employment pattern of the households also indicates a similar phenomenon (Table 4). Here, the indicators show the number of days engaged as agricultural labourers in an household (AWD) as a proportion of firstly, total number of days of these labourers (TWDH) and secondly, total working days of the household as a whole (TWDL). It can be seen that the value of AWD / TWDL very high for SC and OT landed households indicating agricultural labourers in these households do not engage any other type of activity. In case of landless households,

however, OTLL households are seen to be diversifying more as compared to the SCLL households as the value of the indicator is seen to be less for OTLL. In the case of AWD / TWDH, the values for SC categories are seen to be higher than the corresponding values for the OT categories. This also indicates higher occupational diversification for the non-SC categories. The higher share of agricultural working days for SC households than the OT households possibly indicates lower occupational mobility for the former.

Table 4 : Categorywise Average Share of Number of Working Days as Agricultural Labourers

Indicators	Schedule Caste			Other			AL
	LD	LL	All	LD	LL	All	
AWD/TWDL (%)	100	97	98	100	67	97	100
AWD/TWDH (%)	65	91	83	73	71	72	100

Note: AWD/TWDL = No. of days hired out as agricultural labourers/Total working days of these labourers; AWD/TWDH = No. of days hired out as agricultural labourers/total working days of the household.

Table 5 presents percentage change in money wages received by the labourers over period of five years (1991-92 to 1995-96) for different categories of workers and their comparison with the Consumer Price Index numbers for the Agricultural Labourers (CPIAL). Firstly, in comparison with the changes in CPIAL, the percentage change in wage rates during the period of five years is seen to be quite low, clearly indicating the inability of money wage rates in catching up with the prices. The increase in CPIAL by 382 points (81 per cent) during the period of 1991-1992 to 1995-1996 is even greater than that during the entire earlier decade (i.e., during 1981-1982 to 1990-1991 which is 342) reflecting upon the falling standard of living of the labourers in the post-1990 period. Secondly, differences are observed in the rate of change in wages over a period of five years.

Table 5 :Categorywise Percentage Change in Wage Rates, CPIAL (Maharashtra) during 1991-92 to 1995-96

Type of Labour Household	% Change		Change in CPIAL
	M	F	
Scheduled Caste	45	48	382 points
Other	52	45	(81%)
AL	44	44	

The percentage change for OT male labourers is seen to be quite high as compared to the SC labourers. This can probably be attributed to lower supply elasticity and lower opportunity cost of the SC labourers and perhaps greater negotiating capacity of OT labourers (as compared to the SC labourers) with the employers during the time of wage revisions. The wage rates, thus, are increasing at different rates for different labourers and do not seem to be protecting the purchasing power of all the labourers, in spite of their increased individual bargaining strength. A comparative picture of the income, employment and the wage rates of SC and OT households shows a high dependence of the SC households on agriculture for their survival, lower mobility and poor economic status as compared to the OT households.

Consumption expenditure being a better base for judging the standard of living, an attempt here is made to compare the per capita expenditure of the sample households with the poverty line per capita consumption expenditure (PCE). From Table 6 it can be seen that the level of PCE at the state level indicating poverty line is seen to be much lower than that calculated for the sample households in the village.

The difference between the poverty line PCE and PCE of the sample households can partly be explained by the differences in the years for which the data is considered.

The other reason for higher value of PCE of sample households is related to the methodology used for calculating the PCE. All the female and child units have been converted into adult units for the purpose of the present study³. Hence, there is a possibility of overestimation in the latter case. However, the difference persists even after making adjustments for the two factors⁴.

Table 6: Monthly PCE of the Sample Households (for 1995-96) and the Poverty Line PCE

						(Rs.)
Scheduled Caste			Others			AL
LL	LD	ALL	LL	LD	ALL	
436	442	438	501	742	581	575

Maharashtra Poverty Line –Rs. 194.94 (as in 1993-94)

Note: Poverty line PCE considered here is that given by the Expert Group constituted by the Planning Commission in 1993; PCE of households pertain to the year 1996-97.

Source : Poverty line PCE taken from Malhotra (1997).

It was also noticed that given the prevailing prices, consumption basket and the food habits of the population in the region, the expenditure required to satisfy the absolutely necessary minimum food requirements –to satisfy hunger/necessity of three meals per day (out of total expenditure of food) of the households irrespective of the calorie requirements was higher than the total expenditure on food implicit in official poverty line PCE, as well as, higher than poverty line PCE itself. This can be clearly observed from Table 7.

Table 7: Average Minimum Survival Expenditure on Food Incurred by the Sample Households

Item	Weight (Kg)	Price/Amount Spent (Rs)	Total Weekly Expd (Rs)	Monthly Expd. of Households (Rs)	Monthly PCE (Rs)
Jowar	10	6 daily	60		
Rice	10	9 daily	90		
Vegetables	-	10 daily	70		
Meat	-	25 weekly	25	1300	433
Oil (litre)		20 weekly	20		
Tea/Sugar		40 weekly	40		
Flour/mill			20		
Total			325		

Note: Rs. 1300 and Rs. 433 represents the monthly expenditure of the household comprising of on an average three adult units and of one person respectively.

Here, the expenditure of the sample households on other cereals, Kerosene (assuming that the fuel needs of all the households are satisfied by the firewood collected)

³ The conversion scale is based on Lusk's Coefficient which considers -

Adult male above 14 years	=	1 adult unit
Adult female above 14 years	=	.83 adult unit
Child between 10 to 14 years	=	.83 adult unit
Child between 6 to 10 years	=	.73 adult unit
Child below 6 years	=	.5 adult unit

⁴ The annual PCE figures of the sample households were adjusted with the help of the average family size of 4.68 as reported for the year 1987-88 (GOI, 1994). Similarly, the poverty-line PCE was updated by 35.77 per cent (which is the percentage change in CPIAL during 1993-94 to 1994-95 i.e., from 1068 to 1450).

has been excluded from the items listed in the table. The expenditure incurred on milk is also excluded because it is too expensive to be an integral part of the consumption basket of many households. It can also be seen that the minimum necessary PCE of the sample households is even greater than the PCE on the major item of consumption in the basket - food - Rs. 148.66 as is implicit in poverty line PCE.

Table 8 shows item wise level of expenditure as implicit in the poverty line calculated by applying the weighing norm used by the Labour Bureau for constructing CPIAL and updating the poverty line PCE (GOM, 1996, p.28).

Table 8: Itemwise Break up of Per Capita Consumption Expenditure at Poverty Line

Item	Weight Assigned (%)	Break up of Poverty Line PCE (Rs.)
Food	76.87	148.66
Clothing	7.88	15.24
Fuel/Light	8.22	15.90
Services/ Miscellaneous	7.83	15.14
Total	100.80	194.94

Source: GOI (1996) for weighing scheme; Malhotra (1997).

As the average minimum monthly PCE required for survival is higher than the total poverty line PCE on food (Rs. 148.66) and the total poverty line PCE (Rs.194.94), we considered here the estimated per capita minimum expenditure on food required (Rs.433) as the norm and compared the actual per capita total expenditure on food (inclusive of the minimum expenditure on food) of the households with it. The classification of the households falling above and below this norm is presented Table 9. It can be noticed that a significant proportion of the total number sample households (55 per cent) is unable even to satisfy the minimum food needs. The proportion of households below the norm is seen to be highest for the SCLL and the PCE spent on food is seen to be lowest for the same category.

Table 9: Categorywise Number and Percentage of Households Falling Below and Above the Minimum Survival Expenditure on Food (Rs 433) in the Village

Category	Scheduled Caste			Others			AL
	LL	LD	All	LL	LD	All	
Above	3	3	6	6	5	11	1
(%)	(25)	(50)	(33)	(46)	(71)	(55)	
Below	9	3	12	7	2	9	1
(%)	(75)	(50)	(67)	(54)	(29)	(45)	
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	2
Average Monthly PCE on Food (Rs)	355	380	363	373	508	420	512

The exercise carried out hints firstly at limited participation of the community of agricultural labourers in the process of change. Secondly, the exercise also shows systematic variations and a hierarchy in the economic status of the labourers based on their caste. Two things can be noted as far as the demand side of the labour market is concerned. It was observed that all major crops of the village such as, Sugarcane, Soybean, Wheat, Groundnut and Jowar along with others pulses and vegetables were grown by bigger landlords on their lands. As mentioned earlier, it was observed that need for the labour power on these farms gets satisfied with help of the family members of permanent labour household employed, permanent daily

labourers and contract labourers of the sugarcane factory for sugarcane harvesting operation. Secondly, the landholding pattern of the village is typical of Western Maharashtra - dominance of small and marginal farmers. It was reported that more than 30 per cent of the landholders were small and marginal farmers and more than 50 per cent of the irrigated land was owned by handful of bigger landlords. Most of the landed sample households (who sell their labour power) reported that the quality of land owned by them was inferior and the pieces of land were mainly situated at the bottom of the hill (which implies a higher cost of cultivation) and that they mainly use family labour on their farms. Thus, the typical landholding pattern of the village, practice of outside contract labour for cane harvesting, does not seem to be generating enough demand for the local labour given the increasing supply of the labourers. Therefore, particularly for SCLL households, benefits from change do not seem to be translating into enough number of employment days (though higher than OT households) coupled with higher wages. For landed SC labourers, possession of land at least satisfies subsistence or cash needs. However, it was also observed that availability of water has not ensured accessibility of all landed households to water. Inability to purchase water gets reflected in differences in cropping pattern of households with and without water. Information given below shows the difference between SC and OT households in this regard.

	SCLD		OTLD	
No. of households with land above 2 acres -	1		2	
No. of households with irrigated land	2		6	
Total annual man days of work on their farms -	30		34	
Average annual no. of days of work per labour household-	M	F	M	F
	189	189	167	117
NYCUL/ no. of man days (Rs)-	42		64	
NYCUL/Acreage (Rs/acre)	4491		5732	

Note: NYCUL= net income from cultivation.

The ability to benefit directly (for landed labourers) and indirectly (through increasing wages) is thus limited for SC labourers. In the casual labour market, there is no bar on the entry of SC labourers and the money wages are seen to be increasing. Similarly, the number of days of employment are comparatively higher for these labourers. The differences in the earning capacity can therefore be explained in terms of a few factors: firstly, differences in quality land possessed and cost of cultivation for the landed labourers, secondly, decay of traditional industries, thirdly, difficulties to participate in non-farm activities with higher remuneration (e.g., out of the six households with members working in the non farm service or industrial sector, only one household was observed to be the SC households), fourthly the weaker bargaining power (which can probably explained in terms of lower supply elasticity) as compared to other labourers.

Concluding Remarks

The exercise carried out points out the economic implications of stratification of labourers into SC and non SC labourers. Firstly, it was noticed that the availability of water has initiated wage increase and increase in demand generating activity on the farm and improved the negotiating capacity of the labourers, who try to protect their purchasing power as and when prices rise. Market forces of price rise, have adversely affected all labourers irrespective of the caste they belong to. The rates of real wages therefore are falling, over a period of time. Secondly, from the demand side, the typical landholding pattern, practice of outside harvest labour seem to be

preventing labour absorption on a large scale except for a few peak season days for the local labour. However, caste appears to be an additional factor in adversely affecting and explaining the differences in the economic status. There is no discrimination based on caste in the sense of separate markets for various category casual labourers and caste does not seem to be a major determinant of demand for labourers in the casual labour market. The subtly practiced system of untouchability gets manifested in lower bargaining power of these labourers vis-à-vis the upper caste landed employers. The segmentation of the labour market based on asset position and caste prevents any collective bargaining action on the part of the labourers. The SC labourers face difficulties in diversifying and obtaining better paying job opportunities due to poor resource base (human and capital). The exercise carried out for understanding poverty among the agricultural labourers points at the inability of the benefits of change to reach the labourers due to the typical structural and institutional factors.

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Indebtedness among Agricultural Labourers from Deprived Castes: Towards an Explanation

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India's largest share of poor is located among agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Castes. The poverty in this group persists and gets perpetuated due to continued discrimination in the employment opportunities and wage market. Owing to the low wages, they are perpetually under debt burden. This issue becomes sharp due to interlocking of labour and credit market. The insignificant participation of this group in the formal credit market makes the situation worse. In this paper, an attempt is made to analyse the indebtedness and market participation of the deprived castes especially on the background of one of the most radical institutional changes, i.e., land reforms. We have used secondary level information available from different sources in order to analyse the issue. The study concludes that due to marginalisation in land market as well as extremely weak bargaining position in the labour market, the indebtedness of this group has been increasing. This situation is aggravated by the relative neglect of this group by formal credit agencies.

Introduction

The debate that followed the work on measurement of poverty by the working group on poverty of the planning commission in 1962, works on similar theme by Bardhan, Minhas and Dandekar and Rath during early seventies concentrated more on locating the quantum of poverty and its determinants (Rath, 1996; Ravallion and Datt, 1991; Krishnaswamy, 1990). Following this, the regional spread of poverty, as well as, effectiveness of public intervention in poverty alleviation formed the core subject matter of the literature on poverty (Rao and Erappa, 1987; Rath, 1985; Ahluwallia, 2000). However, the location of poor across social classes eluded the attention of the analysts all these years. Only a few studies can be cited to have attempted any indepth analysis of poverty across the social classes (Thorat, 1996). It goes without saying that agricultural labourers in rural areas constitute the bulk of poor of the nation and this group undergoes severe stress of being poor. One can locate two important contributing factors towards concentration of poverty among agricultural labourers. Firstly, the wage trends in real wages have stagnated in large number of regions of the country (Jose, 1988; Parthasarathy and Jayshree, 1995). Secondly, the agricultural labourers can not fully avail the opportunity to cross over the poverty barrier using the public intervention programmes, due to social and institutional constraints. They are also not covered in the net of rural credit due to the requirement of collateral and the designs of the credit schemes. The interlocking of informal credit market with labour market is a well-

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documented phenomenon (Sarap, 1998). These factors always keep the agricultural labourers under persistence poverty. Even among the broader group of agricultural labourer, we find that the agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Caste to be at the lowest rung in the context of poverty. They are deprived in terms of both economic and social opportunities to overcome the constraints of poverty. Traditionally, economic literature provides two theoretical views while explaining the discrimination or inequity in the labour market. Backer's theory (1976) underscores discrimination on the basis of prejudices inflicted by an influential group having control over resources. In the present context, in a number of studies it has been cited that the agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Caste receive discriminatory wage payments for the same job when compared with the labourers belonging to the dominant castes, thereby creating a situation of differential marginal productivity and wages. In turn, this group of society is relegated perpetually under poverty line denying them even the opportunity to cross over the barriers. Unfortunately, such barriers have assumed institutional overtones. As a consequence, we find high concentration of Scheduled Caste labourers among poor in any region of the country. Albeit, unlike any other social classes this proportion is not declining but has been increasing over the years. Another theoretical view about the social discrimination associated with the information available to the employer about the employee is articulated by Phelps (1973) and thus, translates into discrimination. This process of discrimination can be associated with the irrational social institutions operating at the village level during the early decades of independence. The difference across the castes was a strong determinant of the wage bills received by the labourers. The practice of bonded labourers, as well as, interlocking of the markets find explanation from this theoretical construct. Despite the fact that agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Castes constitute the core of rural poor, they as a group are discriminated in the wage market and, therefore, have been perpetually under the debt burden; we hardly come across any analysis of their indebtedness. Their participation in the formal credit market is quite low and insignificant. Keeping this in view, we intend to analyse the participation of Scheduled Caste labourers in credit market in India.

Background

Immediately after the independence and under strong influence of Gandhian Ideology a large numbers of policy tools were developed to correct the discriminatory barriers inflicted by the society on the Scheduled Castes over the centuries. At the same time, it was also necessary to direct development policies towards the crucial issues prevailing during those years. The initial thrust was on the investment led industrial growth followed by redistributive resource policy viz., land reforms. Land reforms were expected to support the weaker section, a large number of tenants among Scheduled Castes by providing them with required economic base. The laws of land reforms were positively placed in the favour of Scheduled Castes. The role of the State was becoming increasingly important all through these phases. The development approach towards Scheduled Castes focussed more on eliminating the social discrimination. Mid-course distortions were taken more as casual variations and the corrective measures were more akin to fire fighting than a long-term solution. One can locate two major inconsistencies in the development process. Firstly, the inducement, as well as, interventionist approaches for the development initiatives for Scheduled Castes were dominant for quite some time. Though the role of 'market' was well recognised, the social constraints in terms of caste differentiation, as well as, inequalities were of such proportion that the

State had no option but to intersect the market generated forces with strong interventions. These interventions were sourced from legal institutions, as well as, through positive discrimination. Secondly, when this approach was strong and being consistently followed the macro economic bottlenecks (deficits, balance of payment, forex reserves etc.) forced the policy analysts to turn back to the 'market' interventionist measures. As a result, the positions that *the economic forces operating in the market will correct all distortions*, came to settle down as a strong belief. This has to be viewed on the background of the proportion of Scheduled Castes among the labour force and their share of productive resources as well as their market participation in order to understand their economic future.

The success of 'market induced growth' is often highlighted on the background of the failure of the State policies. This argument, however, does not hold in practice. In real situation, the State and Market are inter-dependent and compliments of each other in the sense that if one fails the other may not perform. This is because of the simple fact that the results of non-performance of one, largely overlaps the determinants of the failure of the other. In this context, the failure of either of these inflict economic hardship on the Deprived Castes as a social group for a few reasons. Firstly, the group of deprived Castes as a social stratum broadly covers this weakest economic group of the society. For centuries, they were denied the opportunity to enhance their skills (occupational immobility) and forcibly retained in the same occupations providing little economic independence. Secondly, the political will, as well as, the bureaucratic mechanism always favoured the higher castes. Unfortunately, this was achieved through the irrational social customs propounded by the higher castes in the form of rules governed by the prevailing caste system. Therefore, even when the opportunities were provided a large number of the population belonging to the deprived Castes could not derive full benefits of the opportunities. The lead-lag relationship between development and the social deprivation was the major reason of the failure of the policy. No doubt, in overall impact analysis we have some positive effects but there is a plethora of evidence to suggest that the appropriation of access to resources has always stayed in the hands of the upper strata. Thirdly, it is a fact that the deprived castes are concentrated in rural areas and have to be largely identified with the core group of poor. Ironically the mixed success of poverty interventionist programmes has affected this group adversely as the inequality across the income strata changed unfavourably due to social constraints. Such a change causes higher welfare loss, at the least, in relative sense. Further, the investment on infrastructure in the regions with higher concentration of deprived castes is much lower, thereby reducing the access to infrastructure and its per capita availability for them. These bottlenecks in the State policy are confounded by the prevailing interface of this group with the market. Fourthly, as an effect, the market participation of the deprived castes is also extremely marginal. In this context the markets particularly relevant to the poor are: Land market, Labour market (or resource markets in general), Product market and credit market. Among these, density of poor in labour market is a well-known fact. This group is severely constrained in responding to market signals both because of their weak bargaining position (as consumers, as well as, producers) and due to the inadequate information that they have. It can be easily seen that their participation in all the four markets is constrained by the vantage positions of the 'others' rather than their own weaknesses. Even when they participate in the market they are not able to set a 'reserve price' for their labour nor they are able to get remunerative prices for their products. Even as consumers, they have weak bargaining power constituted by limited

choice. Lastly, it is a bare fact that the group of deprived castes is extremely weak in its asset position due to low purchasing power. Therefore, most of the members of this group depend on their labour, participating as weak bargainers in the labour market, which often results in indebtedness. Even those who hold some assets like land also find themselves in weak position to utilise the returns from the assets. In this context a few important characteristics of the landless agricultural labourers belonging to Deprived Castes need to be highlighted. In the ever increasing process of marginalisation of the size of holding land as economic base of this group is receding at a very fast rate. Every year the ranks of landless agricultural labourers are swelling not only due to demographic pressure but also as a negative externality of the marginalisation process. This, further inflicts injury by marginalising their participation in labour and credit market.

Indebtedness Among Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour

Keeping in view the above line of argument it seems essential to analyse the indebtedness among the Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers and its influence on market participation and the strength of bargaining of these sections of people. Since, a major proportion of Scheduled Castes population participates in the agricultural labour market, we intend to examine the indebtedness among the agricultural labour households. Indebtedness is always a consequent reflection of performance in other markets. But, in case of agricultural labourers of deprived castes it is not only a consequent of distortion in other market, but also perpetuation through several market interlocking processes.

The lowest and highest growth rates in SDP recorded during the eighties ranged between 4 to 7 per cent per annum and this range during nineties was noted to be 2.7 to 9.6 per cent per annum making very clear the divergence in growth performance across states. Does that mean poor states have slowed down in growth and a step up is achieved in growth of SDP among rich states? Quite naturally the growth performance also reflected the levels of inequality across states. It is observed that the inter-state inequality has increased substantially during nineties specifically due to quality of growth. This will have a telling effect on the poor in both groups of states.

Table 1: Incidence of Indebtedness Among Agricultural Labour Households

	All Classes		SC HH	
	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	54.7	51.6	56.8	55.9
Bihar	35.9	27.5	38.6	26.8
Gujarat	33.1	35.9	32.0	33.0
Haryana	54.9	57.8	52.8	64.7
Himachal Pradesh	22.9	12.4	28.5	13.7
Karnataka	29.7	36.2	27.8	43.6
Kerala	46.0	29.3	49.5	31.8
Madhya Pradesh	35.1	23.2	45.3	25.8
Maharashtra	35.5	33.4	41.4	39.1
Orissa	36.1	26.3	41.1	36.8
Punjab	56.2	28.4	59.8	28.2
Rajasthan	42.7	26.2	49.4	29.1
Tamil Nadu	47.9	33.5	53.1	34.7
Uttar Pradesh	30.4	40.2	34.0	40.2
West Bengal	39.4	43.2	41.6	44.2

Source: Rural Labour Enquiry Committee Report (1997).

Observing State-wise performance of indebtedness among agricultural labour, we find that indebtedness is high among the Scheduled Castes agricultural labourers across all the states (Table 1) however, in a few States whereas, the indebtedness has declined, in a few others it has increased in varying degrees. It is difficult to find any uniform logical thread to explain this phenomenon. To form an example, in Kerala indebtedness has declined, whereas, it has increased in West Bengal. Though both the States did relatively better in implementing policy of land reforms. Similarly, in Haryana indebtedness has increased, whereas, it has declined in Punjab in spite of the fact that both States showed good performance in agricultural growth induced by technology. This leaves us with a little to conclude in favour of the uniform impact of policies across all the States. Looking into average amount of debt figures (Table 2), we find that all the States except Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal the average debt amount has increased. This provokes us to identify the causes of indebtedness by further examining the sources, as well as, purposes of debt.

Table 2: Average Amount of Debt Among Scheduled Castes Agricultural Labour
(in Rupees)

	Average Loan per Household	
	1987-88	1993-94
Andhra Pradesh	869	1787
Bihar	509	396
Gujarat	748	1366
Haryana	1639	3900
Himachal Pradesh	1369	1545
Karnataka	428	1170
Kerala	780	1052
Madhya Pradesh	930	859
Maharashtra	561	1090
Orissa	458	540
Punjab	1050	1154
Rajasthan	1703	1136
Tamil Nadu	576	850
Uttar Pradesh	937	1284
West Bengal	574	555

Source: Rural Labour Inquiry Committee Report (1997).

When indebtedness is analysed both from the point of view of source (Table 4) and purpose (Table 3), it reveals some interesting features across the States. For the purpose of analysis we have divided indebtedness into two groups namely productive and non-productive. While productive loans consist of land purchase, construction and other directly productive uses in agriculture, the non-productive loans are specific to household consumption and marriage and other ceremony purposes. A higher ratio of productive loan to non-productive loan indicates that the nature of debt is not critical. But among the landless agricultural labour, except for Kerala and Haryana in all other States the ratio of productive loan to non-productive loan is low pointing towards criticality of indebtedness. It is very low in the case of Gujarat and Orissa. Whereas, landed agricultural labour households the ratio of productive to non-productive purpose is high in quite a few States. But, surprisingly this ratio is very low in the case of Punjab and

Haryana. This may be because the intensity of capital use does not offer much for the small-holdings. The analysis of criticality clearly reveals that the group of SC agricultural labourers do not even venture for any productive credit and meeting the consumption requirement is their major concern.

Table 3: Average Amount of Debt per Indebted Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour Household by Purpose of Debt

(in Rupees)

	Without Land			With Land		
	Non-productive	Productive	Ratio P to NP	Non-productive	Productive	Ratio P to NP
Andhra Pradesh	1700	553	0.33	2457	1204	0.49
Bihar	745	446	0.60	831	831	1.00
Gujarat	2972	457	0.15	2017	2062	1.02
Haryana	2510	3212	1.28	3879	374	0.10
Himachal Pradesh	0	0		1095	10160	9.28
Karnataka	1659	537	0.32	1403	1159	0.83
Kerala	927	1614	1.74	1846	4001	2.17
Madhya Pradesh	1206	741	0.61	1780	1223	0.69
Maharashtra	1621	569	0.35	926	2085	2.25
Orissa	821	151	0.18	732	918	1.25
Punjab	2150	990	0.46	4070	597	0.15
Rajasthan	1500	0	0	3604	194	0.05
Tamil Nadu	1540	655	0.43	1135	1458	1.28
Uttar Pradesh	2043	853	0.42	1481	1135	0.77
West Bengal	513	304	0.59	507	566	1.12

Note: P: Productive; NP: Non-Productive

Source: Rural Labour Inquiry Committee Report (1997).

Among the Scheduled Caste agricultural labourer, the source of debt entails the quality of loan. If the debt from formal sources is high as compared to informal sources then the existence of interlocking of market operating through credit market is likely to be low. However, except Kerala and Madhya Pradesh among the landless group and again Kerala and Orissa among the landed group, no other State has higher rate of credit from formal sources than informal sources. One perplexing but consistent observation revealed through the analysis that the incidence of indebtedness and quantum of indebtedness is higher in the States where agricultural growth is high.

We tried to seek explanation on the status of deprived castes through the nature and process of indebtedness. However, the mixed trends do not allow us to arrive at generalised explanation on the overall impact of the State policies at a macro level. This leaves us with the only possible explanation that the local level conditions are more prominent in determining the social transformation among the Scheduled Caste landless agricultural labourers. However, the argument of uneven growth against these section of people is evident in their participation in the market, may it be land labour or product market. This often results in their weak bargaining power, which perpetuates their indebtedness.

Table 4: Average Amount of Debt per Indebted Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour Household by Source of Debt

(in Rupees)

	Without Cultivable Land			With Cultivable Land				
	Formal	Informal	Ratio Informal to Formal	Total	Formal	Informal	Ratio Informal to Formal	Total
Andhra Pradesh	367	2125	5.79	2493	407	3929	9.65	4336
Bihar	455	861	1.89	1315	799	1153	1.44	1951
Gujarat	530	3303	6.23	3834	1580	3304	2.09	4884
Haryana	1120	5001	4.47	6121	424	4253	10.03	4677
Himachal Pradesh	0	0			2465	8838	3.59	11303
Karnataka	316	2021	6.40	2337	1081	1969	1.82	3050
Kerala	2048	678	0.33	2727	5245	913	0.17	6158
Madhya Pradesh	1348	1203	0.89	2552	1804	2226	1.23	4030
Maharashtra	772	1418	1.84	2191	1660	1695	1.02	3356
Orissa	306	792	2.59	1097	1477	505	0.34	1982
Punjab	716	3335	4.66	4052	1934	2732	1.41	4667
Rajasthan	0	3702	-	3703	195	3820	19.59	4014
Tamil Nadu	664	1744	2.63	2408	1256	1376	1.10	2632
Uttar Pradesh	1084	2049	1.89	3134	1536	1691	1.10	3228
West Bengal	471	612	1.30	1083	638	827	1.30	1465

Source: Rural Labour Inquiry Committee Report (1997).

Market Participation of the Deprived Castes

The impact of indebtedness on market participation and the strength of bargaining among the Scheduled Castes agricultural labourers becomes essential to understand the pattern of growth across the regions. However, it is difficult to get to this even at a broad empirical level both due to non-availability of the required data, as well as, the definition of the concept of bargaining power. One of the important aspects detailed in the earlier discussion is the nature of the asset holding of the group. In an earlier study, it was noted that asset holding of this group emerges as an important determinant in poverty alleviation process (Kamble, 1995).

Out of the total population of the country about 17 per cent belong to Scheduled Castes and this proportion varies from less than one per cent in Arunachal Pradesh to more than 30 per cent in Punjab. Majority of them stay in rural areas. In an across State analysis 21 to 71 per cent fall below poverty line (Thorat, 1996). According to estimates given by Planning Commission the proportion of population of Scheduled Castes falling below poverty line in rural areas was 50.07 per cent during 1987-88 which has marginally declined to 48.11 per cent by 1993-94 (based on Consumption Expenditure Survey, NSSO, 1987-88 and 1993-94) but this decline is much smaller compared to the similar reduction in the non-Scheduled Caste group. We have presented above in Table 5(A) and Table 5(B), a comparative picture of the distribution of Scheduled Caste population across States, the proportion of Scheduled Caste population below poverty line and the status of agricultural worker. The concentration of Scheduled Caste population in rural areas is highest in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and

Tamil Nadu. Though poverty does not have one to one correspondence with the proportion of population belonging to Scheduled Castes, it is quite high in those States with high proportion of SCs (with only a few exceptions). But interestingly the States with high proportion of Scheduled Caste population in rural areas show smaller proportion of cultivators belonging to SC and higher proportion of agricultural labour under this category. In other words the market participation of this group in the labour market is much higher as compared to their participation in product-market as cultivators (Thorat, 1996).

Table 5(A): Distribution of Scheduled Caste Population Across States, Poverty and Agricultural Worker Status

State	Per cent of SC Population (Rural) 1991	Per cent SC Below Poverty Line (1983-84) (Rural)	Per cent of Scheduled Caste (1991) (Rural)	
			Cultivators	Agri. Labourers
Andhra Pradesh	13.9	51.0	8.4	32.4
Bihar	15.3	71.1	6.2	27.7
Gujarat	7.0	39.9	2.7	12.9
Haryana	21.6	27.9	4.0	58.4
Himachal Pradesh	25.9	23.5	27.6	43.1
Karnataka	18.2	54.1	12.3	30.8
Kerala	11.0	43.9	3.1	27.2
Madhya Pradesh	14.8	59.3	10.5	24.4
Maharashtra	11.5	55.9	4.9	20.1
Orissa	16.7	54.9	11.0	27.8
Punjab	31.9	21.8	4.0	71.9
Tamil Nadu	22.9	59.4	12.7	40.1
Uttar Pradesh	23.2	57.3	18.6	48.3
West Bengal	27.6	52.0	23.4	40.6

Sources: 1. Census of India 1991, Series I India, Paper 2 of 1993; 2. National Sample Survey 1983-84 Round.

Table 5(B): Percentage of Workers by Industrial Categories – Rural (Male) – 1961-1991

Category	Scheduled Castes				Non-Scheduled Castes			
	1961	1971	1981	1991	1961	1971	1981	1991
Cultivators	42.90	34.94	36.70	33.11	63.74	59.27	58.44	54.74
Agriculture Lab.	32.83	50.24	46.82	49.27	12.12	19.19	18.30	20.14
Agriculture	75.73	85.18	83.52	82.52	75.86	79.26	76.74	74.88
Non-Agriculture	24.27	14.82	16.48	17.61	24.14	20.74	23.26	25.12

Source: Population Censuses 1961, 1971, 1981, and 1991.

Land has always been an important asset which indicates not only the economic position but also serves as the closest proxy for social and political strength. The scope of the paper however is not to analyse land as a base of analysis *per se*, albeit to identify the process of marginalisation, as a consequence for the landless agricultural labourers among the deprived castes. The distribution of holdings across the size classes helps us to understand the relative asset position of the cultivators belonging to Scheduled Castes but a large number of them are also agricultural labourers. The distribution of holding presented in Table 6(A) and Table 6(B), for the two Censuses (1980-81 and 1990-91) shows the proportion of cultivators belonging to different size group of operational

holding. The general trend of distribution of holding is also reflected even in the land distribution of Scheduled Castes. The number of holdings under the group of marginal farmers is increasing and that under the size group of large holdings is declining. But, the increase in the number of marginal farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes is much faster than in the other Social Classes (growth rates of 0.51 and 0.42 per cent per annum). Another most pertinent observation from this table is, the group of farmers belonging to the small size of holding, belonging to Scheduled Castes, has declined, whereas, the Small size of holding has shown an increase among the other social classes. This gets clearly reflected in the average size of holding. The general trend in the average size of holding across the size classes shows a reduction in the land held per cultivator. The average size of holding of a cultivator belonging to Scheduled Castes was 1.15 hectares per cultivator which came down to 1.05 hectares recording a rate of decline of 1.83 per cent per annum. The decline has come significantly from the highest two size classes of holdings (Table 7).

Table 6(A): Distribution of Cultivators by their Size of Holding: 1980-81 and 1990-91
(Percentage to Total Number of Holdings)

Size/ Class	Land Holdings Belonging to								
	Scheduled Castes			Other Social Groups*			Total		
	1980	1985	1990	1980	1985	1990	1980	1985	1990
	-81	-86	-91	-81	-86	-91	-81	-86	-91
Marginal	68.9	70.7	72.2	56.2	57.5	59.1	56.4	57.8	59.4
Small	16.3	16.0	15.9	11.9	18.3	18.8	18.1	18.4	18.8
Semi Medium	9.5	8.8	8.1	20.0	13.7	13.1	14.0	13.6	13.1
Medium	4.4	3.8	3.2	9.3	8.4	7.3	9.1	8.2	7.1
Large	0.9	0.7	0.6	2.6	2.1	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.6
All Sizes	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: 1. Land holdings sizes are: Marginal – up to 1 hectare, Small – 1.0 to 2.0 ha., Semi Medium – 2.0 to 4.0 ha., Medium – 4.0 to 10.0 ha., Large – Above 10 hectares; 2. * Other Social Groups include all other social groups other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Source: Agricultural Census of India, 1980-81, 1985-86 and 1990-91.

Table 6(B): Size Distribution of Ownership Holding

Size Classes	Scheduled Caste		Others	
	1982	1992	1982	1992
Landless	12.61	13.34	10.18	9.85
Marginal	72.41	72.91	52.20	53.95
Small	8.40	7.85	16.09	13.58
Semi-medium	4.52	3.86	12.05	10.08
Medium	1.80	1.83	7.66	11.48
Large	0.26	0.21	1.82	1.06
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: NSS, Land Holding Survey 1982 & 1992, CSO, Delhi.

It is very clear from the Table 5(B) that the proportion of cultivators is declining whereas that of agricultural labourer is increasing among Scheduled Castes. What is more interesting is that the proportion of cultivators among SCs has declined by 9.79 per

cent (between 1961 to 1991) but the group of SC agricultural labourer has increased by 16.44 per cent during this period. Assuming that the definitional changes will account about a half of the discrepancy the writing on the wall is very clear that the landless agricultural labourers among the SCs are increasing mainly due to push factor imparted on marginal farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes. This is evident from the differential figure of agricultural labourer and cultivators belonging to non-Scheduled Caste groups.

Table 7: Average Size of Holding According to Major Size – Classes

(In Hectares)

Size/ Classes	Land Holdings Belonging to								
	Scheduled Castes			Other Social Groups*			All Social Groups		
	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91
Marginal	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39
Small	1.41	1.41	1.41	1.45	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.43	1.44
Medium	5.84	5.78	5.77	6.03	5.97	5.92	6.04	5.96	5.90
Large	16.44	16.24	16.70	15.65	17.43	17.57	17.41	17.21	17.33
All Size Classes	1.15	1.05	0.98	1.88	1.74	1.59	1.84	1.69	1.55

Notes: 1) Land holdings sizes are: Marginal – upto 1 hectare, Small –1.0 to 2.0 ha, Medium–4.0 to 10.0 ha., Large – Above 10 hectares; 2) * Other Social Groups include all other social groups other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Source: Agricultural Census, 1980-81 and 1985-86, Government of India, New Delhi.

One important observation from this data on distribution of land holdings comes out prominently, viz., the cultivators belonging to Scheduled Castes have extremely narrow market access (because only a small proportion of them belong to the holding sizes which claim some sizeable marketable surplus) and further their density in this group has reduced significantly (even during the shortest span of five years this decline is visible). This is another factor acting as a push effect on small and marginal farmer pushing them towards the ranks of agricultural laboureres because of their unequal access to the market which, further contributed to their process of marginalisation. Furthermore, their participation in the land lease market is also marginal and largely with small fragments of land. Only 82 thousand hectares were leased in to the cultivators belonging Scheduled Castes in the year 1990-91, which is about 0.62 per cent of their total operated area. Even out of this, more than 34 per cent comes under the size class of marginal holdings. The tenancy contracts are generally in terms of share of produce, thereby sharing the risk with the landlord.

When we look at the proportion of irrigated area against the rainfed area, it is easily discernible that irrigation has not helped the farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes to strengthen their economic position. According to 1990-91 Agricultural Census about 19 lakh holdings out of the total 84 lakh holdings get the benefit of irrigation. The total area under irrigation is about 29 per cent but a large share of this is in the lower size classes (40.0 per cent accounted by the marginal farmer group). On an average, the irrigated size of holding of Scheduled Caste group is about half hectare whereas the same for the 'other social groups' is nearing one hectare. Thus, even on the count of land augmentation the group of Scheduled Caste cultivators does not seem to be on the strong basis. Therefore, naturally the generation of marketable surplus from this group is likely to be negligible and their participation in the agricultural commodity market is more in the form of consumer than producer. Therefore, their dependence on the informal credit market is an

obvious result. Further, their participation in labour market is quite strong in terms of numerical strength but not necessarily in terms of bargaining power for wages. Though, there is no strong empirical evidence on this count, any keen observer of the micro-level dynamics can even casually note this in the countryside.

Various Aspects of Social Transformation

In a larger theoretical model we can see multilayer development processes generated by various micro and macro factors. For a great number of social scientists, history is little more than a stream of events, somehow outside the social structure and usually opposed to it and States are assumed to be institutional forms whose properties are fixed with respect to time. Evolution is thus reduced to something that occurs between stages, rather than presented as the outcome of the processes that are inherent in the social forms themselves (Friedman, 1975). When we analyse the market participation of the Deprived Castes, we tend to observe it from the radical institutional change in terms of land reforms carried out by the State. However, structure of social reproduction are not of the same order as institutional structures.

When we consider development we are forced to account for the production and distributional relations, which determines its function with respect to other (micro) institutions as well as to techno-environmental conditions. For example, States like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu having higher proportion of population as SC and a very large proportion of them as agricultural labourer [see Table 5(A) and 5(B)] also has to be understood in the backdrop of technological transformation in terms of 'Green Revolution'. The internal properties of a technology impose a certain number of constraints on the functioning of the productive relations by determining the outer limits of technical reproduction. The technology, however, is quite neutral with respect to process of reproduction. It is the relation of production that determines the social fabrication of a community or castes or groups (Friedman, 1975). Market participation of the deprived sections as labour force is much higher as compared to their participation in product market as cultivators, that can be understood through the changing production relation with the transformation of technological changes brought by the state.

Contrary to this, the institutional changes brought by the State in the form of land reforms did not have wider impact on their economic status barring a few pockets. This forms the ideological and political structures whose contents may be derived from, and whose functions must be defined in terms of, the existent relations of production and conditions of reproduction. The concepts of interlocking of market, property right structures and asymmetric information as developed in economic literature provide enough fuel which need to be tuned to the social transformation through the relation of production and the conditions of reproduction. However, the facts remain that there is greater marginalisation of the Deprived Castes and policies implemented either due to land reforms or due to the technological push factor have very little to contribute to the welfare of this section.

Towards Conclusion

This paper tried to analyse the hypothesis regarding indebtedness and market participation of the Deprived Castes especially on the background of one of the most radical institutional change i.e., land reforms. Though the success of land reforms measures has been mixed across the country, it is one of the major determinants of the agrarian structure. Further, it also reflects the present institutional setback in rural India

and increased role of informal credit market. On this background it became easy to find out the market participation of the deprived Castes in rural India. Our endeavour towards locating the market participation was mainly guided by the hypothesis extended recently about the market as an effective correcting measure and partial withdrawal of the State from interfering with poverty, agrarian parameters and other welfare measures. An important outcome is quite feasible in the context leading to enhanced grip of informal money market on the group of Scheduled Castes labourers. One of the important hypothesis that was raised by Deepak Lal in his book on '*Hindu Equilibrium*' regarding the analysis of social stability through the Caste System needs to be looked critically. He especially took help of the neo-classical paradigms in which a large number of untenable assumptions were entered into. To quote, he says that "I would accept that as Dumont emphasizes, the unique feature distinguishing the Caste system from other modes of social stratification in the disjunction of power and status in the Caste hierarchy. But I would argue that it is the peculiar environmental circumstances of endemic political instability in the ancient Hindu monarchies for which the system was forged which makes this disjunction economically, rational and ritually enforceable" (Lal, 1988, p. 73). A proposition that can be challenged through an alternative explanation that the upper castes strengthened the hierarchical caste system and irrational institutional norms to sustain and perpetuate the control over the productive resources. This was achieved by depriving the depressed castes of their normal economic mobility. On this background Dr. Ambedkar's hypotheses are more pertinent and institutional in nature (Ambedkar, 1946 and 1948). In fact, we can still explain the present situation of marginal market participation and continued poverty of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the rural areas.

There are two prominent factors which underscore the discussion carried out in this paper. First, irrespective of any policy induction in the past and any degree of success among the states, no clear evidence of halting the process of marginalisation of the deprived castes is visible. Whereas, marginalisation of cultivator into agricultural labour is clearly evident. The weak bargaining power in the market (specifically in labour market) of the Scheduled Castes further worsens their economic viability. Secondly, we tried to seek explanation, of the process of marginalisation reflected in their indebtedness. The mixed trends do not allow us to identify a common thread of explanation, which would be of macro economic nature. Thus, it would not be wrong to assume that the local level institutions are more powerful in dictating the terms against the deprived castes, which do not often get reflected in aggregate trends.

Our paper very modestly tried to highlight the fact that a large number of people from the Deprived Castes from rural areas depend on agricultural sector. A majority of them are agricultural labourers whereas only about 12 per cent are cultivators. Out of the cultivators less than half have some access (even theoretical) to the product market as producers, thereby clearly indicating their weak bargaining power as consumers which in turn results in indebtedness. Thus the process of marginalisation of the Scheduled Castes in land market is quite clear. On the other hand, the agricultural labourers belonging to Deprived Castes have always been at the other end of the hierarchy. They, too, have extremely weak bargaining position in relation to their wage labour. As a consequence indebtedness is on increase for this social group. In such a situation, it will not be prudent to assume that the market would correct the distortions through the price mechanism and, hence, it will not be erroneous, if we state that the New Economic Policy is likely to have hazardous impact on the Deprived Castes both in living standard and employment.

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Indebtedness of the Scheduled Castes Agricultural Labour Households: A State-wise Analysis

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Studies focusing on the indebtedness of agricultural labour households belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCLHs) are seldom seen. In this paper, therefore, an attempt is made to study the incidence as well as extent of indebtedness of agricultural labour households belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Statewise cross section data pertaining to five time points (1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94) available through Rural Labour Enquiry reports have been used for the analysis. It is found that the share of institutional debt in the total debt of SCLHs has increased from 5.76 per cent in 1974-75 to 30.10 per cent in 1993-94. Similarly, the share of productive purpose debt to the total debt of the same group has also increased from 8.81 per cent to 21.63 per cent during the same period. While the incidence of indebtedness of the Scheduled Castes labour households has declined between 1974-75 and 1993-94 in most of the states, the same is found to be higher than the national level average among the agriculturally advanced states at all time points. The average amount of debt (in real value) of the Scheduled Castes labour households has increased between 1974-75 and 1993-94 in almost all the states, but the value of debt is found to be smaller among the agriculturally less developed states. It appears from the analysis that the extent of indebtedness of agricultural labour households is higher in those states that have higher percentage of landless labour households, percentage of the Scheduled Castes labour households to the total agricultural labour households and share of productive purpose debt to the total debt.

I Introduction

Though indebtedness is common among the rural households, the intensity of indebtedness is expected to be severe among the Agricultural Labour Households belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCLHs). There are many reasons for this. First, SCLHs are predominantly landless labourers and earnings from wages are the only source of income. Second, wages paid to the agricultural labourers are quite low when compared to other categories of labourers (Parthasarathy, 1996; Datt, 1996). Third, the employment opportunities available to the agricultural labourers are seasonal and very limited due to limited irrigation facilities in major parts of India. Above all these, even though the money wages are rising, the real wages have not been showing significantly increasing trends (Jose, 1988; Narayanamoorthy and Deshpande, 2001; 2001a). This has led to a perpetually increasing demand for additional cash resources. At times wage earnings are not even sufficient to meet the consumption needs. Therefore, they are forced to incur debt for meeting their consumption expenditures and other social

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The author is thankful to R. S. Deshpande and an anonymous referee of the journal for their useful comments on the earlier draft of the paper. However, the author alone is responsible for errors remaining in the paper.

obligations. As the credit used for consumption purposes (non-productive debt) does not help to generate income, the labourers are unable to repay the loan in time and thus the burden of debt goes on increasing.

Though indebtedness¹ is expected to be widespread among the agricultural labour households, the incidence of indebtedness (percentage of indebted households) and the extent of indebtedness (average amount of debt per household) may not be the same across states as the socio-economic characteristics of the labour households living in different states are not similar. The level of development of agriculture is one among the crucial factors that determine the indebtedness of agricultural labour households. As wages and employment opportunities are higher in the agriculturally advanced states (Vaidyanathan, 1994 and 1994a), both the incidence and the extent of indebtedness are expected to be less in these states when compared to agriculturally less developed states. Indebtedness of the labour households is also determined by the purpose for which the credit is taken and from whom (source of credit) the loan is borrowed. If the loan is taken and used for productive purposes, the indebtedness of the households is expected to be less because productive loan generates income and helps the borrower to repay the loan in time. Similarly, if the loan is borrowed from an institutional source, it is possible to repay the loan in time because the loan must have been provided for productive purposes with low (subsidised) rate of interest. As the income of the agricultural labour households is mostly dependent upon the performance of agriculture, failure of monsoon may also affect the wage earnings of the agricultural labour households and thereby the repaying capacity.

In the literature, several studies are available regarding the indebtedness of rural households. Some studies have analysed the inter-linkage of land, labour and credit (Bardhan and Rudra, 1978; Bardhan, 1980; Sarap, 1991; Pant, 1980; Binswanger and Rosenzweig, 1986), while others have analysed the intensity of indebtedness of all rural households (Gothoskar, 1988; Tandon, 1988; Rao, *et al.*, 1997). Most of the available studies have analysed the issues that are related to credit-land-labour linkages and the indebtedness of farmers as well as rural households. Despite the fact that SCLHs are the weakest sections of the rural society and the indebtedness is expected to be very high among them, not many researchers have attempted to analyse exclusively the indebtedness of these households. It is essential to study where (states) is the incidence and the extent of indebtedness higher among the SCLHs? Is the indebtedness of SCLHs same across the states at different points of time? Is there any relationship between the agricultural development of the states and the indebtedness of SCLHs? What is the proportion of institutional source of debt in the total debt across the states? What is the magnitude of productive and non-productive debt of SCLHs across states? and what are the factors that determine the indebtedness of the agricultural labour households belonging to the Scheduled Castes? A detailed study covering all these questions would be useful not only to understand the indebtedness of SCLHs but also to make policy decisions concerning these households. It is in this context, an attempt is made in this paper to study the incidence as well as the extent of indebtedness of SCLHs across the

¹ As per the definition of Rural Labour Enquiry, "a household was considered as an indebted household, if it had taken loan from others and part or whole of which had remained outstanding on the date of survey. Loan included borrowings in cash and/or kind and also credit purchases made by the households" (RLE, 1992, p. 12).

states using cross section data corresponding to five time points: 1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94.

The paper is organised into eight sections. The first section is devoted to introducing the problem. Section two provides a detailed account of data and method used in this study. Theoretical explanation of the variables included in this study is presented in section three. While section four provides an account of the share of institution debt to total debt, section five presents the magnitude of productive debt in the total debt of the agricultural labour households. An analysis relating to incidence of indebtedness is presented in section six, while section seven presents a detailed analysis of extent of indebtedness. The section eight presents the conclusion of the paper.

II Data and Method

The data for this study have been mainly collected from different reports of Rural Labour Enquiry (RLE) published by the Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Government of India. So far, six Rural Labour Enquiries have been published corresponding to the years 1964-65, 1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94. The data pertaining to the year 1964-65 are not considered for this study because of non-availability of relevant reports for our ready use. Therefore, for this study, we have considered data pertaining to five time points namely 1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94. The study covers 17 major states of India².

RLE provides all essential data concerning both agricultural and rural labour households. Since our main aim is to study the indebtedness of agricultural labour households³ particularly SCLHs, we have not considered the data relating to rural labour households for any of our analysis. State-wise data relating to the incidence and the extent of indebtedness, source of debt, purpose of debt, average earning strength of agricultural labour households, average size of land cultivated by the agricultural labour households, average daily earnings of men belonging to the agricultural labour households, percentage of agricultural labour households without cultivated land, family size of agricultural labour households, etc. have been collected from various reports of RLE for both SCLHs and the total Agricultural Labour Households (ALHs) for the above mentioned five time points. In addition to these, state-wise data on Gross Cropped Area (GCA), Gross Irrigated Area (GIA) and Cropping Intensity (CI) have been collected/computed to relate them with the indebtedness of agricultural labour households belonging to the Scheduled Castes.

As mentioned earlier, though the major objective of the study is to analyse the incidence of indebtedness as well as extent of indebtedness across states, an attempt is also made to find out the position of each state in terms of institutional and non-institutional sources of debt as well as productive and non-productive purpose of debt. For this purpose, the states are classified in terms of their ranks in order to find out the states that are falling above the national average and below the national average in terms of incidence and extent of indebtedness. In order to neutralise the effect of a change in value of debt over time, the nominal value of debt has been converted as real value by

² Names of the 17 states considered for analysis are mentioned in Table 2. These 17 states together accounted for 99.34 per cent of agricultural labour households and about 98.95 per cent of India's gross cropped area in 1993-94.

³ Rural Labour Enquiry defines agricultural labour households as "households which earned 50 per cent or more of their total income during the last 365 days for wages paid manual labour in agriculture" (RLE, 1992, p.9).

using statewise Consumer Price Index of Agricultural Labourers (CPIAL) with the base year of 1974-75 for all the five time points considered for the analysis. Similarly, the money wage rate of male agricultural labourers, which is used as one of the variables to relate with the indebtedness, has also been converted in to real wage rate using the same deflator, i.e., CPIAL. Regression analysis (using OLS method) has been performed using pooled state-wise cross-section data pertaining to five points of time-mentioned above in order to find out the factors that determine the incidence and extent of indebtedness of agricultural labour households. Comparison has been made between SCLHs and all agricultural labour households (ALHs) in all the aspects that are considered in this paper.

III Theoretical Explanation of the Variables Included in the Study

We are aware that the indebtedness of the agricultural labour households is determined by many social and economic factors. For this study, we have considered 14 variables that are related to the agricultural labour households (see, Table 1). Two of the 14 variables, namely, the incidence of indebtedness (IOI) and the extent of indebtedness (EOI) are treated as dependent variables. The remaining 12 variables are treated as independent variables or explanatory variables to IOI and EOI. Since the earnings of the agricultural labour households are expected to be higher in the agriculturally advanced states due to higher employment opportunities and wage rate, we expect that the incidence as well as the extent of indebtedness would be less in states like Punjab, Haryana and to some extent in AP and Tamil Nadu.

Table 1: Definition of the Variables Used in this Study

Variable	Explanation	Unit
AES	Average earning strength of agricultural labour households	Persons
ASL	Average size of land cultivated by agricultural labour households	Hectare
ADEM/CPIAL	Average daily real earnings of men belonging to agricultural labour households (in 1974-75 prices)	Rupees
CI	Cropping intensity	Percent
EOI/CPIAL	Extent of indebtedness in real value (in 1974-75 prices)	Rupees
GCA/LHs	Gross cropped area per agricultural labour household	Hectare
GIA/LHs	Gross irrigated area per agricultural labour household	Hectare
GIA/GCA	Percentage of irrigated area	Percent
HWL	Agricultural labour household without cultivated land	Percent
IOI	Incidence of indebtedness	Percent
IDTD	Share of institutional source of debt to total debt of agricultural labour households	Percent
SCLHs/ALHs	Percentage of scheduled castes agricultural labour households to all agricultural labour households	Percent
FS	Family size of agricultural labour households	Persons
PDTD	Share of productive purpose debt to total debt of agricultural labour households	Percent

Average size of land (ASL) cultivated by the agricultural labour households is one of the variables considered for the analysis. ASL is expected to influence negatively

both IOI and EOI. This is because of the fact that the income generating capacity of the labour households also increases when land size increases. Average earning strength (AES) refers to total number of persons reporting agricultural labour in a household as their usual occupation. Here, instead of considering AES separately, the ratio of AES to family size (FS) of the agricultural labour households is considered for analysis. It is expected that when the ratio of AES/FS increases, the total earnings of the households would also increase and thus, it will negatively influence both IOI and EOI. Average daily real earnings of men (ADEM/CPIAL) belonging to the agricultural labour households is considered as a proxy variable for earnings of the agricultural labour households. We expect the variable ADEM/CPIAL will have a negative relation with the indebtedness of the agricultural labour households.

Percentage of SCLHs to agricultural labour households (ALHs) is also considered as one of the important variables to relate with IOI and EOI. It is expected that both IOI and EOI will be higher in the states where the ratio of SCLHs/ALHs is higher. Since wage earnings are the only source of income for majority of SCLHs and most of the time the earnings are inadequate to meet their consumption expenditure, the indebtedness is expected to be higher in those states where the ratio of SCLHs/ALHs is higher. Similarly, percentage of agricultural labour households without cultivated land (HWL) is expected to influence both IOI and EOI positively. That is, both IOI and EOI will be higher wherever HWL is higher. Size of labour households (FS) is also an important factor in determining the level of EOI and IOI. If an agricultural labour household has more members and less earners then there is a possibility for higher EOI in that house. Therefore, both IOI and EOI are expected to be higher in the states where FS is higher. The share of productive purpose debt to total debt (PDTD) of labour households is also considered to relate with IOI and EOI. The variable PDTD is expected to have positive relation with EOI because if a labour household is not able to repay the productive debt, it is practically impossible to repay the non-productive debt. Similarly, the share of institutional source of debt to total debt (IDTD) is expected to positively influence both IOI and EOI.

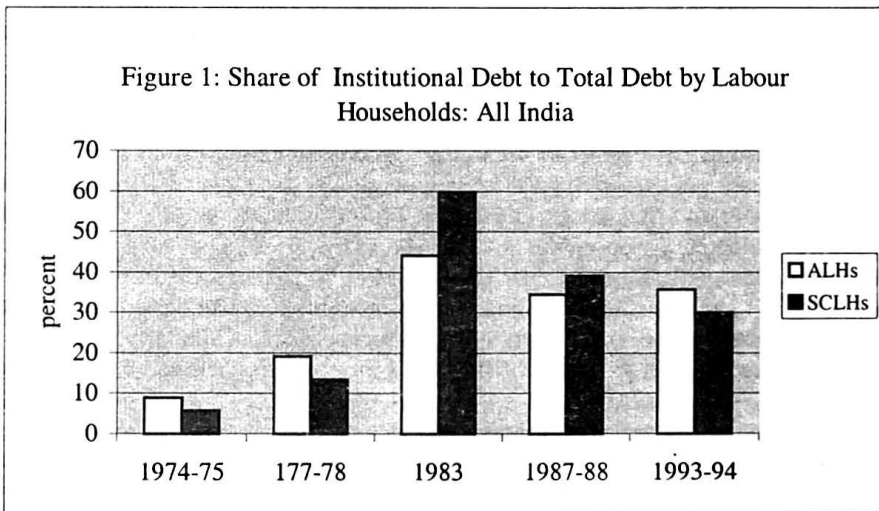
The availability of employment and wage rates of agricultural labourers are largely determined by the agricultural growth. As mentioned earlier, the indebtedness of labour households is expected to be less in the agriculturally advanced states due to higher employment opportunities and earnings. Keeping this in view, four variables related to land and irrigation that determine the demand for agricultural labourers are considered here in addition to the above mentioned variables. The variables chosen are gross cropped area per agricultural labour household (GCA/LHs), gross irrigated area per agricultural labour household (GIA/LHs), percentage of irrigated area to gross cropped area (GIA/GCA) and cropping intensity (GCA/NSA). While GCA/LHs is treated as a proxy variable for general demand for agricultural labourers, GIA/LHs is considered to show the intensity of demand for agricultural labourers. Both GCA/LHs and GIA/LHs are expected to have a negative relation with IOI and EOI.

IV Institutional Debt in the Total Debt

One of the objectives of the paper is to study the state-wise position of share of institutional debt to total debt. This is done specifically to examine the common argument that SCLHs are continued to suffer with heavy burden from non-institutional source of debt due to non-availability of credit from institutional sources. It is a well known fact that the agricultural labour households are always in need of credit for

consumption purposes due to their inadequate wage earnings. Owing to non-availability of credit for consumption purposes from the institutional agencies, they often need to approach non-institutional sources (informal credit market) such as moneylenders, farmers, etc., to satisfy their credit requirements. As the rate of interest charged by the moneylenders is very high, the agricultural labourers most of the time are unable to repay the loan. Because of inadequate wage earnings and poor availability of institutional credit, the share of institutional source of debt is expected to be higher in the agriculturally less developed states. Keeping these in view, we try to see (a) changes in the share of ID to TD among SCLHs across the states, and (b) the position of developed and less developed states in the ratio of IDTD.

The statewise ranks in terms of share of ID in the total debt for five points of time for both SCLHs and ALHs are presented in Table 2. At the national level, the institutional debt has increased substantially for both groups of households between 1974-75 and 1993-94 (see, Figure 1). While the real value of institutional debt of SCLHs has increased from Rs. 32 in 1974-75 to Rs. 259 in 1993-94, the same has increased from



Rs. 52 to Rs. 334 among ALHs during the same period. In terms of share, IDTD accounted for only about 5.76 per cent in the total debt of SCLHs in 1974-75, but it significantly increased to 30.10 per cent in 1993-94. Though the share of IDTD has increased from 8.90 per cent to 35.85 per cent among ALHs, the increasing rate of share of IDTD is relatively higher among SCLHs compared to ALHs. For instance, while the share of ID in the total debt has increased 5.23 times among SCLHs between 1974-75 and 1993-94, the same has increased to only 4.03 times among ALHs during this period. This confutes the common argument that SCLHs are continued to suffer with the heavy burden of debt from non-institutional sources.

As observed at the national level, the share of ID in the total debt has increased substantially in all the states between 1974-75 and 1993-94 among both SCLHs and ALHs. However, the share of IDTD has not increased uniformly across the states, as expected (see, Table 3). For instance, during 1993-94, the share of IDTD of SCLHs is more than the national level average in states like Gujarat, HP, JK, Kerala, MP, Maharashtra, Orissa, TN, UP and West Bengal. Importantly, it was about 50 per cent in

Kerala and Orissa. What is important here is that except Tamil Nadu, all other states are agriculturally not very prosperous states. Our data further show that the increasing rate of IDTD is also very high in these states. The fact that comes out clearly from here is that the less developed states are not heavily indebted to non-institutional sources like moneylenders and others. The position of ALHs is also almost similar to the condition of SCLHs.

Table 2: Share of Institutional Debt to Total Debt: State-wise Ranks

(Ranks are in Descending Order)

Rank	All Agricultural Labour Households					Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour Households				
	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993 -94	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987- 88	1993 -94
1	MH	MH	HR	OR	KE	HP	MH	HR	KE	KE
2	KE	KE	OR	KE	MH	MH	OR	OR	OR	OR
3	OR	OR	HP	MH	MP	KE	KA	India	KR	MP
4	PJ	KA	KE	KA	OR	AS	KE	HP	WB	MH
5	KA	GJ	India	HP	WB	PJ	MP	MH	HR	WB
6	HP	MP	MH	HR	UP	OR	WB	KA	MH	UP
7	HR	India	KA	RJ	India	HR	India	KE	GJ	JK
8	MP	WB	JK	GJ	JK	MP	HP	JK	HP	BI
9	India	HP	MP	MP	GJ	India	PJ	WB	RJ	TN
10	TN	HR	WB	India	BI	JK	TN	TN	JK	India
11	WB	TN	TN	BI	TN	TN	HR	GJ	India	KA
12	GJ	PJ	GJ	UP	KA	WB	UP	MP	TN	HP
13	AS	AP	RJ	WB	HP	KA	GJ	UP	MP	GJ
14	AP	UP	AP	TN	HR	UP	AP	PJ	UP	PJ
15	UP	RJ	PJ	PJ	PJ	AP	RJ	RJ	BI	AS
16	JK	JK	UP	JK	AP	RJ	BI	AP	PJ	HR
17	RJ	BI	AS	AP	RJ	GJ	JK	AS	AP	AP
18	BI	AS	BI	AS	AS	BI	AS	BI	AS	RJ
All-India	8.90	19.24	44.06	34.58	35.85	5.76	13.36	59.85	39.16	30.10
Avg. Avg. of 17 states	9.95	18.60	33.89	38.79	32.74	11.47	16.00	35.01	45.30	32.73
CV	70.15	71.82	67.41	54.62	63.33	130.81	89.37	64.79	44.16	56.04

Source: RLE (various years).

In order to understand the association between IDTD and other variables, correlation is computed using pooled state-wise cross section data corresponding to five time points namely 1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94. It shows that IDTD is positively and significantly associated with CI, PDTD and EOI and negatively (significantly) related with IOI and HWL (see, Table 4). The positive correlation value of PDTD, CI and EOI implies that share of institutional source of debt in the total debt is higher in those states where the share of productive debt to total debt and cropping intensity are higher. The negative correlation between HWL and IDTD suggests that institutional source of debt is less in those states where share of the scheduled castes labour households without cultivated land is higher.

Table 3: State-wise Share of Institutional Debt to Total Debt by Agricultural Labour Households (per cent)

States	All Agricultural Labour Households					Scheduled Castes Agricultural Labour Households				
	1974	1977	1983	1987	1993	1974	1977	1983	1987	1993
	-75	-78	-88	-88	-94	-75	-78	-88	-88	-94
AP	4.86	11.70	17.40	15.14	16.36	2.96	8.81	16.25	16.54	11.98
Assam	6.96	2.42	8.60	1.74	4.13	13.93	0.00	10.26	9.91	18.52
Bihar	1.23	2.50	6.53	29.03	29.30	1.08	2.85	7.18	29.64	36.75
Gujarat	7.88	24.90	18.83	43.30	31.52	2.71	8.91	29.12	55.42	20.27
Haryana	10.50	14.87	94.44	53.32	18.71	11.09	11.45	96.54	58.08	17.86
HP	11.09	15.44	56.12	53.43	21.09	64.92	12.99	55.59	52.95	21.81
JK	3.61	6.25	35.18	20.52	34.48	5.58	1.66	35.16	40.77	38.74
Karnataka	11.60	29.96	38.46	56.51	22.82	5.00	32.97	47.16	66.15	25.66
Kerala	23.92	41.25	53.14	72.45	81.91	19.76	26.95	38.04	77.78	78.26
MP	9.35	21.94	32.68	40.97	57.47	6.72	17.61	26.87	34.71	47.70
Maharashtra	27.04	49.41	43.74	60.94	62.21	21.31	55.63	48.67	57.71	44.01
Orissa	14.93	33.68	63.64	73.08	49.63	11.45	34.56	66.63	74.01	54.19
Punjab	12.99	12.98	17.29	20.72	17.55	11.77	12.84	18.68	22.61	19.60
Rajasthan	2.37	8.13	18.58	50.67	4.17	2.94	5.08	17.90	43.58	3.18
TN	8.50	13.75	24.27	22.19	26.99	5.43	11.60	29.92	35.58	31.48
UP	4.01	10.15	16.19	22.99	38.31	3.20	10.65	19.33	31.01	42.83
WB	8.25	16.80	30.95	22.48	39.93	5.16	17.39	31.90	63.64	43.55
All-India Average	8.90	19.24	44.06	34.58	35.85	5.76	13.36	59.85	39.16	30.10
Average of 17 states	9.95	18.60	33.89	38.79	32.74	11.47	16.00	35.01	45.30	32.73
CV	70.15	71.82	67.41	54.62	63.33	130.81	89.37	64.79	44.16	56.04

Source: RLE (various years).

Table 4: Correlation Value: IDTD with other Variables

Variables	ALHs	SCLHs
ADME/CPIAL	0.19	0.18
AES/FS	-0.02	-0.08
ASL	0.04	-0.13
CI	0.11	0.28 ^b
GCA/LHs	-0.17	-0.16
GIA/LHs	-0.17	-0.17
GIA/GCA	-0.14	-0.12
IOI	-0.36 ^a	-0.40 ^a
HWL	-0.17	-0.25 ^b
SCLHs/ALHs	-0.14	-0.05
PDTD	0.83 ^a	0.75 ^a
EOI/CPIAL	0.40 ^a	0.35 ^a

Notes: a, b, c are significant at 1, 5, and 10 percent level respectively.

Sources: computed from RLE (various years); GOI (various years).

V Productive Purpose Debt in the Total Debt

As in the case of source of debt, purpose of debt is also an important factor in determining the indebtedness of labour households. The repaying capacity of the borrower is expected to increase if the loan is used for the productive purpose, as it generates income and thereby enhances the repaying capacity of the borrower. Therefore, one would naturally expect that the share of productive purpose debt of the labour households would be less in most of the states. Sometime, it is also possible that even after using the loan for productive purposes, the borrower may not be able to repay the loan in time due to vagaries of monsoon, which is a common phenomenon in most part of the country. Our expectation here is that the share of PDTD would be less in the states where irrigation ratio is higher and agriculture is relatively developed. While looking at the state-wise position of share of productive debt in the total debt across five points of time, we also try to find out the states that are falling above the national average and below the national average in terms of share of productive debt at all five points of time and their broad characteristics. Table 5 presents the state-wise ranks in terms of share of productive debt for both groups of households: ALHs and SCLHs.

Table 5: Share of Productive Purpose Debt to Total Debt: State-wise Ranks
(Ranks are in Descending Order)

Rank	All Agricultural Labour Households					Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour Households				
	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993 -94	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993 -94
1	MH	MH	HR	OR	MH	MH	MH	HA	OR	KE
2	TN	OR	HP	MH	MP	TN	OR	HP	KA	MH
3	KE	AP	OR	RJ	LE	AP	WB	OR	MH	BI
4	GJ	TN	MH	HA	GJ	OR	TN	MH	HA	OR
5	KA	KA	India	KA	BI	MP	AP	India	RA	WB
6	India	India	JK	MP	KA	India	MP	JK	WB	KA
7	AP	MP	KA	GJ	India	KA	India	KA	AS	TN
8	MP	GJ	MP	India	UP	UP	KA	MP	India	MP
9	HP	KE	WB	AP	WB	PJ	RJ	WB	TN	UP
10	OR	RJ	KE	WB	OR	WB	UP	KE	JK	India
11	WB	WB	AP	UP	TN	JK	HA	AP	UP	GJ
12	UP	HR	RJ	KE	HA	RJ	KE	RJ	AP	HA
13	PJ	UP	TN	JK	AP	GJ	PJ	TN	MP	PJ
14	RJ	PJ	UP	TN	PJ	KE	GJ	UP	BI	AP
15	AS	AS	GJ	PJ	HP	HA	BI	GJ	GJ	HP
16	HR	BI	PJ	HP	JR	BI	HP	PJ	PJ	RJ
17	JK	HP	BI	BI	AS	HP	JK	BI	HP	AS
18	BI	JK	AS	AS	JK	AS	AS	AS	KE	JK
All-India Avg.	12.67	20.91	41.42	29.05	28.30	8.81	14.01	29.05	30.36	21.63
Avg. of 17 states	11.26	16.94	30.37	29.21	15.35	7.59	13.36	30.37	31.33	20.93
CV	55.62	61.28	74.44	51.07	69.63	72.77	86.99	74.44	43.67	71.83

Source: RLE (various years).

Rural Labour Enquiry provides data by purpose of debt under six headings. They are household consumption, marriage and other ceremonial occasions, productive purposes, purchase of land and construction of building, repayment of debt and others. For the present study, except debt under productive purposes, all other items are considered as non-productive or consumption⁴. The statewide share of productive debt is arrived at by dividing productive debt with the total debt of each state.



At the national level, the share of productive purpose debt in the total debt (PDTD) has increased from 8.81 per cent in 1974-75 to 21.63 per cent in 1993-94 among SCLHs. Similarly, among ALHs, it has increased from 12.67 per cent to 28.30 per cent during this period. Among the two groups of labour households, the percentage of productive debt in the total debt has increased relatively faster among SCLHs (2.46 times) than that of ALHs (2.23 times) between 1974-75 and 1993-94 (see, Figure 2). This is against our expectation. As the productive purpose loan is expected to increase the repaying capacity of the borrowers, we have expected that the share of productive debt would be less across the states or it would be constant over the years. This could not happen possibly due to the following two reasons. First, SCLHs may have taken the loan for productive purposes and may have used it for the purpose of consumption due to their inadequate earnings from wages and other sources. Second, the loan taken for productive purposes may not have increased their earnings and thereby repaying capacity.

As regards state-wise position, the percentage of PDTD of SCLHs has increased in all the 17 states between 1974-75 and 1993-94. The percentage of PDTD of SCLHs is found to be very high in states like Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, TN, UP and West Bengal during 1993-94. Importantly, Orissa, Maharashtra and West Bengal continued to have more than the national average of PDTD at all five points of time (see, Table 6). Since the area under rain-fed cultivation is relatively higher in these states, frequent droughts may have affected the crop cultivation as well as wage earnings and thereby their repaying capacity. On the other hand, the share of productive purpose

⁴ Though the loan used for purchasing of land is productive debt, we could not include this under the category of productive debt, as data are not available separately under the heading of purchase of land.

debt is very low in states like Punjab at all five time points, as expected. Higher wage earnings and assured employment opportunities available in Punjab could have helped to increase the repaying capacity of the agricultural labour households belonging to the Scheduled Castes. In the case of ALHs, except in Assam, the percentage of PDTD has increased in all other states between 1974-75 and 1993-94.

Table 6: State-wise Share of Production Purpose Debt to Total Debt by Agricultural Labour Households (per cent)

States	All Agricultural Labour Households					Scheduled Castes Agricultural Labour Households				
	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993 -94	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993 -94
AP	12.46	25.23	21.79	28.66	17.66	11.07	16.59	21.79	24.12	9.01
Assam	6.52	7.66	3.14	2.48	0.92	0.50	0.00	3.14	34.67	0.00
Bihar	4.19	5.69	7.30	14.52	29.37	3.76	3.70	7.30	21.61	33.69
Gujarat	13.02	17.98	13.95	29.66	29.42	4.58	6.15	13.95	21.07	21.50
Haryana	5.40	15.30	92.20	44.58	19.11	3.77	11.27	92.20	47.34	17.79
HP	10.89	3.11	67.16	17.90	5.38	2.19	3.03	67.16	11.51	5.57
JK	5.02	2.21	34.88	19.34	0.00	5.80	1.06	34.88	28.26	0.00
Karnataka	12.80	22.00	32.55	40.20	28.59	8.59	12.69	32.55	50.16	25.14
Kerala	14.52	17.71	22.85	22.98	37.67	3.95	9.88	22.85	11.05	50.89
MP	11.05	20.36	31.17	30.21	41.50	8.91	14.31	31.17	23.56	24.54
Maharashtra	30.54	44.22	42.94	52.42	56.63	24.70	48.87	42.94	49.45	47.31
Orissa	10.43	28.95	49.28	57.53	23.93	8.91	24.16	49.28	55.02	30.47
Punjab	8.66	9.83	11.53	18.06	10.02	7.55	9.04	11.53	19.25	10.94
Rajasthan	7.60	15.82	20.44	49.00	2.30	5.20	11.54	20.44	43.98	3.20
TN	19.35	23.05	20.21	18.83	41.41	13.76	19.71	20.21	28.48	24.87
UP	9.31	13.27	15.25	22.99	26.30	8.23	11.42	15.25	26.88	23.97
WB	9.71	15.57	29.59	27.17	24.61	7.51	23.67	29.59	36.22	26.99
All-India Average	12.67	20.91	41.42	29.05	28.30	8.81	14.01	41.42	30.36	21.63
Avg. of 17 states	11.26	16.94	30.37	29.21	22.05	7.59	13.36	30.37	31.33	20.93
CV of 17 states	55.62	61.28	74.44	51.07	69.63	72.77	86.99	74.44	43.67	71.83

Source: RLE (various years).

In order to understand the association of PDTD with other variables, correlation is computed using pooled state-wise cross section data corresponding to five time points (see, Table 7). It shows that PDTD of SCLHs is positively and significantly associated with IDTD and EOI. We expected that there would be a significant and positive correlation between PDTD and ASL. But, we could get only a very weak (but positive) correlation between the two variables. On the whole, one can conclude from the above that the share of productive purpose debt of SCLHs has been increasing across the states. The share of productive purpose debt is also found to be very high in those states where area under rain-fed cultivation is higher.

Table 7: Correlation Value: PDTD with other Variables

Variables	ALHs	SCLHs
ADME/CPIAL	-0.16	-0.10
AES/FS	0.15	0.03
ASL	0.16	0.05
CI	-0.05	0.05
GCA/LHs	-0.21	-0.19
GIA/LHs	-0.26 ^b	-0.20
GIA/GCA	-0.08	-0.04
IOI	-0.23 ^b	-0.32 ^a
IDTD	.83 ^a	0.75 ^a
HWL	-0.06	-0.10
SCLHs/ALHs	-0.13	-0.12
EOI/CPIAL	0.51 ^a	0.44 ^a

Notes: a, b, c are significant at 1, 5, and 10 percent level respectively.

Sources: Computed using RLE (various years); GOI (various years).

VI Incidence of Indebtedness and Factors Determining it

One of the main objectives of the paper is to analyse the incidence of indebtedness among the states across five time points mentioned earlier. Incidence of indebtedness refers to the percentage of households indebted among agricultural labour households. Here, besides analysing the incidence of indebtedness, we have also tried to compare how far the incidence of indebtedness of SCLHs is different from that of ALHs. The state-wise position of incidence of indebtedness is presented in Table 8.

It is evident from the table that the incidence of indebtedness has been declining consistently among both SCLHs and ALHs since 1974-75 at the national level (see, Figure 3). For instance, the incidence of indebtedness (IOI) of SCLHs has declined from 70.80 per cent in 1974-75 to 37.90 per cent in 1993-94, a reduction of 46.47 per cent points. Similarly, the incidence of indebtedness of ALHs has declined from 66.40 per cent to 35.50 per cent, a reduction of 46.54 per cent points during the same period. Though there is a considerable reduction in the percentage of indebted households among both SCLHs and ALHs, the percentage of indebted households is higher among the SCLHs when compared to ALHs in all five-time points. As we expected, this clearly indicates that the incidence of indebtedness is still higher among SCLHs. This could be possibly because of inadequate wage earnings and absence of income from other sources.

The results arrived at the national level may not completely reflect the position of states, as the states are different in terms of agricultural development, availability of irrigation, wage rate and employment opportunities, number of landless agricultural labour households, etc. Therefore, in order to find out the state-wise position of IOI across five points of time, the states are classified in terms of ranks based on IOI (see, Table 8). Among SCLHs, the incidence of indebtedness is above the national average in states like AP, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu in all five time points. On the other hand, states like Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa are continued to be below the national average at all five time points. This is also almost true in the case of ALHs across all four points of time. Since earnings and employment opportunities are higher in the agriculturally advanced states, we have expected that IOI of the developed states would be less. Unexpectedly, this is not true in our study. Though Punjab is one of the developed states in agriculture, the incidence of indebtedness is very high across all five

points of time among both SCLHs and ALHs. Similar kind of trend is observed in relatively advanced states like Haryana, AP and Tamil Nadu as well. Since Punjab is agriculturally developed state in India, we have tried to find out as to why the incidence of indebtedness is very high among SCLHs. We have noted two possible reasons for this. First, the percentage of SCLHs to ALHs is around 80 per cent in Punjab, which is the highest among the states in India. Second, the percentage of landless SCLHs is also found to be very high in Punjab when compared to other states. Does this mean that agricultural development of the state has less relevance as far as the incidence of indebtedness is concerned? Detailed field level data based studies are needed to answer this important question.

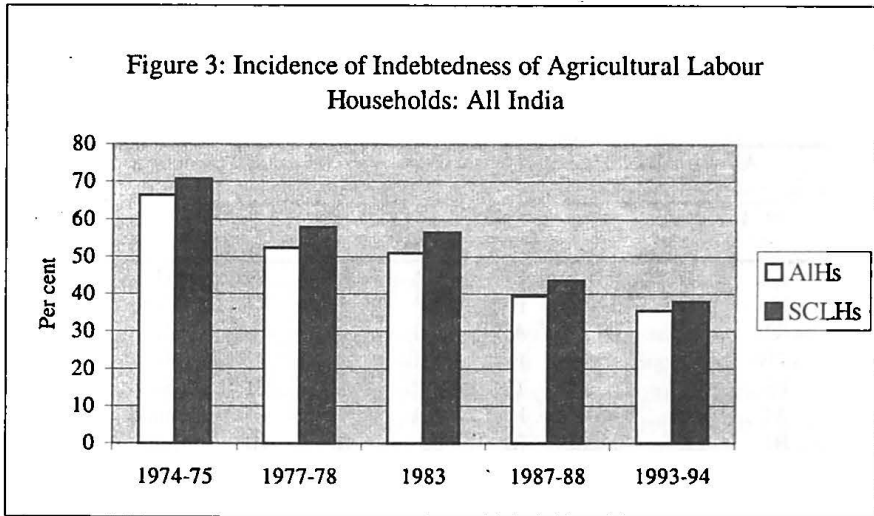
Table 8: Incidence (Percentage of Indebted Households) of Indebtedness: State-wise Ranks (Ranks are in Descending Order)

Rank	All Agricultural Labour Households					Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labour Households				
	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993- 94	1974 -75	1977 -78	1983	1987 -88	1993 -94
1	KE	KE	AP	PJ	HA	KE	KE	AP	JK	HA
2	HA	HR	TN	HA	AP	RJ	TN	TN	PJ	AP
3	RJ	TN	BI	AP	AS	TN	HA	RJ	AP	AS
4	TN	AP	PJ	JK	WB	HA	AP	PJ	TN	WB
5	PJ	PJ	KE	TN	UP	AP	PJ	BI	HA	KA
6	AP	RJ	RJ	KE	KA	PJ	RJ	India	KE	UP
7	BI	JK	India	RJ	GJ	BI	HP	KE	RJ	MH
8	UP	BI	KA	WB	India	UP	India	UP	MP	India
9	JK	India	WB	India	TN	KA	BI	KA	India	OR
10	India	KA	MH	OR	MH	India	JK	WB	WB	TN
11	KA	HP	UP	BI	KE	MP	WB	MP	MH	GJ
12	MP	UP	HA	MH	PJ	OR	KA	MH	OR	KE
13	OR	MH	OR	MP	BI	GJ	UP	AS	BI	RJ
14	HP	GJ	MP	GJ	OR	JK	MP	HA	UP	PJ
15	GJ	OR	JK	UP	RJ	MH	GJ	HP	GJ	BI
16	WB	MP	GJ	KA	MP	HP	OR	OR	HP	JK
17	MA	WB	HP	HP	JK	WB	MH	GJ	KA	MP
18	AS	AS	AS	AS	HP	AS	AS	JK	AS	HP
All-India Avg.	66.4	52.30	51.05	39.40	70.80	70.80	57.90	56.47	43.60	37.90
Avg. of 17 states	65.11	51.06	45.29	39.32	33.74	66.67	55.24	48.65	42.90	36.45
CV	21.21	31.88	25.94	30.59	34.03	21.52	26.66	28.28	29.02	33.46

Source: RLE (various years).

As the wage rates and employment opportunities are less in under developed states, one would normally expect that IOI of agricultural labour households will be higher in agriculturally less developed states. But, against our expectation, IOI of SCLHs is found to be very low in agriculturally under developed regions like Bihar, Kerala, Gujarat, JK, MP and Rajasthan. For instance, during 1993-94, the average incidence of indebtedness of these six states comes to only about 24.33 per cent, which is 13.57 per cent point less than the national average. The low incidence of indebtedness among these six states is

possibly because of two reasons. First, the share of SCLHs to total ALHs is less in these states. Second, since the repaying capacity of the labour households is poor in these states, SCLHs may not have got the required loan from any of the sources. On the whole, what appears from the above is that the incidence of indebtedness of SCLHs is higher in the agriculturally advanced states when compared to the agriculturally less developed states.



After having understood the incidence of indebtedness across the states, we have tried to find out the factors that determine the incidence of indebtedness. For this, multiple regression (OLS method) analysis is performed using pooled state-wise cross section data corresponding to five points of time: 1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94. Though many factors determine the incidence of indebtedness, we have included the following nine variables, which are expected to determine the incidence of indebtedness to a considerable extent. Regression analysis is performed separately for SCLHs and ALHs. The estimated regression equation is as follows:

$$IOI = a + b_1 ADEM/CPIAL + b_2 AES/FS + b_3 ASL + b_4 IDTD + b_5 HWL + b_6 SCLHs/ALHs + b_7 PDTD + b_8 GCA/LHs + b_9 GIA/LHs$$

The results of regression for both SCLHs and ALHs are presented in Table 9. Let us first discuss the results of SCLHs. Among the nine variables included in the regression equation, three variables (GCA/LHs, PDTD, ADEM/CPIAL) have negatively and significantly influenced the incidence of indebtedness of SCLHs. The coefficient of GCA/LHs suggests that an increase in gross cropped area per household reduces the incidence of indebtedness. It is true that when GCA/LHs is higher in any state, the demand for agricultural labour will be higher which will ultimately increase the income for labour households. The incidence of indebtedness is expected to be less when the

income of SCLHs is higher. Importantly, the coefficient of PDTD is negatively and significantly influenced the incidence of indebtedness. This suggests that the state that has higher percentage of PDTD has less incidence of indebtedness. The negative coefficient of ADEM/CPIAL indicates that an increase in daily earnings of male labourers belonging to SCLHs reduces the indebtedness.

Table 9: Factors Determining the Incidence of Indebtedness: Regression Results

Variables	ALHs	SCLHs
1. ADEM/CPIAL	-2.09 (1.88) ^c	-2.31(2.61) ^a
2. AES/FS	0.53 (2.25) ^b	0.62(3.07) ^a
3. ASL	5.29 (0.90)	4.34(0.95)
4. GCA/LHs	-0.43(2.29) ^b	-0.20(2.26) ^b
5. GIA/LHs	1.38(2.27) ^b	0.54(2.16) ^b
6. IDTD	-0.13(0.68)	-0.10(0.89)
7. HWL	-0.05(0.59)	0.02(0.46)
8. SCLHs/LHs	0.21(2.06) ^b	0.20(2.35) ^b
9. PDTD	-0.14(0.63)	-0.23(1.61) ^d
Constant	33.24 (2.64) ^a	37.64(3.05) ^a
R ²	0.32	0.41
Adjusted R ²	0.24	0.34
D-W	2.06	2.17
F	3.09	5.83
N	85	85

Notes: a, b, c and d are significant at 1, 5, 10 and 20 percent level respectively.

Figures in brackets are 't' values.

Sources: Computed using RLE (various years); GOI (various years).

The coefficients of variables such as, AES/FS, SCLHs/ALHs and GIA/ALHs are turned to be positive and significant in determining the incidence of indebtedness. The positive coefficient of SCLHs/ALHs suggests that an increase in the percentage of SCLHs to ALHs increases the incidence of indebtedness. Similarly, the positive coefficient of GIA/LHs implies that incidence of indebtedness is higher in those state where the ratio of irrigated area to labour households is higher. We have expected that the coefficient of AES/FS will negatively influence IOI, as higher earning strength of the labour households is expected to reduce IOI. But the coefficient of AES/FS turned out to be positive. The regression results of ALHs are almost similar to the results of SCLHs. On the whole, the regression analysis suggests that the incidence of indebtedness is higher in those states that have higher irrigated area per labour household, higher ratio of earning strength to family size and higher percentage of SCLHs to ALHs.

VII Extent of Indebtedness and Factors Determining it

Extent of indebtedness (EOI) refers to average amount of debt per agricultural labour households. While IOI indicates the percentage of households indebted, EOI explains the intensity of indebtedness of the labour households. In this section, we try to find out the following two aspects: (a) state-wise position of average debt (in real value) of both SCLHs and ALHs and how it has been changing across five points of time, and (b) the factors that determine the extent of indebtedness of both SCLHs and ALHs.

The average amount of real debt of SCLHs and ALHs at the national level and the ranks of each state in terms of real debt per household are presented in Table 10. It is clear from the table that the average amount of debt in real value has increased since 1974-75 with significant divergence across five time points among both groups of households (see, Figure 4)⁵. While the average amount of debt (per household) of SCLHs has increased from Rs. 556 in 1974-75 to Rs. 860 in 1993-94, the same increased from Rs. 584 to Rs. 931 for ALHs during the same period. Though, the average amount of debt is by and large same for both SCLHs and ALHs during 1974-75, the amount of increase of debt is relatively less for SCLHs (54.68 percent) when compared to ALHs, where it increased nearly 59.42 percent between 1974-75 and 1993-94.

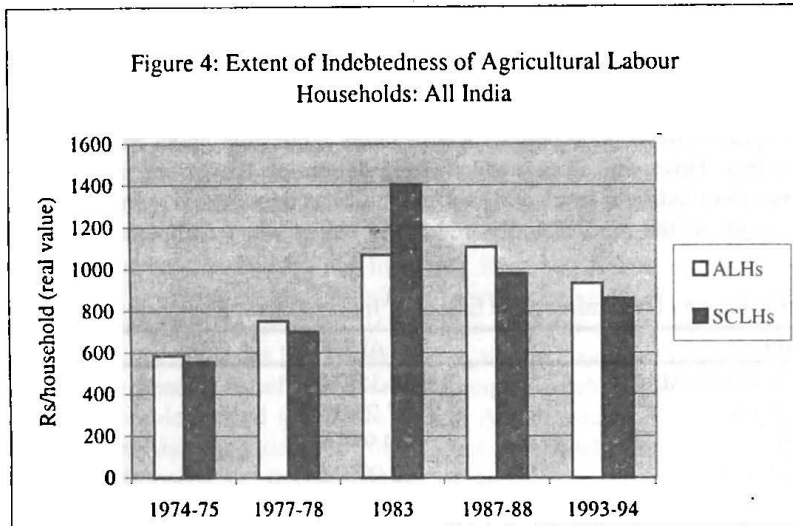
Table 10: Extent of Indebtedness: Statewise Ranks based Real Value of Debt
(Ranks are in Descending Order)

Rank	Agricultural Labour Households					Scheduled Castes Agricultural Labour Households				
	1974-75	1977-78	1983	1987-88	1993-94	1974-75	1977-78	1983	1987-88	1993-94
1	HA	RJ	HA	RJ	KE	HP	RJ	HA	RJ	HP
2	RJ	HA	JK	UP	HP	HA	HA	RJ	HA	HA
3	PJ	PJ	RJ	TN	HA	RJ	PJ	India	UP	GJ
4	HP	GJ	MP	HA	MP	PJ	GJ	HP	MP	MP
5	GJ	TN	PJ	AP	AP	GJ	HP	PJ	GJ	RJ
6	KA	AP	HP	KE	TN	MP	UP	MP	HP	AP
7	UP	KA	KE	India	MH	UP	AP	UP	India	PJ
8	TN	HP	India	KA	RJ	KA	KA	KE	AP	KE
9	AP	India	UP	MP	PJ	India	TN	GJ	PJ	MH
10	MP	UP	GJ	HP	India	TN	India	KA	KA	TN
11	India	MH	AP	PJ	UP	AP	MH	AP	KE	UP
12	MH	BI	KA	WB	KA	JK	NP	TN	MH	India
13	JK	MP	TN	MH	GJ	MH	JK	OR	BI	KA
14	OR	KE	MH	BI	OR	OR	KE	MH	WB	OR
15	BI	JK	BI	OR	BI	BI	BI	BI	TN	BI
16	KE	OR	OR	GJ	WB	KE	OR	WB	OR	JK
17	AS	AS	WB	AS	JK	WB	WB	JK	JK	WB
18	WB	WB	AS	JK	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
All-India	584	752	1069	1105	931	556	700	1403	979	860
Avg. of 17 States	712	861	1936	1067	1010	762	796	2305	952	983
CV	56.75	54.92	207.04	32.62	51.49	77.57	63.97	275.57	46.01	63.46

Source: RLE (various years).

In order to find out the factors that determine the extent of indebtedness of the agricultural labour households, multiple regression (OLS method) is computed using pooled state-wise cross section data corresponding to five time points: 1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94. Regression analysis is performed using nine variables that are considered to be important in determining the extent of indebtedness. These same

⁵ Two households in Haryana reported a debt of Rs. 3.53 lakh during 1983 and hence the average debt at the national level was relatively higher in 1983 when compared to 1987-88.



nine variables are used for computing regression pertaining to the incidence of indebtedness as well. Table 11 presents the results of regression pertaining to the extent of indebtedness separately for both SCLHs and ALHs. Out of nine variables included in the model, none of the variables have negatively and significantly influenced the extent of indebtedness of SCLHs. The coefficients of variables namely HWL, SCLHs/LHs and PDTD have positively and significantly influenced the extent of indebtedness of SCLHs. The positive coefficient of HWL suggests that an increase in percentage of agricultural labour households without cultivated land will increase the extent of indebtedness significantly. This is possibly because the states like Punjab and Haryana have higher HWL and their average amount of debt is also very high when compared to other states. Similarly, the coefficient of SCLHs/ALHs explains that when the percentage of the Scheduled Castes agricultural labour households to the total agricultural labour household increases, the average amount of debt also increases. The coefficient of PDTD suggests that the states, which have higher ratio of productive debt to total debt also, have higher extent of indebtedness. The regression results of ALHs is almost similar to the results of SCLHs. On the whole, the following points emerge out from the analysis relating to the extent of indebtedness. First, the real value of debt of SCLHs is more than the national level average in the agriculturally advanced states and below the national level average in less developed states. Second, the average amount of debt is very high in those states where proportion of SCLHs to ALHs is higher. Third, the average amount of debt is higher in those states that have higher share of productive purpose debt in the total debt.

As far as the state-wise position of the extent of indebtedness is concerned, the average real debt of SCLHs is very high in states like Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Punjab at all five points of time. It is worth noting here that the incidence of indebtedness

is also very high in these states. Almost a similar kind of trend is noticed among ALHs as well. As observed in the incidence of indebtedness, the extent of indebtedness of SCLHs is found to be very less in the agriculturally less developed states like Orissa, Assam, Maharashtra and West Bengal. These states occupy the lowest ranks in the average amount of debt at all five time points. Our data also show that the average amount of debt is much higher than the national level average in the agriculturally prosperous states. This is against the general belief. It also raises a question about the validity of trickle-down effect. However, since many factors determine the extent of indebtedness, one requires a detailed field level study to find out as to why the average amount of real debt is very high in the agriculturally developed states when compared to less developed states.

Table 11: Factors Determining the Extent of Indebtedness: Regression Results

Variables	ALHs	SCLHs
1. ADEM/CPIAL	38.55(0.34)	-49.02(0.31)
2. AES/FS	-27.25(1.14)	0.23(0.01)
3. ASL	309.94(0.52)	475.58(0.59)
4. GCA/LHs	12.09(0.64)	12.93(0.83)
5. GIA/LHs	-26.41(0.43)	-25.18(0.57)
6. IDTD	-1.83(0.90)	20.63(1.00)
7. HWL	17.99(2.00) ^b	28.37(2.27) ^b
8. SCLHs/Ahs	21.22(2.02) ^a	47.39(3.17) ^a
9. PDTD	66.37(2.86) ^a	66.29(2.60) ^a
Constant	-1189.36(0.93)	-4294.97(1.97) ^b
R ²	0.41	0.37
Adjusted R ²	0.34	0.29
D-W	2.21	2.21
F	5.86	4.82
N	85	85

Notes: a, b, c and d are significant at 1, 5, 10 and 20 percent level respectively.

Figures in brackets are 't' values.

Sources: Computed using RLE (various years); GOI (various years).

VIII Conclusion

Agricultural labour household belonging to the Scheduled Castes is the weakest section of the rural society. Wage earnings are the only source of income for majority of these households. Most of the time, the earnings are inadequate to meet their consumption expenditure. Therefore, they are forced to incur debt to meet their consumption expenditures. Though several studies have analysed the indebtedness of farmers and rural households, not many studies have analysed exclusively the indebtedness of the agricultural labour households belonging to Scheduled Castes. In this study, therefore, an attempt is made to find out the incidence as well as extent of indebtedness of SCLHs using state-wise cross section data pertaining to five time points (1974-75, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94) available through RLE. The study covers 17 major states of India. The data for this study have been collected from different reports of Rural Labour Enquiry. In order to find out the state-wise position of incidence and extent of indebtedness, states are classified in terms of ranks based on their level of indebtedness. Regression analysis has been performed using pooled state-wise cross section data

corresponding to five points of time mentioned above to find out the factors determining the incidence, as well as, extent of indebtedness.

The results of the study show that the incidence of indebtedness of SCLHs has declined consistently from 1974-75 to 1993-94 across the states. While the incidence of indebtedness is found to be higher than the national average in the agriculturally advanced states, the same is found to be below the national level average in the agriculturally less developed states like Orissa, Assam, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The regression analysis suggests that the incidence of indebtedness is higher in the states that are having higher percentage of SCLHs to ALHs and gross irrigated area per agricultural labour household. With regard to the extent of indebtedness, our study results show that the real value of debt of SCLHs has increased from Rs. 556 in 1974-75 to Rs.860 in 1993-94 at the national level. Though the average amount of debt of SCLHs has increased between 1974-75 and 1993-94 in all the 17 states considered for the analysis, it is found to be higher in states like Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan in all five time points. Contrary to the general belief, the average amount of debt of SCLHs is lower in the agriculturally less developed states like Orissa, Assam, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Regression analysis suggests that the extent of indebtedness is positively and significantly influenced by the percentage of agricultural labour households without cultivated land, proportion of SCLHs to ALHs and the share of productive purpose debt to total debt. Altogether, both the incidences as well as extent of indebtedness of SCLHs are found to be higher in the agriculturally advanced states than that of less developed states. Since the employment opportunities and wage earnings are higher in the agriculturally advanced states, it was expected that the indebtedness of SCLHs would be less in these states. But, this was not found to be true in our study. Since many factors determine the indebtedness of the agricultural labour households, one needs to carry out a detailed field level study in order to find out as to why the indebtedness of SCLHs is higher in the agriculturally developed states than that of the less developed states.

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Land, Labour and Dalits in Independent India

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This paper attempts to examine the changes in the occupational distribution of workforce and their impact on economic development with special reference to Dalit (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) agricultural-workers at the national level in the post-independence period in the context of agrarian reform and agricultural growth. It also explores the linkages between incidence of poverty and extent of dependence on agriculture as landless labourers among the Dalits. The paper is divided into three parts. While the first part deals with the analysis of land, labour and poverty with special reference to Dalits at the macro level, second part presents some micro studies to understand the process of change in rural India. Third part summarises the paper and draws some conclusions.

I Analysis of Land, Labour and Poverty

Agriculture and Dalits

Dalits comprise of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. As per 1991 Census, SCs and STs constitute 16.40 per cent and 18.72 per cent of the total population (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) at all India level. Only 18.72 per cent of SC and 7.39 per cent of ST population live in urban areas as against 25.75 per cent of general population. That is, more than 81 per cent of SC population and about 93 per cent of ST population live in rural areas as against 74 per cent of general population.

The work participation rate of SCs (defined as the percentage of SC population participating in the work to their total population) is 39.25 per cent and that of STs is 49.3 per cent as against 37.46 per cent among general population in 1991. The better participation among SCs and STs is due to higher participation rate among SC and ST women (25.98 per cent and 43.71 per cent respectively) as against 22.25 per cent for the total women population of the country. The female work participation among SCs and STs are much higher in A.P. (46.7 per cent and 50.75 per cent) than at all India level. It is also to be noted that as per 1991 Census, 77 per cent of SC and 90 per cent of ST main workers depend on primary sector as against only 67 per cent that of general population. While the proportion of agricultural labourers among SCs and STs comes to about 49 per cent and 33 per cent of their main workers respectively, it is only 26 per cent in case to the general population (Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 1993, pp.1-10).

In view of the dependence of SCs and STs on agriculture, the analysis of the changes in agrarian structure and relations, in the context of agricultural reforms and growth may reveal in more detail the land and labour situation of Dalits. It could be seen from Table 1 that SC households constituting nearly 20 per cent of total rural households control only about 8 per cent of the total area owned, while other households with 70 per cent of total rural households control 82 per cent of area owned in 1982. By 1992 the SC rural households increased to more than 21 per cent and their share in land also increased to 10 per cent. On the other hand, the proportion of other households declined to 67 per

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cent with a decline of their share in area to 78 per cent. The position of ST households in terms of land ownership is better than that of SCs in 1982, the ST households constitute 9.7 per cent of total rural households and control 10 per cent of total area owned. By 1992 their households percentage increased to more than 11 per cent, while their share in area owned increased to nearly 11 per cent. However, the quality of land owned by ST households is inferior to that of land owned by others and their agricultural productivity is very low.

Table 1: Share of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Households in Total Area Owned and Landlessness among them (Rural)

Item	Year	Social Group			All
		SC	ST	Others	Households
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Percentage of distribution of households	1982	19.7	9.7	70.6	100
	1992	21.5	11.2	67.4	100
Percentage of distribution of area owned	1982	7.9	10.1	82.0	100
	1992	10.2	11.8	78.0	100
Percentage of landless households (owing no land less than 0.02 ha.)	1982	12.6	17.1	10.2	11.3
	1992	13.3	11.5	10.5	11.3
Percentage of semi-landless households	1982	48.0	16.3	24.9	28.6
	1992	47.5	22.3	27.4	35.2

Source: NSS Report No. 399 (48th Round, Jan.-Dec. 1992) 1997, p. 33.

Landlessness among the Dalits and Others

It is also seen from Table 1 that landlessness is more prevalent among SCs. The proportion of SC landless and semi-landless households were 12.6 per cent and 48 per cent respectively, 10.2 per cent and 24.9 per cent among the other rural households in 1982. By 1992 the landlessness among SCs increased to 13.3 per cent and semi-landlessness declined to 47.5 per cent. In the case of other households proper incidence of landlessness remained same and semi-landlessness increased to 27.4 per cent. The position of ST households is better in this respect also. Among STs the percentage of landless households and semi-landless households were 17.1 per cent and 16.3 per cent respectively in 1982 and their position improved by 1992. The ST landless households declined to 11.5 per cent and semi-landless households increased to 22.3 per cent. Thus, the position of Scheduled Castes in terms of their access to land deteriorated in 1980s despite agricultural growth rate of 3.2 per annum over the same decade. It is also to be noted that among the SC cultivators, about 73 per cent are marginal farmers as against 66 per cent that of all social groups. This clearly indicates that Dalits, particularly, Scheduled Castes depend on agriculture mostly as agricultural labourers for their livelihood in 1992 also.

Now, let us examine the occupational changes of Dalits vis-à-vis general population in the post green revolution period.

Occupational Distribution of Dalits

The following Table 2 shows the changes in the occupational structure during 1970-71 to 1990-91.

Table 2 : Occupational Distribution at All India Level (per cent to Total Main Workers)

Category	To Total SC			To Total ST			To Total General Population		
	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991
Cultivators	27.87	28.17	25.44	55.60	54.43	54.50	42.9	41.50	38.75
Agricultural Labourers	51.75	48.22	49.6	33.00	32.67	32.69	26.9	24.94	26.15
Non-farming workers	20.38	23.61	25.41	9.40	12.90	12.81	30.2	33.48	35.10

Sources: 1. Government of India, VII Five Year Plan (1987-1992), Vol.II, p.330; 2. Census of India, 1991, Series 1, Paper-1, Union Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.

It is evident that during 1971 to 1981 there was an increase in the proportion of SC cultivators from 27.97 per cent to 28.17 per cent accompanied by a decline of agricultural labourers from 51.75 per cent to 48.22 per cent. In case of general workers the percentage of cultivators declined from 42.9 per cent to 41.58 per cent. Percentage of agricultural labourers also declined from 26.9 per cent to 24.94 per cent during the same period. As regards the size of non-farming workers, it increased from 20.38 per cent to 23.61 per cent among SCs. Thus, there is some marginal improvement of the SCs in terms of number of cultivators and non-farming workers. This indicates some upward mobility of SC workers also which may be attributed to redistribution of waste and surplus lands under 20 Point Programme in 1970s. But during 1981 to 1991 the percentage of SC cultivators declined from 28.17 per cent to 25.44 per cent with an increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers (from 48.22 per cent to 49.06 per cent) indicating a trend of impoverishment of agricultural workers. Of course, in the case of workers of general population also the percentage of cultivators declined from 41.58 per cent to 38.75 per cent with a corresponding increase of agricultural labourers from 24.94 to 26.15 per cent. However, the non-farming workers increased from 33.48 to 35.10 per cent indicating the occupational shift. In case of STs, there was a decline in the percentage of cultivators as well as agricultural labourers marginally with an increase in the non-agricultural activities from 9.4 per cent to 12.9 per cent during 1971 to 1981. During 1981 to 1991 their share as cultivators and agricultural labourers almost remained same.

Thus, during 1971-1991 SC workers remained mostly as agricultural labourers although there was some change in their composition. It was revealed from the village level studies that the number of attached labourers declined significantly and many of them have converted to casual labourers due to market forces unleashed by green revolution and the state intervention in the form of antipoverty programmes in postgreen revolution period (Nancharaiyah, 1988, pp. 105-106). Many studies noted the higher concentration of poverty among agricultural labour households.

Incidence of Poverty among Dalits

The data on incidence of poverty among various social groups at all India level are presented in Table 3.

It is evident from the Table 3 that though the incidence of poverty has declined during 1983-84 to 1993-94 it is much higher among SCs (48.37 per cent) and STs (51.40 per cent) than that of the general population (35.97 per cent) in 1993-94.

Table 3: Incidence of Poverty among Social Groups in Percentages (Head Count Ratio)

Year	Total Population	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
1983-84	44.48	52.60	63.14
1993-94	35.97	48.37	51.40

Source: Government of India, IX Five Year Plan, p. 361.

From Table 4 it follows that there has been an increase in the per capita consumer expenditure of all social groups in rural areas at all India level from 1983-84 to 1987-88. It is also observed that agriculture registered a growth rate of 3.2 per cent during 1980s. However, there was significant gap between per capita consumption expenditure of SCs/STs and others. The per capita consumption expenditure of SCs was 78.3 per cent of that of others and consumption of STs was 72.4 per cent of that of others in 1983-84 and the gap remained almost same in 1987-88 despite significant increase in agricultural growth. It is to be noted that the per capita consumption expenditure per 30 days of SCs/STs in agriculturally advanced states like Punjab and Haryana was higher than that of backward states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. However, the gap between per capita consumption expenditure of SCs/STs and others in advanced states of Punjab and Haryana than in agriculturally backward states in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. In 1983-84, the per capita consumption of SCs in Punjab was 70.9 per cent of that of others in 1983-84 and 80.7 per cent in 1987-88 in Bihar. In Haryana per capita consumption of SCs was 70.9 per cent of that of others in 1983-84 and 70 per cent in 1987-88 while in Madhya Pradesh it was 73.5 per cent in 1983-84 and 78.3 per cent in 1987-88. That is, the gap is not only higher in advanced states compared to backward states, but also it is getting widened between these states. It clearly indicates that agricultural growth due to new technology largely benefited the upper strata and the lower strata did not witness any significant improvement as they remained mostly as agricultural labourers.

Land Reform and Agrarian Structure: The Post-Independence Period

Abolition of intermediary land tenure system was given top priority immediately after the independence as it was exploitative in nature for the tenants. In this system by fixing abnormal rents Zamindars arbitrarily used to extract surplus from the peasants. As they were required to pay only fixed amount in the form of land tax to the government, the rest was used for extravaganzas. They never showed interest in the development of the land. Tenants also did not have any incentive to develop the land because they had no control over it. They were evicted by Zamindar at any point of time and was leased out to other persons without showing any reasons. Secondly, even if a tenant produces more it was quite likely that it might be appropriated by Zamindar by collecting high rent in the absence of any rent regulation. On the eve of Independence about 173 million acres out of 324 million acres of cultivable land were under intermediary tenures. Therefore, it was felt that to protect the interests of the tillers of land, to raise the productivity with equity in the agriculture, the abolition of Intermediary Land Tenure System was a necessary condition. Accordingly, Intermediary Land Tenure Abolition Act was promulgated. Zamindars resisted initially by moving to the Courts. Government could overcome their resistance through necessary Constitutional Amendment in early 1951. The tenure was totally abolished acquiring Zamindars' rights by paying compensation not only for the ownership of land but also of forests, fisheries and minerals. (Dantwala, 1986: 73-74). It should be noted that even during the time of national movement for Independence, the need for abolishing intermediary land tenure system was felt.

Although Zamindars were economically powerful, they were politically weak. Moreover, they were away from people and land as they were mostly living in urban areas and enjoying their wealth. These factors helped government to overcome the resistance posed by the Zamindars in abolishing intermediary tenure. On the eve of Independence, more than 40 per cent of the cultivated land controlled by the Zamindars was cultivated by tenants. The higher extent of tenancy indicates the degree of persistence of feudalism in Indian agriculture on the eve of Independence. It may be noted that the total food production was 48 million tones and population was about 363 millions in 1950-51 (Govt. of India 1996-97, pp. S24-25). About 20 million farmers were conferred ownership rights at national level after Zamindari abolition. It is definitely progressive change as land passed from the rentier class, which was an absentee landlord class, to owner cultivator class. However, Zamindari abolition has some negative aspects from the point of national development. Firstly, lot of money (Rs. 534 crore) had to be paid in the form of compensation to the erstwhile Zamindars at the rate of about Rs. 30/- per acre on average. It varied from Rs. 15/- per acre in Madras composite State to about Rs. 45/- in Bihar. Large chunk of land could be retained by Zamindars by claiming as land under personal cultivation and ownership rights were conferred not to the actual cultivator but to the statutory tenants, that is, persons whose names were recorded as tenants although these tenants have chain of sub-tenants who were actual tillers and belonged to vulnerable sections of the society (Dantwala, 1986-87, p.74). As a result, many actual tillers who were small and marginal tenants belonging to lower sections of the society could not gain from the abolition of intermediate land tenure. It could help the tenants who themselves were intermediaries with some socio-economic base. However, the abolition of intermediary tenure was desirable and it succeeded in removing tenures which were highly inequitable and oppressive.

Table 4: Average Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure by Social Groups Statewise (Rural)
(Value (Rs) of Total Consumption Per Person for 30 Days)

India/States	S.C.		S.T.		Others		All Households	
	83-84	87-88	83-84	87-88	83-84	87-88	83-84	87-88
Andhra Pradesh	97.84	132.3	94.29	120.7	121.8	169.0	115.5	159.41
Assam	111.07	166.0	108.8	145.1	114.1	160.8	113.0	158.85
Bihar	76.02	114.5	80.68	122.9	99.49	141.9	93.76	135.70
Gujarat	103.47	144.0	87.50	131.7	131.0	172.5	119.2	161.17
Haryana	113.64	168.2	-	195.2	160.3	239.8	149.1	221.98
Himachal Pradesh	125.69	179.9	-	212.1	159.7	217.0	150.0	26.79
Jammu & Kashmir	112.96	179.0	-	176.5	129.7	198.9	128.1	195.94
Karnataka	94.61	112.0	87.84	130.4	125.1	159.4	118.1	150.45
Kerala	105.07	163.3	-	186.6	150.7	215.5	145.2	208.83
Madhya Pradesh	87.47	124.9	79.43	106.4	119.0	159.6	101.7	138.44
Maharashtra	93.60	130.8	90.01	129.7	116.7	168.3	110.9	158.54
Manipur	-	-	122.2	167.5	137.9	192.6	131.4	182.54
Meghalaya	-	202.1	-	167.5	-	192.1	-	169.99
Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Orissa	87.30	117.6	72.73	93.72	110.6	144.9	97.48	128.91
Punjab	132.05	178.9	-	-	186.3	273.5	170.3	243.33
Rajasthan	110.17	160.0	90.11	125.2	140.0	190.0	127.5	173.68

Contd...

Table 4: Average Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure by Social Groups Statewise (Rural) (Value (Rs) of Total Consumption Per Person for 30 Days)

India/States	S.C.		S.T.		Others		All Households	
	83-84	87-88	83-84	87-88	83-84	87-88	83-84	87-88
Sikkim	-	145.5	-	152.8	-	159.7	-	156.81
Tamil Nadu	87.53	118.1	-	151.9	119.7	169.5	112.1	156.99
Tripura	-	158.5	-	155.0	-	205.0	-	186.98
Uttar Pradesh	88.57	124.7	-	132.9	108.8	158.3	104.2	149.90
West Bengal	94.99	137.2	85.29	127.1	110.9	161.4	104.6	151.59
Andaman & Nicobar	151.45	-	146.9	252.4	159.5	265.5	156.7	261.77
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	202.1	-	184.9	-	199.00
Chandigarh	116.60	-	-	-	220.7	274.0	199.4	259.86
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	82.36	111.7	179.8	204.5	93.33	127.28
Delhi	122.85	-	129.0	-	208.0	369.5	208.8	356.27
Goa, Daman & Diu	-	-	124.1	159.9	172.3	188.4	169.1	186.13
Lakshadweep	-	-	-	232.0	-	-	-	221.44
Mizoram	-	216.3	119.2	243.2	131.1	204.6	119.8	241.17
Pondicherry	69.80	127.2	-	-	109.6	199.4	96.02	185.10
All India	94.31	133.3	87.15	123.0	120.4	169.2	112.3	157.66

Source: Sarveksha, Vol.XVII, No.2, Oct-Dec., 1993, Issue No.57.

Sarveksha, Vol.XII, No.3, Jan-March, 1989, Issue No.38.

In Fifties and Sixties land ceiling acts limiting the size of the farm holdings were also promulgated by various states to reduce inequalities in Indian agriculture. Indian agriculture has been exposed to new technology since mid-sixties. New technology refers to use of high yielding varieties of seeds, application of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and mechanization of agricultural operations. States like Punjab, Haryana, some parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh where there was an assured source of irrigation, adopted new technology as it requires continuous irrigation facilities. About 25 per cent of the operated area in the country was irrigated in 1981-82 and it increased to 35 per cent in 1991-92 agricultural year. That is, only 35 per cent of operated areas was affected by green revolution in 1991-92. In the post-Green Revolution period there was a tremendous increase in the agricultural production particularly in the food production. Food production which was 83 million tonnes in 1960-61 increased to 108.4 million tonnes in 1970-71 and 129.4 million tonnes in 1980-81. It went upto 176.4 million tonnes in 1990-91 and to 192 million tonnes in 1996-97 (Govt. of India, 1996-97, P. 141). This increase was mostly due to intensive cultivation of the area exposed to new technology. But the benefits of the Gree Revolution have been cornered by rich farmers as the incomes were proportionately to the farm size and greater access to modern inputs. On the other hand, marginal and small farmers who did not have access to modern farm inputs received meagre incomes. The large land owners appropriated higher incomes in the form of rents while the large mass of share croppers and agricultural labourers received incomes which kept them at a level of subsistence. Thus, size of the income by and large in rural areas closely related to the amount of land owners or controlled. It is also evident that in the agriculturally advanced regions the money wages increased substantially. The incidence of poverty declined significantly. It is found that incidence of poverty was low in states like Punjab (13.20 per cent) and Haryana (16.64 per cent)

where Green Revolution was pervasive on the other hand, it was at very high level in agriculturally backward states like Bihar (52.13 per cent) and Orissa (55.58 per cent) in 1987-88 (Hashim, 1997, P. 21). Thus, there was an inverse relationship between agricultural growth and incidence of poverty. There was also an increase in the casualisation of labour in the post-Green Revolution period at all India level. Wage labourers as a percentage of total workers in 1983 was close to 40 percent. The percentage of casual labour as to total rural wage labour (males) was more than 72 per cent in 1983. The level of real wages was found to be higher in the technologically leading states compared to backward states in the post-Green Revolution period. Thus, higher level of wages was maintained because of technology and high growth rates of production sustained over a long period. However, the real wages were increasing at all India level particularly. Since mid-Seventies, the growth rate of real wages was found to be almost stagnant in Punjab and Haryana due to the fact that the wages were enhanced at a faster rate in these states during the first phase of the Green Revolution. In the technologically advanced states there was an increase in employment despite the lower elasticity of employment due to faster growth of allied occupations, off-farm employment and shift to labour-intensive crops and crop-intensity in the first phase of the Green Revolution. However, the income gap between poor and rich widened in agriculturally advanced regions. The per capita farm business income moved hand in hand with per capita land area in technologically advanced states like Punjab in 1974-75. Social conflicts are also observed in both the advanced as well as backward states. Social conflicts found to be sharper due to high degree of proletarianisation and casualisation in the context of growing demographic pressure and immiserisation (Parthasarathy, 1991, pp. A71-76). The existing inequalities in the distribution of land was also found to be an important factor for high incidence of poverty in rural India despite agricultural growth in the post-independence period, particularly, in the post-Green Revolution period.

Land Distribution Pattern:

Let us examine the change in the pattern of distribution of operational holdings in the context of agrarian reform in the post-independence period. The Table 5 presents the changing distribution pattern during 1960-61 to 1991-92 with respect to number and area of operational holdings at the all India level.

Table 5: Changes in Distribution of Operational Holdings (percentage)

Size, Class	1960-61		1970-71		1980-81		1991-92	
	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
Marginal (< 0.01 ha)	39.1	6.9	45.8	9.2	56.0	11.5	62.8	15.6
Small (1.01-2.00 ha)	22.6	12.3	22.4	14.8	19.3	16.6	17.8	18.7
Semi medium (2.01-4.00 ha)	19.8	20.7	17.7	22.6	14.2	23.6	12.0	24.1
Medium (4.01-10.00)	14	31.2	11.1	30.5	8.6	30.1	6.1	26.4
Large (> 10.00 ha)	4.5	29	3.1	23	1.9	18.2	1.3	15.2
All Sizes	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NSS Report No. 407 (48th Round) 1995, P. 20.

It could be seen from Table 5 that the marginal holdings constitute 38.1 per cent of total holdings with only 6.9 per cent of the total operated area in 1960-61. Small holdings constitute 22.6 per cent control only 12.3 per cent of total operated area. Marginal and small holdings together constitute nearly 62 per cent of total holdings but the area under these holdings comes to only about 19 per cent of operated area in 1960-61. On the other hand, medium and large holdings together constitute about less than 20 per cent of total holdings but cover more than 60 per cent of the total operated area during the same period. This indicates that the distribution of land was skewed in 1960-61. By 1991-92 there was a tremendous increase in the number of marginal holdings. Their percentage share to total holdings increased to about 63 per cent but area operated under them increased to only about 15 per cent. On the other hand the number of medium and large holdings declined to about 7 per cent of total holdings which was nearly 42 per cent of total area. If we take large holdings alone their share is only 1.3 per cent of total holdings but control more than 15 per cent of total operated area in 1990-91. This clearly indicates that although number of medium and large holdings declined the area under their control has not declined proportionately. On the other hand, number of marginal holdings increased from 39 per cent to 63 per cent but the operated area under their control was only 15 per cent of total operated area in 1991-92. This implies that in the post-independence period inequalities in the distribution of land has increased despite land reform. The increase in the marginal holdings may be attributed to population explosion and also to redistribution of small pieces of surplus land/waste land to weaker sections. But medium and large farmers could retain large holdings as land reforms were not properly implemented. Although intermediate land tenure system effectively removed through Zamindari abolition, equity in the agrarian structure was bypassed. Land has passed hands, from old absentee landlord (rentier) class to dominant peasant class, which is owner cultivator class but land concentration persists. Many micro studies indicated this change in rural india at village level.

Gini's coefficients for Operational and ownership holdings (Rural) at all India level by NSSO for different years are presented in the Table 6. Gini Coefficient increased from 0.38 in 1960-61 to 0.629 in 1980-81 and further increased to 0.641 in 1991-92 in case of operational holdings. In case of ownership holdings also Gini concentration ration remained high, that is, 0.710 even in 1991-92. Trends in the concentration of operational area can be clearly seen from Table 6.

Table 6:

Year	Operational Holdings	Ownership Holdings
1960-61	0.583	0.731
1970-71	0.586	0.709
1980-81	0.629	0.712
1990-91	0.641	0.710

Source: NSS Report No. 407 (48th Round, Jan. - Dec.1992, 1995, P. 22).

It could be clearly seen from Table 7 that the share of the bottom 30 per cent of holdings in operated area has declined form 4.6 per cent in 1960-61 to 3.0 per cent in 1990-91 while the share of the top 5.0 per cent of holdings increased from 30.5 per cent to 33.6 per cent during the same period. Thus, inequality in the distribution of operational holdings has been increasing at all India level in the post-independence period particularly, from 1960-61 to 1991-92 indicating the failure of land reform in Indian

agriculture. The distribution pattern of operational holdings continued to be unequal in all major states.

Table 7: Trend in Concentration of Operated Area At All India Level (Rural)

Group of Operational Holdings	Percentage Share to Total Operated Area			
	1960-61	1970-71	1981-82	1991-92
Bottom 30 %	4.6	4.4	2.2	3
Bottom 60 %	18.3	18.6	14.9	14.2
Top 10 %	46	45	47.2	47.6
Top 5 %	30.5	30.6	32.4	33.6

Source: NSS Report No. 407 (48th Round), Jan - Dec.1992, 1995, P. 22.

Table 8: Changes in Percentage Distribution of Operational Holdings and Area Operated by Size Categories of Operational Holdings in 15 Major States. (Rural)

State	Year	Marginal		Small		Semi-Medium		Medium		Large	
		No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
A. P.	91-92	59.27	17.54	21.38	23.34	13.16	26.23	5.38	23.49	0.81	9.40
	81-82	48.64	10.25	22.13	15.37	15.51	21.08	10.80	30.20	2.92	23.10
	70-71	47.29	9.28	19.14	11.74	18.23	21.91	11.87	31.32	3.47	25.75
Assam	91-92	70.78	34.24	19.99	31.22	7.53	22.92	1.51	9.07	0.19	2.55
	81-82	61.57	22.12	24.32	35.51	11.32	29.34	3.68	13.65	0.10	1.38
	70-71	52.40	21.64	30.23	34.90	14.30	30.54	2.99	12.20	0.08	0.072
Bihar	91-92	76.76	29.01	13.68	25.14	6.86	23.69	2.48	18.24	0.22	3.92
	81-82	68.70	22.41	17.61	25.85	9.90	27.08	3.38	18.79	0.41	5.87
	70-71	58.86	18.14	23.32	26.22	12.85	28.92	4.52	21.01	0.45	5.71
Gujarat	91-92	47.90	8.49	19.96	13.79	17.69	24.92	12.06	35.02	2.49	17.78
	81-82	38.63	6.53	20.30	11.31	21.30	22.42	15.82	38.60	3.87	21.14
	70-71	27.19	3.90	20.70	8.55	22.24	17.41	21.64	35.95	8.23	34.19
Haryana	91-92	50.73	5.32	13.50	8.81	20.32	25.54	11.49	29.38	3.96	30.95
	81-82	42.22	3.74	12.74	7.28	22.88	25.56	18.81	45.57	3.35	17.85
	70-71	17.48	2.53	17.54	6.54	28.30	19.86	31.06	49.24	5.62	21.83
Karnataka	91-92	49.71	9.56	20.26	15.41	17.98	25.21	9.77	30.78	2.28	19.04
	81-82	38.40	5.80	22.53	13.18	22.18	24.14	13.24	32.74	3.65	24.14
	70-71	28.76	5.10	22.61	10.69	25.44	22.97	17.58	34.29	5.40	26.95
Kerala	91-92	91.58	53.27	5.94	23.36	1.99	14.93	0.48	8.08	0.01	0.36
	81-82	88.94	45.45	7.28	24.09	12.89	18.47	10.82	10.06	0.07	2.93
	70-71	86.21	40.05	8.90	24.75	3.66	20.08	1.13	12.26	0.10	2.86
Madhya Pradesh	91-92	38.71	6.70	24.43	15.56	20.90	25.47	13.49	35.92	2.47	16.35
	81-82	32.94	4.67	22.51	12.31	23.12	24.18	17.85	38.60	3.58	20.24
	70-71	26.11	3.42	20.29	8.86	26.77	21.15	21.64	37.99	61.19	28.58
Maharashtra	91-92	43.59	6.66	18.92	11.77	20.38	24.67	14.07	36.59	3.04	20.31
	81-82	35.26	3.63	19.47	9.35	21.28	20.01	18.42	37.88	5.57	29.13
	70-71	23.71	3.06	21.74	8.38	23.44	17.59	22.44	35.29	8.67	35.68
Orissa	91-92	59.99	22.09	24.34	30.16	12.02	27.87	3.36	16.20	0.29	3.08
	81-82	54.45	17.02	26.11	26.48	14.08	26.16	4.63	17.84	0.73	12.50
	70-71	54.52	18.60	25.78	27.32	13.60	27.06	5.25	21.56	0.55	5.46
Punjab	91-92	63.22	6.20	11.42	10.74	13.85	26.72	9.82	40.55	1.69	15.79
	81-82	59.02	3.91	10.39	8.90	13.96	21.76	14.15	45.85	2.48	19.58
	70-71	11.71	1.46	19.06	7.09	32.70	24.28	38.51	45.05	6.02	22.12
Rajasthan	91-92	39.34	5.56	19.88	9.36	18.46	17.25	15.23	30.16	7.09	37.67
	81-82	30.53	3.55	17.43	6.98	52.09	17.08	22.50	36.50	7.40	35.89
	70-71	31.00	2.01	16.40	5.79	21.30	14.19	21.77	33.23	9.53	44.78
Tamil Nadu	91-92	77.17	28.94	14.14	28.06	6.62	24.72	1.80	13.22	0.27	5.09
	81-82	71.37	22.39	16.72	26.72	8.28	25.37	3.35	20.68	0.28	4.84
	70-71	60.06	21.93	21.25	22.73	13.17	27.32	4.93	21.72	0.58	6.30
Uttar Pradesh	91-92	68.01	24.96	18.52	26.31	9.85	26.30	3.33	18.18	0.29	4.25
	81-82	59.60	18.09	21.58	23.76	12.88	28.04	5.40	23.62	0.54	6.49
	70-71	49.78	15.64	26.92	25.30	16.45	29.76	6.20	23.33	0.65	5.97
West Bengal	91-92	80.69	39.98	13.43	30.69	5.00	22.06	0.88	7.27	0.00	0.00
	81-82	74.34	29.27	15.63	28.77	8.07	28.25	1.67	11.39	0.09	2.37
	70-71	61.21	24.80	22.80	28.92	12.94	31.06	2.98	14.58	0.07	0.84
INDIA	91-92	62.79	15.60	17.79	18.70	11.99	24.13	6.10	26.37	1.33	15.20
	81-82	56.00	11.50	19.32	16.59	14.23	23.55	8.56	30.15	1.89	18.21
	70-71	45.77	9.21	22.28	14.80	17.66	22.52	11.11	30.49	3.08	22.92

Source: NSS Report No.407, (48th Round, Jan - Dec.1992),1995, P. 22.

Table 8 presents the size distribution of operational holdings and area operated in 15 major states. It is found (Table 4) that there has been a rise in the percentage of marginal holdings and a decline in percentage of holdings in the semi-medium category during 1970-71 to 1991-92. Some amount of inter-State variation could be observed with reference to small holdings. The percentage of small holdings has increased since 1970-71 in Madhya Pradesh. In Punjab and Haryana also the proportion of small holdings increased during the eighties after having declined in the preceding decade. Gini Coefficient of operational holdings, which increased significantly at the all India level during 1970-71 to 1991-92, shows varying trends across the states.

In 10 of the 15 major states there has been an upward trend in the concentration ratio since 1970-71. The rise was more pronounced for the most agriculturally advanced states of Punjab and Haryana (Table 9). In Punjab the ratio increased sharply from 0.418 in 1970-71 to 0.702 in 1981 and followed by a small rise in the next decade. In Haryana it raised from 0.464 in 1970-71 to 0.675 in 1991-92. In these two states concentration ratio was much higher than the national concentration ratio of 0.641. In Assam, Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal, the Gini Coefficient increased during 1970-71 to 1981-82 and declined marginally in the next decade. However, when we consider the distribution pattern of owned land, the Gini concentration ratio in case of Andhra Pradesh was found to be (0.72) higher than national concentration ratio of 0.71 in 1992 (NSSO, 1997, p. 23).

Table 9: Changes in Gini Coefficient of Operational Holdings

State	Gini's Coefficient			Average Area (ha.) 1991-92
	1970-71	1981-82	1991-92	
Andhra Pradesh	0.603	0.599	0.576	1.29
Assam	0.422	0.519	0.494	0.88
Bihar	0.566	0.606	0.637	0.75
Gujarat	0.540	0.558	0.604	1.99
Haryana	0.464	0.598	0.675	2.19
Karnataka	0.527	0.581	0.609	1.85
Kerala	0.647	0.649	0.636	0.35
Madhya Pradesh	0.533	0.535	0.558	2.24
Maharashtra	0.526	0.571	0.598	2.25
Orissa	0.501	0.526	0.511	1.13
Punjab	0.418	0.702	0.730	1.46
Rajasthan	0.564	0.604	0.613	3.08
Tamil Nadu	0.516	0.640	0.646	0.71
Uttar Pradesh	0.495	0.565	0.572	1.01
West Bengal	0.490	0.597	0.585	0.60
INDIA	0.586	0.629	0.641	1.34

Note: The concentration ratios for 1970-71 and 1980-81 are taken from T. Haque. "Temporal and regional variations in the agrarian structure in India", Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics, July-Sept., 1987, Vol.42, No.30N, (NSS Report No.407, 1995)

Source: NSS Report No.407, (48th Round, Jan - Dec. 1992), 1995, P. 22.

Growth of Landless and Semi-landless Households

While inequality in the distribution of land persists in case of owned land and shows an increasing trend in case of operational holdings at all India level, as well as, in different states, the number of landlessness and semi-landlessness indicates a rising trend.

It follows from Table 10, that the proportion of landless rural households increased from 9.6 per cent to 11.3 per cent during 1970-71 to 1992 at all India level. The proportion of landless households by and large remained same during the latter decade. Most of the states which showed an upward trend in concentration ratio in ownership of land have also reported a sharp rise in the proportion of landless households between 1971-72 and 1992. Taken together the proportion of landless and semi-landless households has increased from 37 per cent to 42 per cent at the national level during the last two decades. In the case of Andhra Pradesh, landless households increased from 7 per cent in 1971-72 to 11.9 per cent in 1982 and concentration ratio increased from 0.73 to 0.74 during the same period. However, the proportion of landless households remained same at 11.9 per cent from 1982 to 1992 and concentration ratio declined from 0.74 to 0.72. The national concentration ratio remained unchanged at 0.71 during the last two decades. The proportion of semi-landless households in Andhra Pradesh increased from 38.7 per cent in 1971-72 to 45.8 per cent in 1992.

It is to be noted that the growth rate in the real wages of unskilled agricultural labourers remained stagnant at the all India level in the second phase of green revolution contributing to incidence of poverty among agricultural labourers (Jeemol Unni, 1997, P.69).

Table 10: Proportion of Landless and Semi-Landless Households and Concentration Ratio (Gini's Coefficient) (Rural)

State	Percentage of Landless Households			Percentage of Landless and Semi-landless Households			Concentration Ratio		
	71-72	1982	1992	71-72	1982	1992	71-72	1982	1992
Andhra Pradesh	7.0	11.9	11.9	38.7	42.0	45.8	0.73	0.74	0.72
Assam	25.0	7.5	13.4	38.8	30.7	33.5	0.62	0.56	0.57
Bihar	4.3	4.1	8.6	43.9	44.0	47.9	0.72	0.68	0.70
Gujarat	13.4	16.8	16.3	34.4	36.8	41.2	0.68	0.69	0.70
Haryana	11.9	6.1	3.7	51.9	43.7	41.2	0.75	0.70	0.68
Himachal Pradesh	4.4	7.7	10.4	16.9	19.4	26.9	0.55	0.54	0.60
Jammu & Kashmir	1.0	6.8	2.8	11.9	22.6	21.3	0.42	0.52	0.51
Karnataka	12.5	13.7	10.0	32.4	35.1	32.0	0.66	0.68	0.66
Kerala	15.7	12.8	8.4	59.1	61.0	65.0	0.70	0.68	0.69
Madhya Pradesh	9.6	14.4	15.2	25.6	31.0	30.8	0.62	0.65	0.65
Maharashtra	10.4	21.2	19.6	32.9	39.0	41.7	0.68	0.70	0.71
Orissa	10.6	7.7	13.8	36.1	33.0	40.8	0.64	0.61	0.66
Punjab	7.1	6.4	5.9	57.9	55.8	56.7	0.78	0.77	0.77
Rajasthan	2.9	8.1	6.4	12.8	18.7	21.0	0.60	0.62	0.65
Tamil Nadu	17.0	19.1	17.9	52.3	58.4	63.4	0.75	0.76	0.75
Uttar Pradesh	4.6	4.9	4.9	32.7	30.9	34.6	0.63	0.60	0.63
West Bengal	9.8	16.2	11.0	47.1	49.6	53.4	0.67	0.63	0.68
All India	9.6	11.3	11.3	37.4	39.9	42.4	0.71	0.71	0.71

N.B.: The figures of cols/ (B) & (9) are taken from a paper entitled "Temporal and Regional Variations in the Agrarian Structure in India", by T. Haque, Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics, July-Sept., 1987, Vol. 42, No. 3, PP.313-318.

Source: NSS Report No. 399, 1997, P.23.

II Process of Change in Rural India

An attempt is made in this section of this paper with the help of some micro studies relating to land transfers to understand the process of change in the distribution of land at the macro level.

Rao (1998) in his study entitled "Green Revolution and Land Transfers: A Case Study of a Village in Coastal Andhra" analysed the land transfers among different caste groups with special reference to Dalits in the post-Independence Period during 1960-61 to 1996-97. He selected a village namely 'Poondla' in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. In this village out of 1135 total households, he selected a sample of 141 households for intensive study. The study made the following observations:

- a) The SC landless households which constituted 20 per cent of total SC households in 1980-81 increased to 27 per cent in 1991 and to about 55 per cent by 1996-97. In every decade the landless households among SCs doubled during 1960-61 to 1996-97 while the number of landless households among others declined during the same period. The landless households among others declined from 30 percent of total households to 16 percent. The main reasons for increase in the landless households among Dalits are found to be the land transfers from them to non Scheduled Castes besides population explosion.
- b) In the post-Green Revolution period the land was transferred from the dominant non-cultivating castes to the dominant cultivating castes and BCs but not to the SC/STs who were the actual tillers. The marginal and small holders leased out and some of them sold their land to the medium and large farmers. In the first two decades (1960-61 to 1980-81) the land was transferred from Dominant Non-cultivating Castes (DNCCs) to Dominant Cultivating Castes (DCCs). The DCCs had gained 21 per cent and 25 per cent of the total land transfers respectively during these decades. In the second two decades 1980-81 to 1990-91 and 1990-91 to 1996-97, the land was transferred from DNCCs and DCCs to BCs. BCs gained as 28 percent and 27 percent of the total land transfers respectively in third decade and after 1990-91 while the SCs had gained during 1960-61 to 1996-97 only 4 per cent of the total land transferred, although they were the actual tillers of the lands of DNCCs and DCCs.

In his case study of a village in Alur Taluk, of Kurnool district of Rayalaseema region Rajasekhar (1988, pp.1-78) studies the land transfers during 1891-1994. The study finds that during the period of 1891-1948, while Brahmins lost land of 907 acres and other upper castes Reddies gained 915 acres out of the total land transferred. In the post-Independence period, (i.e., during 1948-84) Brahmins and others lost 86 per cent and muslims lost 14 per cent of the total land transferred. On the other hand, Yadavas (OBCs) and Valmiki gained 48 per cent and 36.24 per cent respectively. SCs gained only 15 per cent and Artisans 6 per cent.

Venkati (1994) in his study of Dsantapalli village in Adilabad district Telangana region of A.P. indicates the following findings:

In every decade Komatis (dominant non-cultivating community) lost their land due to lack of interest in agriculture and fear of land legislation. Kapus, the dominant cultivating caste gained 30 per cent during 1960-61 to 1970-71, 29 per cent during 1970-71 to 1980-81 of the total land transfers. In the second phase, Kunbis gained 16 per cent of the total land transfers. Similarly Gowdas gained 28 per cent during 1980-81 to 1990-91. In the first decade land was largely transferred from Komaties, SCs and STs to

Kapus. During second and third decades, most of the land was transferred from SCs and STs and Kapus to Gowdas and Kunbis, the next dominant caste in the hierarchy. Started precisely, while Kapus (upper castes) Gowdas and Kunbis (upper BCs) were the gainers Kamatis (Ocs) and SCs and STs were the losers during the period of 1960-61 to 1990-91.

In another study on land transfers in Uttar Pradesh Kripa Shankar (1988) shows that significant portion of the land passed from Zamindars to the hands of large land owners who belonged to upper castes. The study is confined to transfers which were duly registered with the Government till 1982-83. The sample consists of all households, which sold or purchased land during this period (of about 30 years) in the selected 10 districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Central Uttar Pradesh, Western Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand and the hill region. A total of 1730 land transfer cases were studied. The following are the main findings: The Upper Caste landholders lost their land due to fear of Land Tenancy Act, as they were Non-cultivating communities. While 18 percent of the land transfers were from the upper castes, 16 percent of them were in form of the other Backward castes. Scheduled Castes and Sikhs gained marginally (only about 2 percent and 1 percent of the total land transfers respectively) during the same period.

Nancharaiyah (1988) in his study on "Land and Caste" examined the change in the land distribution among different caste groups during 1930 to 1982 based on data collected from land records and household survey. An inamdari village namely Kanchakoduru of Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh was selected for this study. It shows that in 1930 nearly 80 percent of total the land under revenue jurisdiction of the village was controlled by Brahmins who were inamdars. Non-Brahmin Castes who were landless agricultural labourers controlled only about 1 per cent of total land. However, by 1965 there was significant shift in the land distribution pattern due to land legislation initiated by the Government. About 80 per cent of the total land came under the control of non-brahmin cultivating castes and SC's share improved to about 15 per cent. The Brahmin's share declined to about 7 per cent of the total land. By 1982 there was further shift in the land distribution pattern. More than 85 per cent of the total land of the village came under the control of non-brahmin castes and the share of Brahmins (non-cultivating advanced castes) declined to only 3 per cent. The share of SCs also declined from 15 per cent to 10 per cent during 1965-1982 as against their population of 38 per cent to total population. It is to be noted that as this was the period of post-Green Revolution the number of marginal holdings and area under their control declined. It clearly shows that the benefits of neither land legislation nor of the Green Revolution reached the Scheduled Castes in terms of their access to land.

Thus, the analysis of five micro-studies confirm that the land has passed to the hands of dominant cultivating castes and upper BCs. In this process, Dalits could not gain and they essentially remained as agricultural labourers as they were in the pre-independence period. Rather, their position deteriorated in the post-Green Revolution period. This may be the reason for the growth of SC landless households in rural India.

III Summary and Conclusions

Dalits' particularly SCs mostly remained as agricultural labourers without land and heavily depend on agriculture for their livelihood even after 50 years of Independence. Incidence of poverty is found to be higher among them than others. Failure of land reform in reducing the inequalities in the distribution of land and stagnation of growth rate in the real wages of unskilled agricultural labourers in the post-Green Revolution period are found to be the important factors contributing to the high incidence of poverty

among Dalits. Landlessness is found to be higher in the states having greater concentration of land.

Various land reform measures have been initiated to reduce the inequalities in the distribution of land, to provide security to tenants and to raise the productivity of agriculture in the post-Independence period. Land reform was successful to the extent of removing of intermediaries like Zamindars, Jagirdars and Inamdars and reducing incidence of tenancy significantly. However, land concentration persists. Though land passed from rentier class to owner cultivator class it did not benefit the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers who mostly come from socially disadvantaged sections such as dalits. From mid-sixties onwards, Indian agriculture has been exposed to new technology, which is popularly known as Green Revolution. As a result, the agricultural growth rate increased substantially, particularly, food production. But incidence of poverty continues to be high at the national level. One important reason for this is that the gains of Green Revolution have been mostly cornered by the better off farmers. The marginal farmers and agricultural labourers could not gain significantly due to their low or no land base. Of course, the incidence of poverty is found to be low in agriculturally advanced states like Punjab and Haryana compared to backward states like Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. However, the disparities between Dalits who are mostly agricultural labourers and others is found to be wider (in terms of monthly per capita consumer expenditure) in the agriculturally advanced states than in agriculturally backward states. Social conflicts are found to be sharper in the context of increasing proletarianisation and casualisation.

Hence, special measures like redistribution of surplus and waste lands among Dalit agricultural labourers and marginal farmers are required to be taken up on priority while implementing the land reform programmes, which could improve their economic asset base and skills particularly education which would help them shift to non-farming employment. The state should also provide the necessary micro finance to augment the productivity of their economic assets.

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Socio-Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes, with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers in Maharashtra

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One of the distinctive and pervasive features of Indian Society is its division into castes and sub-castes. After the independence, statutory safeguards were provided to the Scheduled Castes in the Constitution of India. Even after 50 years of Independence, looking in to the trends, there is a need to change the policy governing the programmes. The present study attempts to examine the impact of socio-economic development programmes for the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra. The study utilises data from both secondary, as well as, primary sources. To find out the joint impact, the study worked out the multiple regression models. It is observed that only a small proportion of non-land asset group benefited from these developmental schemes.

I Introduction

One of the distinctive and pervasive features of Indian society is its division into castes and sub-castes. The backward communities have for historical reasons, remained socially and economically backward. Scheduled Castes (SC) for a long time faced problems such as untouchability, social and economic discrimination, inequality and poverty hindering their economic and social development and deprivation of access to opportunities as well as resources, reflecting the vicious circle of deprivation. These deprived social groups do not have enough economic opportunities to earn their livelihood through gainful employment, and do not have social and political status in the society. In the absence of this they either becomes dependent on the better off sections of the society serving their interest or adapt to crimes and violence.

After independence statutory safeguards were provided to the SC in the Constitution of India. From the First Five Year Plan a policy of positive discrimination was adopted and the emphasis was laid on " growth with justice." This was continued in all the successive Five Year Plans. Several developmental schemes were framed and implemented by the central as well as by the State Governments and other agencies. The plan expenditure on the welfare of Backward Classes (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) was Rs. 457 lakhs (at constant prices) during the First Five Year Plan and it reached to Rs. 15577 lakhs during the 7th Five Year Plan. Even after 50 years of independence, looking into the trends, there is a need to change the policies governing the programmes.

On the background of this, it become necessary to analyse the structure, direction, emphasis and impact of the developmental programmes operating in the country for the Scheduled Castes under the Special Component Plan. In order to analyse the impact of

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The author would like to thank R. S. Deshpande and A. Narayanamoorthy for their useful comments and helps on the earlier draft of the paper.

these socio-economic development programmes on the living condition of the SC; it becomes necessary to test the efforts undertaken through the Government agencies. In view of all these, the present study attempts to study the impact of socio-economic development programmes on the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra.

Objectives of the Study

- 1 To attempt a review of the studies analysing the problems and impact of socio-economic development programmes on the SC covering socio-economic aspects.
- 2 To analyse the strategies and policies adopted towards amelioration of the socio-economic conditions of SC during the plan periods from the point of view of changes in the philosophy and expenditure pattern at Centre and State levels and particularly in the state of Maharashtra.
- 3 To identify the gaps in the socio-economic development programmes for the SC in Maharashtra.
- 4 To analyse the effectiveness of the developmental programmes at micro-level, in terms of determining factors for the effectiveness represented by the economic parameters.

Methodology of the Study

The study utilises data both at the secondary, as well as, the primary levels. For the collection of primary data, field schedule was canvassed. The field work was conducted in two Talukas of Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra state. The secondary level data were used in order to understand the trends in plan efforts of socio-economic developmental programmes for the SC. The data analysis also incorporates the spread of the SC across the region and their growth. The data sources utilised are the Population Census, Five Year Plan documents, Budgets, Commission and Commissioners for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Reports.

The paper contains 10 sections. The First Section is introductory describing the nature of problems of SC and methodology. The Second Section gives a brief review of the selected literature. Third Section defines the scheduled castes and agricultural landless labour. Fourth Section deals with the land reforms in Maharashtra. Fifth Section provides the analysis of Special Component Plan (SCP). The Sixth Section is based on primary data. The section attempts to correlate the selected indicators for the selected groups. The Seventh Section attempts to analyse the determinants of socio-economic development. Section Eight deals with the factors determining the socio-economic condition of the SC. The Ninth Section evaluates the effectiveness of developmental programmes with the help of Multivariate Linear Discriminant Analysis (MLDA) and the last section brings out some broad conclusions.

II A Review of the Selected Studies

In his guest editorial of the special issue on the Scheduled Castes : An Inter Regional Perspective of the Journal of Indian School of Political Economy Beteille pointed out that changes are taking place in the conditions of the SC but there are disagreements about the extent and even the direction of these changes. How one evaluates the changes depends not only on what has actually been taking place but also on the orientations and expectations of the investigators. Large disparities still remain between the SC and other sections of the society. If we view these in the light of what was promised and perhaps expected at the time of independence we might be inclined to feel that nothing much has

changed. But if we view them in terms of what prevailed even a couple of generations ago, it will be hard to deny that some disparities have indeed been substantially reduced although others still remain. He concluded that the SC are still exploited, appraised and stigmatized, but their presence in Indian society can no longer be ignored (Beteille, 2000, 367).

In this connection Census of India mentioned nine points (Census of India, 1931, p. 472). Three studies are directly related to the untouchability. These are : (1) An extensive survey of Maharashtra was undertaken by the Rashtriya Sevadal and Jati Nirmulan Sanstha (Gare and Limaye, 1973). The study concluded that in spite of all the constitutional protections, serial efforts and welfare schemes, the Scheduled Castes continued to suffer from various social disabilities and untouchability was being practiced in the villages; (2) Another report by Harijan Sevak Sangh (Patil, 1990) stated that 60.94 (755) per cent villages spread over 12 states prohibited the use of drinking water wells, 73.28 (908) per cent villages prohibited the entry to the temple and 58.84 (729) per cent villages prohibited entry in the hotel to the Scheduled Castes (See Appendix 1-A); (3) Ghanshyam Shah (2000) examined the practice of untouchability in Gujarat on the lines of an earlier study by Desai (1976) and concluded that in 1971 practice of untouchability was low in the state. It had declined further in 1990s. However, the source of water still continues to be an area where SCs are ill treated in the religious sphere. (Shah, 2000, 467).

Tendulkar *et.al* (1993) in the description of the structure of poverty of two years, namely 1983 and 1987-88 concluded that social groups namely Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), suffer from poverty in more intensive terms as compared to the other groups. This can be seen from Appendix Table 1.B gisted from Tendulkar's study.

III Caste and Landless Agricultural Labour

Origin of Caste System

Caste system is a moral system that differentiates and ranks the whole population of a society in corporate units (castes). It is generally defined by descent, marriage and occupation. Elaborately differentiated and ranked caste systems have developed especially in the regional societies of India and related population in the territories of modern Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka over the past 2000 years (The New Encyclopedia of Britannica, 1975, p. 982). The earliest evidence for caste and untouchability dates back to more than 2000 years. Varna is first mentioned in a late Vedic and by the time of Manusmriti (200 BC to AD 200), Varna and Jati (or caste) coexisted as similarly ranked social orders. A vast number of existing castes of this period are explained and ranked by Manu according to a theory of mixture between the Varna categories (Moffatt, 1979 p. 33). The first reference to the caste system and to the word 'shudras' occurs in a late hymn of the Rigveda in its famous Purshsukta. The Brahman springs from the mouth, the kshatriyas from the arms, the vaishas from the thighs and the shudras from the feet of the creator (Tiwari, 1963, P. 7). The caste system has a penetrating influence on Indian social structure. There are 2000 sub castes in such linguistic area (Ghurye, 1932, p. 27). In a gist even as a definition of the group, it was discriminated to be perpetuated.

Caste Criteria : Nine Points

In the 1931 Census, the Scheduled Castes were classified as 'depressed'. There was a lot of criticism against the use of this word since it meant 'out caste'. Hence, the word 'exterior' was substituted in 1931. As it was found difficult to decide which castes should be included in the list of 'exterior' nine points were taken into consideration while tabulating the exterior castes. The points are : (1) Served by Brahmins or not?; (2) Served by Barber, water carriers, tailors etc ?; (3) Pollutes a high caste?; (4) From whose hands a caste Hindu can take water?; (5) Debarred from the use of public convenience i.e. roads, wells, schools etc.?; (6) Debarred from the Hindu Temple?; (7) Equal educated person treated as equal person? ; (8) The caste depressed an account of ignorance, illiteracy or poverty?; (9) Depressed on account of the occupation (Census of India, 1931, p. 472).

List of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The shudras were required to stay outside the village settlements. Mahatma Gandhi named them as Harijans, where Hari meant people of God. The expression "Scheduled Castes" was first coined by the Simon Commission and embodied in the Government of India Act (1935). While the castes were listed systematically in the 1931 census of India, the term "Scheduled Castes" (SC) was applied to these castes for the first time in the Government of India Act of 1935. Then the Government of India published a list of Scheduled Castes under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order 1936 (Kamble, 1979 pp 36-37). After the independence with the order of the President of India in pursuance of provisions of Article 341 and 342, inter alia specified various castes and tribes as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in relation to respective states and Union territories. These orders were extended and modified as and when new states and Union Territories came into existence either by reorganisation or transfer of territories. In the light of Backward Classes Commission Report (GOI, 1955, Kalelkar Commission, 1955) and other works, the Government of India declared a list of castes to be included under Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Scheduled Castes are enumerated from 1951 census onwards. The Scheduled Castes are those notified by the President under Article 341. Article 341 states Scheduled Castes (1) The President (may with respect to any State (or union territory) and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof) by public notification, specify the castes, rules or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that state (or Union Territory as the case may be). (2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any state, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification (Constitution of India, 1990, p. 95).

Agricultural Labour

The first and second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (1950-51 and 1956-57) defined the term agricultural labour in different ways. The First Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (1950-51) defined an agricultural labourer as one who was employed for wages in the process of crop production and defined an agricultural family as one in which either the head of the family or 50 per cent or more of the earners reported agricultural labour as their main occupation. The Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (1956-57) states the term agricultural labour to include not only labour

employed in occupations viz. dairy, farming, horticulture etc. and the family derived the bulk of its income from agricultural wages. The National Commission of Labour (1969) defining agricultural labour as those persons whose main source of income is wage employment fall in this category. It consists of two sub categories: 1) Land less agricultural labour and 2) very small cultivators whose main source of earnings due to their small and sub marginal holdings is wage employment. Landless labour, can be classified into two broad categories (a) permanent labour attached to cultivating households (attached labour) (b) casual labour, this may be divided into three sub-groups viz. cultivators, share croppers and leaseholders.

The agricultural landless labour may be engaged in one or more of these activities like farming, dairy farming, production, cultivation, harvesting, horticulture, etc. and he offers himself full time on hire. (The Scheduled Castes Landless Agricultural Labours (SCAL) the avenues for employment in the rural areas are limited). It leads to their exploitation in the hands of big farmers, money lenders and others in terms low wages rates, high rate of interest charged on loans and practice of bonded labour. SCAL does not have any source of income other than their selling working powers. At the same time the group is facing the problems of low income, untouchability, social discrimination, inequality, socio-economic and political deprivation. SCAL has to follow some social and cultural restrictions. In this limited constraint SCAL has to develop and achieve their socio-economic development. SCAL are among the most vulnerable and exploited sections of our society.

IV Land Reforms in Maharashtra

The Scheduled Castes holdings were 7.60 lakh in 1990-91 and 6.45 lakh in 1985-86. The total holdings were 94.70 lakh in 1990-91 and 80.01 lakh in 1985-86. The Scheduled Castes holdings accounted for 8.0 per cent of the total number of operational holdings in 1990-91. Table 1 shows the operated area of Scheduled Castes holdings which was 12.62

Table 1: Distribution of Operational Holdings and Operated Area by Tenancy Status in 1990-91

Category	Operational Holdings (in lakh)		Operational Area (in lakh ha)	
	SC	ST	SC	ST
Wholly Owned (Land Self-operated	7.55 (99.34)	6.24 (98.42)	12.5 (99.12)	15.06 (98.3)
	(0.13)	(0.32)	(0.16)	(0.33)
Wholly otherwise Operated	0.03 (0.40)	0.05 (0.79)	0.05 (0.40)	0.10 (0.65)
(a) Purely Owned	*	*	0.02 (0.16)	(0.6)
(b) Partly Leased-in	*	*	0.01 (0.08)	0.02 (0.13)
(c) Partly otherwise Operated	*	*	0.01 (0.08)	0.03 (0.20)
Total (a)+(b)+(c)	0.01 (0.13)	0.03 (0.47)	0.04 (0.32)	0.11 (0.72)
All categories	7.6	6.34	12.61	15.32

Note: (1) figures

Source: GOM (1995), p. 58.

lakh hectare and 11.83 lakh hectare in 1990-91 and 1985-86 respectively. In terms of operated area Scheduled Castes holdings had a share of 6 per cent in 1990-91 to the total operated area. The average size of a holding for Scheduled Castes was 1.66 hectare in 1990-91. Correspondingly the average size of a holding in 1985-86 was 1.83 hectare, which indicates a decrease of 9.3 per cent. Among the Scheduled Castes holdings, individual and joint holdings were 7.19 lakh and 0.41 lakh respectively. Among Scheduled Castes holdings the operated area of individual and joint holding was 11.72 lakh hectare and 0.90 lakh hectare respectively in 1990-91. The percentage of net irrigated area to net area sown for Scheduled Castes holdings was 13.1 per cent in 1990-91 (GOM., 1995, pp. 57-58).

The achievements of both old ceiling laws that is the first phase of land ceiling (pre 1972) and the revised ceiling laws (post 1972 phase) in Maharashtra have recorded a considerable achievement in the area declared surplus distributed and maintaining a major share to the Scheduled Castes and scheduled tribe beneficiaries. In comparison with the national average, it appears to be a better achievement relative to other states (Rajasekaran, 1996, p. 35).

Deshpande (1997) states that one of the important aspects is the nature of the asset holdings of the social group and notes that the asset holding of the group emerges as an important determinant in the poverty alleviation process of the group. According to him, land has always been an important asset which indicates not only the economic position but also serves as the closest proxy for social and political strength. He wanted to show the proportion of Scheduled Castes below poverty line and agricultural workers across the states, concentration of Scheduled Castes population in rural areas smaller proportion of cultivators and higher proportion of agricultural labour under this category. Deshpande (1997) concludes that after the two phases of land reforms in the country, it is difficult to conclude that the interests of the deprived castes are protected.

V Special Component Plan: As a Saviour for Landless Agricultural Labourers

The Sixth Report of the Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987) observed that "one of the main causes for the slow development of the Scheduled Castes during the earlier plans has been the lack of economic support programmes. The Special Component Plan evolved for the Sixth Five Year Plan gave a new dimension to the approach and strategy for the development of the Scheduled Castes. It envisaged three important instruments for the socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes namely: (i) The Special Component Plans for the States and the Central Ministries; (ii) The Special Central Assistance, and (iii) The Scheduled Castes Development corporations in the States.

The strategy of the Special Component Plan [SCP] envisages identification of schemes under general sectors of development in the plans of States and of the Central Ministries. This would be of benefit to the Scheduled Castes quantification or channelling of funds from all divisible programmes under each sector, and also determination of specific targets in terms of Scheduled Castes families, which are to be benefited from these programmes under each section. Thus, a careful and systematic effort is being made as part of the Annual Plan exercise to extend adequate benefits to the Scheduled Castes from all possible plan schemes through composite income generating programmes.

The main philosophy behind the developmental programme is to provide social justice to the deprived classes of the society, of course, landless agricultural labourers were incidental inclusion. These efforts indicate possibilities of substantial change in the socio-economic conditions of SCs as they are availing the benefits of the programme. The structure of the socio-economic programmes changed according to the thrust area, of the philosophies behind their implementation. Despite the plan efforts through expenditure on various programmes, constitutional safeguard and strong emphasis on bringing these castes in the mainstream of the life, the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the years 1987-1989 did not find the expected changes. It was pointed out in the report that the inequalities have increased and continued to increase.

Socio-Economic Developmental Schemes in Maharashtra

In the state of Maharashtra, in the financial year 2000-2001, 553 developmental programmes are being implemented for the socio-economic development of general category people and other backward groups including Scheduled Caste. Out of 553 developmental programmes, 243 are directly related to the socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes under the head of Social Welfare Programmes. Under the SCP the expenditure outlay was Rs. 16124.92 lakhs in 6th Five Year Plan and it was increased up to Rs. 38174.71 lakhs in 7th Five Year Plan and anticipated expenditure for the year 2000-2001 is Rs.55100 lakhs.

In the above mentioned programmes and from the developmental strategies one major group is neglected from it i.e., Agricultural Labourers. In this group with the general category people one major community is involved, which is belonging to the Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled Caste community is classified into two groups, which is based on the availability of cultivable land, viz. First, Scheduled Caste Agricultural labourers with land and second, Scheduled Caste Agricultural labourers without land i.e. Scheduled Caste agricultural landless labourers.

Table 2 shows outlays for the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th five year plan under special component plan (SCP). For the 9th five year plan (1997-2002) the outlay of Maharashtra state is about Rs. 2887 thousand crores out of which about Rs. 37 crores are anticipated expenditure in respective plan under SCP. For the year 2000-2001 the total annual outlay is Rs. 551000 lakhs under the scheme of SCP. Table 3 provides the information of budget provisions of central government under SCP.

Table 4 indicates SCPs percentages of expenditure for the period 1981 to 2000-2001. We may observe from Table 4 that the percentage expenditure varies from year to year from 57 per cent to 148 per cent. Table 4 also provides percentages of expenditure on 20 point programme (point 11) for the period of 1981 to 2000-2001. We may observe from Table 4 that for the year 1983-84 the percentage of expenditure is 294 per cent higher than the outlays from the period 1981 to 2000-2001, the percentages of expenditure are higher for all years, except the years 1981-82, 1996-97 and 1997-98.

Available documents of the Government of Maharashtra show that there are 583 socio economic developmental schemes being implemented for the year 2000-2001. Out of 583 schemes, 128 schemes are related to the agriculture and allied services, 11 schemes are related to the rural development, irrigation and flood control, 28 schemes to power development, 18 schemes to transport and communication, 11 schemes to social and community services, 293 schemes to labour and 52 schemes to labour welfare (for the detailed list see Appendix 2) and nutrition includes 4 schemes.

Table 2: Statement of Sector / Sub-Sector wise Annual Special Component Plan 2000-01

Name of the Scheme / Programme	6 th Plan 1980-85	7 th Plan 1985-90	8 th Plan 1992-97	9 th Plan 1997-2002	Annual SCP 2000-01
Agriculture & Allied Services	7814.10	3970.66	135022.00	19449.06	4591.40
Rural Development	15229.50	20205.00	170983.00	35008.44	6635.57
Special Area Programme	NA	NA	21656.00	NA	NA
Irrigation & Flood Control	140.00	2206.00	332910.00	NA	170.45
Power Development	160.00	3500.00	457998.00	NA	2328.24
Industry & Mineral	3341.47	570.00	81446.00	1464.12	2268.02
Transport	NA	290.00	173923	146555	6502.75
Communication	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Science and Technology	NA	NA	811	NA	NA
General Economic Services	NA	NA	38602	11722.70	2243.0
Social and Community Services	38119.49	47133.22	418513	74485.42*	30360.57
General Services	NA		20136	NA	NA
Other Programmes	NA		NA	NA	NA
Grand Total	81961.74	159983.48	1852000	NA	55100.00

Note : * Included all programmes

NA: Not Available

Source: GOM (1985), pp. XXIII & XXXIV, GOM (2000), pp. 129-182.

Table 3: Budget Provisions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987-88 and 1999-2000)

Sr. No.	Items	1986-87 Revised Total (Plan + Non-Plan) Expenditure*	1999-2000
1	Secretariat – Social Service	1.49	9.66
	Welfare of Scheduled Castes		(1.43)
2	Special Central Assistance for Scheduled Castes Component Plan	175.00	437 (64.79)
3	Post-matric scholarships	8.90	72.25 (10.71)
4	Machinery for implementation of protection of Civil Right Act 1955	8.58	25.00 (3.71)
5	Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporation.	12.75	8.50
6	Girls Hostel	3.15	(1.26)
7	Other programmes for welfare of Scheduled Castes	3.80	5.20 (0.77)
	Total – Welfare of Scheduled Castes (2 to 7)	212.18	674.45 (47.67)
8	Common programmes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare of Scheduled Tribes	1.42	47.35
9	Girls hostels	1.40	12.00
10	Post-matric scholarship scheme	2.10	62.75

Contd...

Table 3: Budget Provisions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987-88 and 1999-2000)

Sr. No.	Items	1986-87 Revised Total (Plan + Non-Plan) Expenditure*	1999-2000
11	Other programmes for welfare of Scheduled Tribes Central Assistance for State Plans	1.67	90.99
12	Tribal Area Sub-Plan	155.00	400.00
13	Assistance for schemes under provision (i) to Art.275 of the Constitution	20.00	100.00
	Total –Central Assistance for State Plans (12 +13)	175.00	500.00
	Total – Welfare of Scheduled Tribes (9 to 13)	180.17	692.99
	Total – Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (2 to 13)	393.77	48.98
14	Central Sector Plan Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward classes	226.86	1094.00 (73.23)
15	State Plan Tribal Sub-Plan	155.00	400.00 (26.77)
	Total – (14 +15)	381.86	1494.00
	Total – (2 to 15)	775.63	(100)
	Grand Total (1 to 15)	77.12	1484.00

Sources: *GOI, 1987a, Expenditure Budget 1987-88, pp.248-250.

**GOI, 1999, Expenditure Budget 1999-00, pp.234-236.

Table 4: Percentages of Expenditure of SCP and 20 Point (11) Programme in Maharashtra (1981 to 2001)

Year	SCP (%)	20 Point Programme (%)
1980-81	57	-
1981-82	60	68
1982-83	104	111
1983-84	93	294
1984-85	101	108
Total VI	86	127
1985-86	148	128
1986-87	124	131
1987-88	120	128
1988-89	131	126
1989-90	108	111
Total VII	122	127
1990-91	87	118
1991-92	139	100
1993-94	119	112
1994-95	110	97
1995-96	86	100
1996-97	91	87
Total VIII	NA	NA
1997-98	97	86
1998-99	80	100
1999-2000	100	43.33
2000-2001	100	100

Note : NA = Not Available.

Source : GOM (2000), p. 2.

The social welfare department has Divisional offices at Mumbai, Pune, Aurangabad, Nasik and Amaravati for the effective implementation of social welfare schemes. The Department implements their rural development scheme through District offices. Some schemes are implemented through Zilla Parishad (ZP) offices. Official audit is completed within two years. The department does not have implementing officers and staff to work at the panchayat and village level. Probably this is the reason why a large share of the allocation is not utilised. The utilisation across regions has also not been encouraging.

Ministry of Welfare, Government of India (1998) Standing Committee on Labour and Welfare (1998-99) action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the third report on special assistance to Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes made available with some observations are as follows :

1. The committee had noted that the Ministry of Welfare did not have authentic data of Scheduled Castes living below the poverty line. All India poverty ratio for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is worked out from the National Sample Survey (NSS) distribution of persons and (implicit) all India poverty line. The estimates of poverty for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are made only for 16 major states due to limitations of data. Further the methodology adopted by the National Sample Survey Organisation for the estimation of Scheduled Caste population living below poverty line is not acceptable to the committee (GOI, 1998, p. 4).
2. The Committee noted that the Ministry of welfare did not have a properly set monitoring mechanism for evaluation and implementation of special component plan. The Committee also suggested that the monitoring mechanism of the Ministry should be strengthened and the suggestions given by the Ministry should be taken up at the highest level for its effective implementation by the state government.
3. The Committee was of the view that in order to check effectively the diversion and misutilisation of funds earmarked under SCP scheme, the Ministry should setup a Vigilance Committee at the National level.
4. The Committee regret to note that the fund proposed by the Ministry of Welfare for SCP schemes in their plan outlay for the last three financial years was not acceded to by the planning commission and the funds allocated to the ministry were not emerge to meet the committed liability of the Ministry towards the scheme.
5. The Committee expressed its distress at the allocation to the SCP by states / STs. It has been between 10 to 11 per cent and it has never reached to the level of percentage of SC population in the country i.e., 16.48 per cent. In some of the states namely Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra the allocation to SCP has been 6.68 per cent, 4.23 per cent and 5.17 per cent respectively. Further the average percentage of expenditure out of the amounts allocated has been ranging between 6.30 per cent and 9.64 per cent.

In gist it comes out very clearly that the SCP has been administrated and no cognizance is taken of the recommendation given above. This is a dismal discussion and as a result the entire efforts towards development of SC are going down the drain at least in the case of SCP. At the receiving end are the two groups among SCs. One which has assets like land or skill (whatever merge share they own) and the other which has neither skills nor land assets namely landless agricultural labour. This group happens to be worst sufferer in the process.

VI The Scenario of Sample Households

Socio Economic Condition – Population Profile

The total population of 178 sample household is 1052. It includes 53.33 per cent male and 46.67 per cent females. Out of the total population 2.76 per cent population is more than 60 years old, 17.21 per cent children aged below 6 years and 34.60 per cent in the age group of 18 to 60 years, which is, the main work force of the population and 28.14 (296) per cent is in the age group of 6 to 18 out of which 2.47 per cent children work as child labour and the remaining are attending schools.

The literacy level of the sample population shows that every second person is literate but among the literate about half of them have attended only 4 years of schooling.

From the total sample households 77.53 per cent households are engaged in primary sector, 18.54 per cent secondary sector and 3.93 per cent service sector. About 46 per cent of the sample households is landless and almost 98 per cent have the land holding below 4 hectares. Thus, land is not a major asset among the sample households. Table 5 provides mean values of variables related to the agricultural land holders, landless labourers and rural artisans group. The working days in a year is less for the rural artisans group compared to other groups. The household assets value is higher for landless labour. The consumption expenditure values are less for agriculture holding and landless labour compared to the rural artisans. The total loan amount, as well as, total loan schemes is less for landless group but the same values is higher for other two remaining groups – rural artisans represents higher income group, followed by landless agricultural group and then agricultural holding group.

Table 5: Mean Variables of Respective Variable

Variables	Unit	ALH (33)	NAL (64)	RA (14)	Total (111)
Total wages per year	Rs.	5320	5668	3339	5270
Agricultural income	Rs.	1056	117	30	377
Net scheme income	Rs.	6679	9678	14478	9392
Total family income	Rs.	13055	15463	17787	15040
Days worked in a year	Days	151	158	96	148
Value of assets (Home)	Rs.	5827	4820	4900	5129
Assets (including livestock)	Rs.	3019	2225	1378	2354
Other assets	Rs.	1279	447	905	752
Total Assets (6+7+8)	Rs.	10125	7493	7184	8236
Scheme expenditure	Rs.	326	327	346	329
Live stock value only	Rs.	2277	2017	1364	2012
Food consumption	Rs.	9121	8156	9754	8644
Non food consumption	Rs.	3266	4284	5422	4124
Total consumption (12+13)	Rs.	12387	12440	15176	12769
Total loan (Other)	Rs.	1288	484	142	680
Per capita consumption (15/16 ratio)		2400	2326	2707	2396
Income on BPL Card	Rs.				
Loan Amount (Scheme)	Rs.	1924	1877	1811	1883
Subsidy	Rs.	3334	2754	4552	3153
Total Loan (19+20) scheme	Rs.	1586	1177	2061	1410
		4920	3930	6614	4563
		N=33	N=64	N=14	N=111

ALH - All Households with Land, NH - Landless and RA - Rural Artisan.

Table 5 indicates that for all the three groups the wage income is the dominant income in their total income and the scheme income higher with rural artisans, followed by landless labour and agricultural holding group. In brief, for three groups, wage income, consumption, scheme income total, land assets, are the important variables which determines the socio-economic development of the groups.

VII Determinants of Socio-Economic Development: Analysis Based on Multivariate Regression Model

To find out the joint impact of different variables, the study worked out the multiple regression model with the help of some selected variables. In order to find out the change in the socio economic conditions of the beneficiaries in the study, we have used the total family income as a dependent variable for the analysis. The first set shows four equations and second set also shows four equations. In the second set, the below poverty line income is used as an dependent variable for the analysis. In the first set of equations, the four equations have very high R^2 . The specification of the models are as follows :

$$Y = f (TW, TSI, DWY, NFC, FC, FS, BPLI)$$

and

$$Y = f (TW, TFI, DWY, LSVO, TLO, STL)$$

Where,

Y = Dependent Variable.

The Independent Variables = TW, TSI, DWY, NFC, FC, FS, BPLI,
FI, LSVO, TLO, STL

The model used here is additive model. (For the definition of variables see Table 6). In both the groups first model is related to all respondent, second is concerned with agricultural land holders, third with agricultural landless labour and fourth equation model represents the rural artisans group.

Table 6: List of Variables Used

Definition	Variable
Total Wages	TW
Agri. Income	AI
Net Scheme Income	NSI
Total Family Income	TFI
Days Worked in Year	DWY
Value of Assets (Home)	VAH
Assets (Live Stocks)	ALV
Other Assets	OA
Total Assets (Above 7+8+9)	TA
Scheme Expenditure	SE
Live Stock Value Only	LSVO
Food Consumption	FC
Non Food Consumption	NFC
Total Consumption (Above 13+14)	TC
Family Size	FS
Total Loans Others	TLO
Per Capita Consumption (15/16 Ratio)	PCC
Income On BPL Card	BPLI
Loan Amount Scheme	LAS
Subsidy	SUB
Total Loan (Above 20+21)	STL

In first three equations, the family size emerged as a highly significant variable. This indicates that the family size has a strong influence on the total income. Food and non-food consumption have their own importance in theoretical analysis, as well as, in practice. Surprisingly, total consumption expenditure is not an important variable and above all in all the four equations it has been showing negative sign, but at the same time the non-food consumption indicates positive impact on total income. Total scheme income has emerged with positive sign in all the equations.

In the second group the poverty line (BPL) income is used as dependent variable. This indicate the income before participating in the programme. In this second group of equations total wage income has emerged as positive except the agricultural labour, which indicates negative relationship between BPL income and total wage income. Total working days in a year showed positive relationship with BPL income except agricultural holding cultivators group.

The variable representing loan indicates positive relationship to land holders and rural artisans groups and for other two groups negative relationship. Livestock assets are important for all the group, among the groups third group i.e., agricultural landless labour. Total loan scheme emerged as positive relationship with BPL income for cultivators and agricultural landless labours, but the same variable indicates negative relationship with dependent variable. Among the 4 equations shown in Table 7.B second and fourth equations have a high R^2 compared to first and third equations.

Table 7.A: Results of the Multivariable Regression Model Values with their Slope Coefficient (Group I)

Eq. No.	Constant	TW	TSI	DWY	NFC	TC	FS	BPLI	R2	F Value	N	Group	Y
1	229.868	.005	0.989	-2.002	0.010	-0.010	65.347	0.125	.993	2132.544	111	Total	Total Family Income
2	128.007	.929	0.943	-2.700	0.088	-0.039	153.351	0.192	.971	120.974	33	ALH	Total Family Income
3	-113.103	.000	1.000	-0.425	0.076	-0.011	7.445	0.028	.998	5021.408	64	NAL	Total Family Income
4	140.679	1.008	1.001	-0.251	0.013	-0.009	-24.264	0.000	.999	100969.8	14	RA	Total Family Income

Table 7.B: Results of the Multivariable Regression Model Values with their Slope Coefficient (Group II)

Eq. No	Constant	TW	TSI	DWY	NFC	TC	FS	BPLI	R2	F Value	N	Group	Y
1	-1576.319	0.006	0.008	1.014	0.032	-0.071	-0.053	-	0.1639	3.398	111	Total	BPL Income
2	1726.356	0.034	-0.004	-0.453	0.011	0.014	0.003	-	3.706	1668	33	ALH	BPL Income
3	1566.953	-0.011	0.010	1.906	0.039	-0.139	0.084	-	0.262	3.380	64	NAL	BPL Income
4	643.768	0.048	0.034	2.661	0.016	0.230	-0.007	-	0.485	1.100	14	RA	BPL Income

VII Factors Determining the Socio-economic Condition of the Scheduled Castes : A Micro Level Analysis

For the purpose of analysis and with the help of correlation matrix, we selected a few variables namely income, (wages, scheme & invoices, agricultural income, other activities), assets (Home, Live stock), loan (total, scheme loan), subsidy consumption (Food and non food) and days worked in a year and family size, etc. -

The analysis of correlation matrix is divided into four groups. The groups and the household included are as follows: Group I: All respondent (111); Group II: Agricultural land holding group (33); Group III: Agricultural landless labourers (64); Group IV: Rural artisans (14).

In Table 8.A only significant values are reported pertaining to Group I. The analysis shows that agricultural income and wage income is the dominant sources of income. Total consumption also emerged as an important variable in the analysis. Similarly the asset position of the households have a positive relationship with days worked in the year. Food consumption is dominating the total consumption and per capita food consumption and family size have depicted a negative relationship. Subsidy and total other loans, as well as, scheme loans have positive relations. Variable representing total consumption indicates positive correlation with net scheme income. This indicates if the scheme income increases, the total consumption also increases.

Table 8.A: Correlation Matrix of Relevant Indicators Showing the Effectiveness of the Various Schemes (Group I)

Variables First	Variables Second	Significant Values
DWY	VAH	.6810
TC	NSI	.9204
LSVO	ALV	.9512
TA	OA	.5192
LSVU	TA	.6050
TC	FC	.8539
PCC	FC	.6630
TC	NFC	.6128
FS	NFC	.3586
FS	TC	.3796
PCC	TC	.6506
NFC	FS	.3586
TC	FS	.3791
PCC	FS	.3717
SOB	TLA	.5477
STL	LA	.7710
STL	SUB	.7319

Table 8.B includes the results pertaining to Scheduled Caste agricultural landholders. In this group total days of work in the year and wage income showed a positive relationship and at the same time total wage income has a positive relationship with net scheme income. Among various assets, livestock asset is the predominant asset in generating income. The households below poverty line and non-food consumption expenditure show a positive relationship with per capita consumption expenditure and value of live stock has a positive relation. The increasing number of family members have a negative relationship with per capita consumption expenditure. Households are approaching for loans if there is subsidy, and subsidy, as well as, total loan other than

scheme loan have a positive and significant relationship. At the same time, scheme total loans are positively and highly correlated to total loan and subsidy.

Table 8.B: Correlation Matrix of Relevant Indicators Showing the Effectiveness of the Scheme for Scheduled Castes, Agricultural Holding, Households.

Variables First	Variables Second	Significant Values
DWY	TW	.6685
TFI	NSI	.9130
TA	VAH	.7180
TA	OA	.5696
LSVO	ALU	.8661
TC	FC	.9312
BPLI	NFC	.5288
PCC	LSVO	.7839
PCC	TC	.6782
PCC	FS	.5739
SUB	TLO	.7741
STL	TLO	.9790
STL	SUB	.8868

Table 8.C shows the results pertaining to the Scheduled Castes agricultural landless labourers. In this group only a few variables emerged as significant determinants, probably due to smaller variances on both sides. In this group wage income and days worked in a year have positive relation. The asset position did not emerge as a significant variable. Live stock value and other assets have shown a positive relationship. Total consumption and live stock assets value also have positive relationship. We have presented results pertaining to rural artisans in Table 8.D The artisans here include leather making, chappal making and fisheries. Considering all the earlier variables used in the correlation analysis, surprisingly quite a few variable indicated significant relationship. Particularly agricultural income, livestock, value of food consumption, as well as, non-food consumption have shown negative relationship.

Table 8.C: Correlation Matrix of Relevant Indicators Showing the Effectiveness of the Scheme for Scheduled Castes, Agricultural Labour Household (Group III)

Variables First	Variables Second	Significant Values
DWY	TW	.6655
TFI	NSE	.9233
TA	VAH	.8026
LSVO	ALV	.9735
TC	LSVO	.8632
TC	NFC	.6684
PCC	FL	.6867
PCC	TC	.6929
STL	LA	.9779

Level of significance value = 0.4176, N = 64

Table 8.D: Rural Artisans Households (Group IV)

Variables First	Variables Second	Significant Values
TFI	SNI	.9551
DWY	TW	.8402
ALV	AI	-.9172
OA	AI	-.8838
LSVO	AI	-.9159
FC	AI	-.8257
TC	AI	-.6445
OA	ALV	.7399
TA	VAH	.8297
TC	VAH	.7169
FS	VAH	.7607
TA	OA	.7796
LSVO	OA	.7412
FC	OA	.8297
TC	OA	.7597
FS	OA	.7162
LSVO	TA	.8056
FC	TA	.8243
TC	TA	.7885
FS	TA	.8359
FC	TA	.7621
TC	FC	.7821
FS	TC	.8147
SUB	LAS	.9786
STL	LAS	.9975
STL	SUB	.9908

When we bring together the results of above analysis we arrive at the following important findings.

- 1 Livestock Value - Assets (Livestocks); Total Consumption - Net Scheme Income; Total Consumption - Food Consumption; Days Worked in Year; Value of Assets have a significant and positive relationship in the group I.
- 2 Total Loan - Total Loans Other; Total Consumption - Food Consumption; Total Family Income - Net Scheme Income; Total Loan - Subsidy has shown a significant and positive relationship in the group of households possessing land.
- 3 Livestock Value Only - Agricultural Income; Total Loan - Loan Amount Scheme; Total Family Income - Net Scheme Income; Total Consumption - Livestock Value Only has shown a significant and positive relationship in the agricultural labour households.
- 4 The results in the group of artisans show positive relation for many variables and a few among them are: Subsidy - Loan Amount Scheme, Total Loan - Loan Amount Scheme; Total Loan - Loan Amount Scheme; Total Loan - Subsidy and Family Size - Total Assets. But we also have a few instances of strong negative relationship among Assets Agricultural Income; Livestock Assets only- Agricultural Income; Other Assets and Agricultural Income.

In an earlier study, Kamble (1995) has calculated the programme effectiveness index for the households. He defined the effectiveness index mathematically as follows:

$$\text{Effectiveness Index (EIH)} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^P (IA - IE)}{\sum_{i=1}^P PI}$$

Where, EIH = Effectiveness Index of the Household

IA = Total Income after the programme participation.

IE = Income before the programme participation

(or even Income without programme intervention)

PI = Total Programme Investment (Loan + Subsidy).

Kamble (1995) analysed the determinants of effectiveness in two ways firstly, with the help of correlation matrix and secondly, tried to fit regression models to certain selected variables to locate their degree of influence on effectiveness. According to Kamble (1995) from the policy point of view, it became necessary to locate the factors discriminating between the levels of effectiveness. Such an analysis can help in properly modifying the programme. Kamble (1995) divided the households into two groups. First, those who have crossed the poverty line (CPLE) by effectively utilizing the programme's (adjusted to the current prices of the year 1990) and other who failed to cross the poverty threshold (NCPLE) due to various reasons. With the help of a Multivariate Linear Discriminant Analysis, the major discriminating variables were identified. On the basis of this analysis the sample of 178 households was segregated into two groups as indicated earlier based on the field data (for the details of variables see Appendix 3). These groups include 65 households in group CPLE and 113 households in group NCPLE. The present study attempts to segregate the 111 households into two groups, i.e., CPLE and NCPLE. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 : Distribution of Sample Households into Two Groups

Group	Identified with the help of MLDA	Per cent Correct	Per cent Error	Earlier Identification
Group 1 st CPLE	47	87.23	12.77	41
Group 2 nd NCPLE	33	47.14	52.86	70
Total	80	67.19	65.63	111

Note : 31 households fall in the Gray Zone

The index values for the sample households are shown in Appendix 4. It may be observed from Appendix 4 that the maximum index value for an effectively successful sample household is 3.70227 and the minimum index value for an effectively successful sample household is -0.7410586. The maximum index value for an unsuccessful household is 2.75324 and the minimum index value is -4.90082.

The area between the two groups can be called as the zone of ignorance or gray zone (Altman, 1968, p. 606). This area is observed because of the susceptibility to error. Hence, it is necessary to find out the division point, and with the help of such a division point it would be possible to determine the two groups properly. The calculated division point is 1.127011. Now for any individual sample households if their index value (HEI) is more than 1.127011, it can be included in the group of those who have effectively used

the developmental programmes assistance to cross the poverty barrier or in group CPLE. Thus the high value of Z correspond to the effective use of the developmental programme assistance to cross the poverty barrier and low values indicate the other side of the argument.

The study concludes that 52.72 per cent of the households seem to have used the developmental programme assistance effectively as against 48.18 per cent of the households who could not make use of the programmes due to various constraints. These constraints come out very clearly in the form of discriminating variables.

X Concluding Observations

The Constitution of India provided safeguards to the Scheduled Castes to provide protection to construct a casteless modern India. The central government and the state governments have implemented several developmental programmes for the development of Scheduled Castes. Central, as well as, the State Government are making considerable change in the policy and in financial outlays through the five year plans. However, some of the earlier studies reported that these policy interventions did not yield satisfactory results. The present study makes an attempt to highlight major findings of the studies relating to the problems of Scheduled Castes, particularly on land reforms, socio economic development based on household amenities, and impact of agricultural modernization on Scheduled Castes, social untouchability etc.

It is observed that only a small proportion of non-land asset group benefited from these developmental schemes. Labour activity is the main source of livelihood of the respondents. The determinants of effectiveness was attempted with the help of correlation matrix, as well as, multiple regression model. A positive relation of the total income was noted with all variables but more interestingly the per capita expenditure and family size. Wage income is the dominant source of income for all the families. The study also considered the multiple regression model to identify the joint impact of different variables. The study worked out 8 equations with different groups. The major groups for the purpose of MLDA were identified as those households who have effectively used the programme assistance to cross the poverty barrier successfully (CPLE) and those who could not achieve such level due to various socio economic constraints (NCPLE). About 53.72 per cent of the households have used the developmental programme assistance effectively as against 48.18 per cent of the households who could not use the programmes due to the various constraints which came out very clearly in the form of discriminating variables.

Appendix 1.A: 1983 for Various Livelihood and Social Groups of all India Rural Population

1983	SGTP (%)	APCTE Rs. P.M	HCR %	PGI Ratio	FGT Ratio	SI Ratio
Agricultural Labour/Wage Earner Households	27.68	30.03 (21.0)	68.61 (38.7)	.2212 (44.2)	0.0936 (47.5)	.2921 (43.0)
Scheduled Castes	17.97	33.20 (15.1)	61.55 (22.6)	.1904 (24.7)	.0783 (25.8)	.2530 (24.2)
All groups	100	39.58 (100)	49.02 (100)	.1386 (100)	.0545 (100)	.1882 (100)

Appendix 1.B: Poverty Indicators and their Share in Total Population in Year (A) 1987-88

Group Type	SGTP (%)	APCTE Rs. P.M	HCR %	PGI Ratio	FGT Ratio	SI Ratio
Agricultural Labour/wage earner households	27.12	31.55 (20.8)	62.74 (37.9)	.1790 (41.8)	.0697 (43.9)	0.2408 (41.0)
Scheduled Castes	18.37	30.14 (14.3)	56.06 (22.9)	.1499 (24.5)	0.557 (25.3)	0.2032 (24.1)
All groups	100	38.73 (100)	44.88 (100)	.1126 (100)	0.0404 (100)	.1546 (100)

Notes: APCTE refer to mean PCTE at constant prices of 1970-71. These estimates of poverty indicators are based on the planning commission all India poverty lines which are monthly PCTE of Rs. 49.09 (rural) and Rs. 55.64 (urban) at 1973-74 prices.

SGTP refers to share of a specific group in the population of all groups.

Figures within brackets refer to group specific shares in aggregate value of the variable at top for all groups.

Source : Tendulkar *et. al.* (1993), p. 3 & 39.

Appendix 2: Maharashtra - Labour and Labour Welfare Schemes (2000-2001)

(a) Labour Training

S. No.	Name of the Scheme
497	Strengthening of the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training including project management unit. (State).
498	Development of State Maintenance Unit and Establishment of Regional Maintenance Units (State).
499	Discretionary Grant for Minor works (State)
500	Creation of four faculty centres for development of entrepreneurship training programme.
501	Replacement of worn-out machine tools and modernisation of equipment in existing ITIs.(State).
502	Instructor's training programme (State)
503	Procurement of deficient equipment in existing I.T.Is. (District).
504	Removal of deficient staff in exiting I. T. Is. (District).
505	Introduction of additional seats in existing I. T.Is. (District).

Contd...

Appendix 2: Maharashtra - Labour and Labour Welfare Schemes (2000-2001)

(a) Labour Training

S. No.	Name of the Scheme
506	Construction of buildings for ITI trainees
507	Establishment of new I.T.Is. (SC) (District)
508	Development of SW employment section
509	Assistance to SC students for supply of instruments I (its total)
510	System improvement of employment scheme of SWD providing computer
511	Introduction of trades of more demands in lieu of trades of less demand. (Dist.)
512	Equipment modernisation in ITIs. Under W. B. Project.(District).
513	Machinery maintenance system under World Bank Project. (District).
514	Stipend to S.C. students in I.T.Is.
515	Expansion of scheme of evening classes for individual workers.
516	Development of Audio Visuals other quality improvement activities. (State).
517	Provision of audio visual aids in ITIs in W .B. Projects.(Dist). I
518	Expansion of additional seats in ITIs. New trade, under W .B. Projects. (District).
519	Establishment of BC cell in employment Exchanges of District level Employment.
520	Establishment of new institutions for Women under WFP
521	Introduction of courses for self-employment (District).
522	Establishment of basic training centres under World Bank Projects (Dist.)
523	Establishment of related instruction centres (District).
524	A.V.Ts. Expansion.(District).
525	Vocational Training Project under World Bank (50: 50)
526	Establishment of new IT Is for women under W.B. Projects (District).
527	Deficiencies in equipment's and hand tools at BTRI Centres. (Dist.)
528	Creation of addl. Training facilities of BTRIs centres (District)
529	Opening of Book Banks in IT Is. (District)
530	Introduction of new trades in existing women ITIs/Wing under W.B.Project. (District).
531	Conduct of progressive trade test of Apprentices as per DGET. (Dist.)
532	Hostel facilities for apprentices (District).
533	Establishment of full-fledged BTRI Centres.
534	Staff for EPP.
535	Training scheme for educated unemployed
536	Establishment of UEIGBS activities at Amravati University (State)
537	Strengthening Directorate of Employment Marketing Unit and Vocational Guidance Unit (state)
538	Creation of Mobile Units and Employment Exchange (District) (Employ).
539	Opening of sub-employment exchange at Urban and Nagothane. (District).
540	Development of Advanced Vocational Training Project under W.B. Project (50: 50) (District/State)
541	Acquisition of lands. (District).
542	Construction of Workshop/Administrative Buildings in I. T. Is. (District).
543	Construction of Staff Quarters (District)
544	Construction of Hostel Buildings for trainees (District).
545	Sanjay Gandhi Swavlamban Yojana (HAND SAD) (DIST.) (H. D. & S.A.)
546	Expansion of State Institute of Vocational Education. (SLS)
547	Opening of vocational guidance unit of employment 548 Training scheme for education unemployment honorarium to educated .

Total-Labour and Labour Welfare [Annual Plan (2000-2001) Outlay Rs.175.96 lakhs.]

Source: GOM, 2000, pp. 165 - 167.

Appendix 3: Definition of the Variables Used for the Individual Sample Households Effectiveness Index (HEI)

Sr. No.	Variable Definitions
1.	Durable assets X 100 /Total assets
2.	Per capita Durable assets /TPI
3.	Incremental Programme Income /Scheme Income
4.	Wage Income X 100 /Total Income
5.	Expenditure Technology /TPI
6.	Total Assistance as per cent of total income
7.	Total Consumption /TPI
8.	Per Capita Total food consumption /TPI
9.	Total Non-food consumption /TPI
10.	Total Income after programme -Income before /TPI
11.	Total Per Capita Income before programme /TPI
12.	Assets per capita/size of landholding (ha)
13.	Net value of agricultural production per hector
14.	Expenditure on scheme/Total Income
15.	Scheme expenditure/TPI
16.	Number of Schemes participated in
17.	Outstanding Loan per capita/total per capita income
18.	Repayment of loan/Total scheme income
19.	Outstanding loan per capita/Total scheme income
20.	Total scheme expenditure/Total scheme income
21.	Total market participation per capita
22.	Value of total services purchases per capita
23.	Percentage adults (above 18 years) educated
24.	Political and social participation score
25.	Expenditure an addition habits to total non-food consumption
26.	Durable assets/TPI
27.	Scheme Income/TPI

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Agricultural Labourers Social Security and Welfare Scheme in Tamil Nadu

M Thangaraj*

The government of Tamil Nadu constituted a Committee on Agricultural Labourers in 1997 to analyse the nature and extent of socio-economic problems faced by the agricultural labourers in Tamil Nadu and to suggest the ways and means of improving their levels of living. The Committee was assisted by the representatives of the trade union of agricultural labourers, members of the farmers' association and academicians. The report was submitted to the government of Tamil Nadu in 1998. The Committee has made several recommendations for the overall development of the agricultural labourers. The report was well received by the agricultural labourers' trade union and NGOs and they demanded that the government should accept the recommendations of the committee's report. They also conducted several struggles for implementation of the committee's report. The government of Tamil Nadu issued an order in 2001 for the establishment of the "Tamil Nadu agricultural labourers social security and welfare scheme". The immediate cause for the establishment of this welfare board is due to the fact that the agricultural labourers trade unions and NGOs were fighting for the implementation of the recommendations of the Kolappan Committee report on agricultural labourers. The objectives of the paper are: 1) to examine the report on the committee on agricultural labourers and 2) to analyse the nature and the functions of the agricultural labourers social security and welfare scheme.

Labour is an important productive asset in India. About sixty per cent of our population directly depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Agricultural labourers constitute the single largest workforce in India being 33 per cent of the total work force. An agricultural labourer is defined as 'a person who works on another person's land for wages in money, kind or share in order to eke out his livelihood. The landless labourers, marginal and small farmers, who work on another person's land for wages constitute the total agricultural work-force in the country'.

After 53 years of independence, the government of Tamil Nadu issued an order on 9th February 2001, for the establishment of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers Social Security and Welfare Scheme. This is an outcome of the continuous struggles conducted by the Agricultural Labourers Trade Unions and several NGOs in Tamil Nadu. The immediate cause for the establishment of the social security and welfare scheme is due to the fact that the agricultural labourers, trade unions and NGOs were fighting for the implementation of the recommendations of the Kolappan Committee Report on Agricultural Labourers. The report was well received by all working class people. Hence, it is worthwhile to study the salient features of the Kolappan Committee Report on

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The author is grateful to Mr. G. Veerayyan and Mr. S. Thirunavukkarasu of the All India Agricultural Workers Union, Chennai, for their help in getting the reports available and their fruitful discussion.

agricultural labourers. In fact, all newspapers in Tamil Nadu have carried the information regarding the protest or demonstration for implementation of the report, until recently.

The objectives of this paper are: 1) to examine the Report on the Committee on Agricultural Labourers, and 2) to analyse the nature and functions of the Agricultural Labourers Social Security and Welfare Scheme set up by the government of Tamil Nadu for the well-being of the agricultural labourers.

Social Security for Agricultural Labourers

Leela Gulati's study on agricultural workers' pension shows that Kerala was the first state to experiment with a pension scheme, which came into effect in 1980. The coalition government of the left parties introduced this scheme. This scheme provided for payment of monthly pension of Rs.45 per agricultural workers and this amount was enhanced to Rs.60 per month in 1987 to all eligible agricultural workers who completed 60 years of age. A study conducted by Kannan and Shaji on State Assisted Social Security Scheme in Kerala shows that there are 14 welfare funds with statutory status. The workers covered under these Welfare funds are: (1) Toddy Workers; (2) Head Load Workers; (3) Motor Transport Workers; (4) Cashew Workers; (5) Khadi Workers; (6) Coir Workers; (7) Fish Vendors; (8) Handloom Workers; (9) Abkari Workers; (10) Construction Workers; (11) Agricultural Workers; (12) Auto Rickshaw Workers; (13) Tailors and (14) Other selected workers. Patel's study on Life Insurance shows that Gujarat government introduced Voluntary Scheme of Life Insurance for agricultural labourers. Under this scheme agricultural labourers could take a policy with annual premium of Rs.10 for a policy of Rs.1000. This scheme was introduced in 1983. Shyamleendu Chatterjee study shows that West Bengal government introduced State Assisted Provident Fund Account for Agricultural workers recently. Under this scheme the agricultural worker whose average family monthly income does not exceed Rs.3500, is included in this scheme where each member worker deposits Rs.20 every month and the state government deposits the same amount and the state government also gives interest on the yearly for deposits. A news report as given in the Indian Labour Journal shows that Labour Ministry of the government of India has announced a unique social security scheme for Agricultural workers namely *Krishi Shramik Suraksha Yojana-2001* and this was launched in July 2001. The scheme in the first phase would cover 10 lakh agricultural workers in 50 districts of the country and provide comprehensive life insurance protection, periodical lump-sum survival benefit and pension through the Life Insurance Corporation of India to them.

Social Security Schemes in Tamil Nadu

The Government of Tamil Nadu has already established Social Security Measures for Unorganised Workers. Mehta's study on Group Insurance Scheme shows that the government of Tamil Nadu had initiated Handloom Weavers Scheme in 1976. It insures all those registered weavers who contribute to a certain thrift fund with a matching contribution by the Government. Members in the age group of 18-55 are insured. It started with a sum assured of Rs. 500 for a premium of Rs.7 p.a. On 1st March 1980, the sum assured was raised to Rs.3000 for a premium Rs.15 p.a. wholly paid by the Government.

Mehta's study further shows that the Tamil Nadu government launched a unique scheme covering the unorganized labour in the State from 1st April 1985. This was an insurance-cum savings scheme for the benefit of workers such as agricultural labourers,

small and marginal farmers, village artisans, building workers, loading and unloading workmen, cart pullers, washermen, barbers, carpenters, masons, etc. This is a fully contributory voluntary scheme in which out of Rs.10 collected every month, Rs. 6.25 is saved by the Government together with interest to the credit of the member and the balance of Rs. 3.75 p.m. is utilized to pay premium to LIC for a sum assured of Rs. 5000.

Mehta has listed some Group Insurance Schemes for Weaker Section introduced in India. The following schemes are being implemented for different categories of workers in Tamil Nadu: (i) Gunny bag workers, Coimbatore; (ii) Temple Employees, Tamil Nadu; (iii) School Teachers of aided school, Tamil Nadu; (iv) Quarry Workers, Thanjavur; (v) Leather Workers, Madras; (vi) Wood Carvers, Iron Manufacturers, Carpentry and Blacksmith Workers, Thanjavur and Coimbatore; (vii) Tailors of Thanjavur; (viii) Harijan Transport Drivers, Madras; (ix) Blind and Handicapped Workers, Coimbatore and Madurai; (x) Anna Lorry Tholkalar Sumaithookhum Sangam, Madurai; (xi) Small Farmers, Labourers, etc. of Tamil Nadu; (xii) Cobblers of Thanjavur; (xiii) Vegetable Vendors of Vellore.

The policy note on labour, factories, employment and training (2002-2003) shows that the Tamil Nadu government has also formed the following welfare boards for the manual workers: (i) Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Social Security and Welfare Board; (ii) Tamil Nadu Auto Richshaws and Taxi Drivers Social Security and Welfare Board; (iii) Tami Nadu Washer men Social Security and Welfare Board; (iv) Tamil Nadu Hair Dressers Social Security and Welfare Board; (v) Tamil Nadu Tailoring Workers Social Security and Welfare Board; (vi) Tamil Nadu Palm Tree Workers Social Security and Welfare Board; (vii) Tamil Nadu Handicraft Workers Social Security and Welfare Board; (viii) Tamil Nadu Footwear and Leather Goods Manufacturers and Tannery Workers Social Security and Welfare Board; (ix) Tamil Nadu Artists Social Security and Welfare Board; (x) Tamil Nadu Handlooms and Handlooms Silk Weaving Workers Social Security and Welfare Board.

The registered manual workers in the above mentioned boards are entitled to the following benefits: (i) Group personal accident relief; (ii) Assistance for funeral expenses; (iii) Assistance on natural death; (iv) Assistance for education of the son or daughter of the registered manual worker; (v) Assistance for marriage and (vi) Assistance for delivery or miscarriage of pregnancy or the termination of pregnancy by a registered female manual worker.

Social Security Pension Scheme

Budget Memorandum of the Tamil Nadu government (2001-2002) shows that the government of Tamil Nadu Provides for a monthly pension scheme of Rs. 200 under various social security pension schemes. Financial allocations have been made in the budget for Old age pension, Pension to destitute widows and physically handicapped, Pension to destitute agricultural labourers, Pension to the deserted wives and Pension to freedom fighters.

I Committee on Agricultural Labourers

The Government of Tamil Nadu constituted a Committee on Agricultural Labourers on 27th August 1997 to analyse the nature and extent of the socio-economic problems faced by the agricultural labourers in Tamil Nadu and to suggest ways and means of improving their levels of living. The committee was headed by Mr. Kolappan, IAS and was assisted

by representatives of the trade unions of the agricultural labourers, members from farmers' associations and academicians. The report was submitted in 1998.

The committee on Agricultural Labourers visited 26 out of 29 districts of Tamil Nadu and conducted meetings with agricultural labourers and farmers at the level of districts, taluks, blocks and villages. The committee also visited fields where agricultural labourers were involved in agricultural operations. The committee collected secondary data as well.

The Kolappan Committee Report on Agricultural Labourers has made several recommendations for the overall development of the agricultural labourers. The agricultural labourers trade unions headed by CPI (BKMU), CPM (AIAWU) and several NGOs have demanded that the government should accept the recommendations of the Kolappan Committee Report and asked the government to make available the copies of the Committee Report. In fact, they conducted several demonstrations to implement the Kolappan Committee Report. The AIAWU had released the copies of the committee report before the media persons. The following day almost all-leading newspapers have published the major content of the report. They have also brought out several booklets, which highlighted the recommendations of the Kolappan committee report. The Kolappan Committee Report also gives information on the distribution of agricultural labourers by males and females and the number of days employed by them.

Agricultural Workers

The distribution of the workforce engaged in agriculture as given in Table 1 clearly shows that the percentage of agricultural labourers to the total agricultural workers was highest in Nagappattinam district with 50 per cent in Tamil Nadu. It is also observed from the data that contrary to our expectation the number of cultivators has exceeded the number of agricultural labourers in four districts viz. Dharmapuri, Pudukkottai, Pasumpon and Ramanathapuram. Out of 23 districts listed in the table, the ratio of female agricultural labourers to male agricultural labourers were found to be more in seven districts viz. Dharmapuri, Thiruvannamalai, Dindigul, Thiruchapalli, Pudukkottai, Kamarajar and Ramanathapuram.

Table 1: Distribution of Workers Engaged in Agricultural Sector

District	Person s	Total Workers	Cultivators		Agricultural Labourers	
			Number	%	Number	%
Madras	P	1173062	883		199	
	M	1016526	852		176	
	F	156536	31		23	
Chengalpattu MGR	P	1771326	273563	15	569341	32
	M	1275136	219021		318296	
	F	496190	54542		251045	(0.79)
North Arcot Ambedkar	P	1223243	268734	22	378770	31
	M	832850	210640		199411	
	F	3909393	58094		179359	(0.90)

Contd...

Table 1: Distribution of Workers Engaged in Agricultural Sector

District	Persons		Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers		
	Males	Females					
Dharmapuri	P		1156040	497172	43	359836	31
	M		715659	364669		170482	
	F		440361	132503		189354	(1.11)
Tiruvannamalai	P		932432	343981	37	357117	38
	M		569579	259384		155924	
	F		362853	84597		201193	(1.29)
South Arcot Vallalar	P		880713	225618	26	364973	41
	M		594223	183574		207198	
	F		286490	42044		157775	(0.76)
Villupuram	P		1250009	449926	36	513413	41
	M		773279	358784		258214	
	F		476730	91142		255199	(0.99)
Salem	P		1918826	465041	24	618515	32
	M		1227415	325632		314848	
	F		691411	139409		313667	(1.00)
Periyar	P		1213560	274235	23	450036	37
	M		774755	195335		234795	
	F		438805	78900		215241	(0.92)
Nilgiris	P		288869	10922	4	24992	9
	M		184113	8675		14745	
	F		104756	2247		10247	(0.69)
Coimbatore	P		1583452	185562	12	455700	29
	M		1122966	136520		240334	
	F		460486	49042		215366	(0.90)
Dindigul	P		864770	216559	25	366338	42
	M		531459	149874		181821	
	F		333311	66685		184517	(1.01)
Tiruchirapalli	P		1919755	600983	31	648518	34
	M		12054346	424039		313858	
	F		7144321	176944		334660	(1.07)
Thanjavur	P		855966	196709	23	346310	40
	M		602300	165760		212531	
	F		253666	30949		133779	(0.63)
Nagappattinam	P		982801	180844	18	487676	50
	M		675007	161174		296265	
	F		307794	19670		191411	(0.65)
Pudukottai	P		587254		43	133588	23
	M		367688	251181		64225	
	F		219566			69363	(1.08)
				186962			
				64219			

Contd...

Table 1: Distribution of Workers Engaged in Agricultural Sector

District	Persons		Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers		
	Males	Females					
Pasumpon	P		497104	185828	37	122894	25
	M		290846	130300		61651	
	F		206258	55528		61243	(0.99)
Madurai	P		1517583	249751	16	636323	42
	M		979676	177084		326259	
	F		537907	72667		309964	(0.95)
Kamarajar	P		783741	145118	19	245133	31
	M		454693	92475		113915	
	F		329048	52643		131218	(1.15)
Ramanathapuram	P		519753	219832	42	97308	19
	M		313376	149875		44778	
	F		206377	69957		52530	(1.17)
Chidambaranar	P		605584	108824	18	192836	32
	M		381357	75267		98385	
	F		224227	33557		94451	(0.96)
Tirunelveli	P		1180369	251257	21	349069	29
	M		668831	181371		184055	
	F		511538	69886		165014	(0.90)
Kanyakumari	P		488131	61567	13	177410	36
	M		400303	57968		159305	
	F		87828	3599		18105	(0.11)
Tamil Nadu	P		24194343		23		33
	M		15957471	5664090		7896295	
	F		8236872				(0.89)
				4215235		4171571	
						3724724	
				1448855			

Note: Figures in brackets indicate the ratio of female agricultural labourers to the male agricultural labourers.
Source: Report of the committee on Agricultural Labourers, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1998.

Number Of Days Employed

The distribution of agricultural labourers by the number of days employed by districts as given in Table 2 clearly shows that the number of days employed by the women labourers was low as compared to male agricultural labourers. On an average, female workers engaged in agriculture about three to four months and male agricultural workers engaged in agriculture four to five months in a year and most of the days in a year they remain unemployed.

Table 2: Number Days Employed by Agricultural Labourers by District in Tamil Nadu

Districts	Number of Days Employed	
	Male	Female
Villupuram	120	120
Thiruvarur	150	120

Contd. .

Table 2: Number Days Employed by Agricultural Labourers by District in Tamil Nadu

Districts	Number of Days Employed	
	Male	Female
Nagapattinam	120	120
Thanjavur	150	120
Pudukottai	100	90
Madurai	180	150
Dindigul	120	90
Kanyakumari	240	180
Tirunelvali	180	150
Tuticorin	115	95
Coimbatore	120	90
Erode	200	180
Salem	150	120
Namakkal	150	120
Dharmapuri	150	120
Tiruvannamalai	150	100
Vellore	120	100
Kancheepuram	120	100
Thiruvallore	120	100
Cuddalore	120	90
Trichy	160	120
Karur	160	160
Perambalur	160	120
Sivagangai	120	100
Ramanathapuram	105	90
Virudhunagar	120	90

Source: Report of the Committee on Agricultural Labourers, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1998.

Recommendations

The Kolappan Committee on Agricultural Labourers has listed 43 recommendations for the overall development of agricultural labourers. The major items of the recommendations of the Kolappan Committee are given below:

1. Considering the increased cost of living and the minimum requirements to have a decent living, the following minimum wages are recommended.

Man labour : 6 Hrs : Rs.54.00 per day

Woman labour : 5 Hrs : Rs.45.00 per day

It is important to note that the per hour wage rate fixed by the Kolappan Committee for male labour is equal to female labour.

2. Steps may be taken to assign the house site as well as ownership (pattas) to all the eligible agricultural labour households in a phased manner, so as to cover almost 100 per cent of them within a period of five years.

3. In group housing scheme to STs and SCs, the Government grant may be raised to Rs. 40,000/-. The excess over the present limit may be recovered from the beneficiary households in 20 equal annual installments without interest.

4. The quantum of supply of 20 kg. of rice at a subsidised rate may be increased to 30 kgs, per household per months under PDS. The norm of one ration shop per revenue village located in a continuous area geographically may be ensured, even if the village is small. The distribution may be effected round the month and in even small lots of 5 to 10 kgs.
5. Considering the rural conditions, it is suggested that medical facilities are made available round the clock in Public Health Centers. Each Public Health Center must also be provided with one ambulance van and must be made available to patients on emergency calls. Life saving drugs like anti-venom injections may also be made available all the 24 hours in each Public Health Centre.
6. In places where agricultural labourers live a convenient location may be identified and public latrines may be constructed to take care of sanitary conditions with water facilities.
7. To break the vicious cycle of poverty and indebtedness, the provision of festival loan for either Deepavali or Pongal may be thought of by the government at the rate of Rs. 500 per labour household per year without interest and it is to be recovered in 10 monthly installments.
8. Each labour household may be provided with a marriage loan of Rs. 5000/- towards conducting the marriage of their daughter or son.
9. A "self-help" group among women agricultural labourers may be organized with the help of NGOs or the Mahalir Manrams to cultivate the habit of thrift. For such organised groups, seed capital (grant) at the rate of Rs. 50 per member may be initially provided by the Government.
10. In the rural schools, the teacher-student ratio may be kept optimal, by maintaining the required teacher strength. Infrastructures like buildings, teaching aids and sanitary facilities may be adequately created.
11. In all professional colleges 5 to 10 per cent of the seats may be specifically earmarked for students hailing from agricultural labour families.
12. At present the Tamil Nadu government is extending maternity benefit to women agricultural labourers in the form of Rs. 500 per mother. Considering the poor economic status, a total benefit of Rs. 1,500 is recommended. This benefit may be extended for the first two pregnancies.
13. In agricultural operations, labourers normally face the following types of risks/accidents: death due to snakebite, electrocution, lightning, detonators in well deepening, tractor accidents and wrong handling of pesticides/chemical. Now the government extends a relief of Rs. 15,000. The committee recommended that the relief amount might be raised to Rs. 40,000.
14. The Government of Tamil Nadu at present implements the old age pension scheme to those who have attained the age of 60 years and have no sons. This scheme may be extended to all agricultural labourers who attained the age of 60 years, irrespective of the presence of the son/daughter. At present Rs. 100 is paid per month per individual under this scheme and this amount may be enhanced to Rs. 200 per month per individual.
15. On the pattern set by the Kerala Government, the Gratuity-cum-Provident Fund Benefit scheme may be implemented in Tamil Nadu for agricultural labourers who are in the group of 30 to 60 years. Each participant agricultural labourer requires to contribute Rs.10 per month and the Government of Tamilnadu may match the contribution with 9 times the total amount paid by the agricultural labourers and pay the total amount as Gratuity-cum-provident fund on the attainment of the 60th year of age. Labourers who

joins in this scheme at the age of 30 will get an amount of about Rs. 40,000 at the age of 60 i.e. Rs. 3,600 being the individual's contribution, Rs. 32,400 being the Government's matching contribution and the amount of Rs. 4,000 being the interest.

16. For the children of agricultural labour families, from the date of graduation till they get employment, the unemployment relief benefit, say at the rate of Rs. 200 per month may be extended for a maximum period of three years within which she/he must find employment.

17. In order to implement the various welfare measures effectively, a separate Act captioned as 'Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers Welfare Act' may be enacted.

18. To implement the various welfare measures including minimum wages through a single window, a separate Department or Board namely Agricultural Labour Development Department/ Board may be created by the Government.

19. By generating more employment opportunities in rural areas, the wage income of agricultural labourers could be increased. The following are the strategies suggested for implementation in the long run, in a phased manner: (i) The existing potential water sources may be tapped for irrigation through the construction of new dams, tanks and check dams; (ii) Renovation and desilting of all the existing tanks and waterways may be taken up in a phased manner and completed in a period of five years according to priority; (iii) In implementing the rural employment oriented programmes, the local agricultural labourers should be employed; (iv) Energisation of pumpsets may be effected as and when sought for by farmers considering agriculture as a priority sector; (v) In the dry land areas, horticultural and agro-forestry development may be encouraged; (vi) The potentials for starting agro-processing units in the State may be assessed and necessary support to be extended for new ventures.

20. The agricultural labourers, to supplement their wage income, may be encouraged to take up poultry farming, dairying, sheep/goat rearing, duckery, bee keeping, rabbit rearing, etc. Fifty per cent subsidy may be extended to them in starting these ventures on commercial scale.

21. Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDPs) may be organised jointly by the Rural Development Department, District Industries and Small Business Associations specifically for the agricultural labourers.

II Agricultural Labourer Social Security and Welfare Scheme

The Tamil Nadu government constituted the social security and welfare scheme on 9th February 2001. The government has established a Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers Welfare Board for administering the scheme. The board will function under the chairmanship of the revenue minister. He will be assisted by 8 IAS Officers, 9 representatives from farmers' associations and 9 representatives from agricultural labourers' trade union. All landless agricultural labourers and any person who owns one acre of wet land or 2.5 acres of dry land are eligible to get benefit under this scheme.

Agricultural labourers who have completed the age of 18 years but not completed 60 years can register their name with the board to become member of the scheme and will have to pay a one time contribution of a sum of Rs. 100. The Board will maintain a register of members. The agricultural labourers have to renew their registration for every two years and the fee for the renewal will be Rs.10.

Social Security and Welfare Fund will be established out of employer's contribution, worker's contribution and contribution to be made by the government from

time to time to the board will form part of the fund. The employer contribution will be collected at the rate of one rupee per quintal from the paddy procured by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, one rupee per ton from the sugar cane brought by the employer to the sugar mills and one rupee per quintal from the sugar produced by the sugar mills, and one per cent of the cess amount collected from the employer (agriculturist) by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Marketing Committee.

All registered agricultural labourers can avail group personal accident benefit if they met with an accident. The board will insure all the registered agricultural labourers with the insurance company and pay the premium to the insurance company. The coverage by this scheme is Rs. 1,00,000 in the case of death or major physical deformity, Rs. 50,000 for physical deformity, Rs. 25,000 for permanent disablement. A fund has been earmarked for permanent partial disablement also. If a registered agricultural labourer dies, the nominee of the agricultural labourers will get Rs. 2,000 towards the funeral expenditures of the deceased registered agricultural labourers.

If the registered agricultural labourers dies naturally, the board will pay Rs. 10,000 to the nominee of the deceased registered agricultural labourers. The board also provides assistance for the education of the son or daughter of registered agricultural labourers depending upon the level of education. The amount varies from Rs. 1,000 for those who passed 10th standard to Rs. 6,000 to post graduate students.

The board will also help the registered agricultural labourers to the tune of Rs. 2,000 for their sons or daughters marriage. The board will also help financially upto Rs. 1,000 to registered female agricultural labourers for delivery or miscarriage of pregnancy.

Agricultural labourers were disappointed as the social security and welfare scheme has failed to provide the pension, gratuity and provident fund to its members. It is worthwhile to mention that the Committee on Agricultural Labourers headed by Kolappan has strongly recommended that pension, gratuity and provident fund be given for agricultural labourers. Regarding the pension for the agricultural labourers, it is heartening to note that the government of India has come out with a scheme of pension for agricultural labourers. While presenting the budget speech for 2001-2002 Mr. Yashwant Sinha, Minister of Finance, has announced that 'a special scheme for landless agricultural labourers, the Khatihar Mazdoor Bima Yojana, will provide benefits of insurance cover as available under Janashree Bima Yojana and a pension of Rs. 100 per month on attaining the age of 60 years'. There is also a provision to help those who join at a young age. The Minister has further stated that a small contribution to be made by the beneficiaries towards the premium.

Scheduled Caste as Workforce and Agricultural Labourers

Although agricultural labourers produce food for the nation; most of them are living below the poverty line due to low income, as they are poorly paid by the landlords. The wages for the agricultural labourers are too low, as compared to all other workers in both the industrial and the service sectors. Hence they deserve to get benefits under any scheme. The majority of the agricultural labourers belong to the underprivileged sections viz. the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

Percentage distribution of total workers to the total population and percentage of agricultural labourers to the total workers by social groups as given in Tables 3 and 4 clearly shows that total workforce was more among the SCs and STs as compared to the Non SC/ST. The data also show that most of workers belonging to the SCs and STs are

engaged in agriculture as landless wage labourers i.e. 64 per cent and 44 per cent respectively in Tamil Nadu. Implementation of welfare programmes through Agricultural labour welfare board will definitely benefit the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

Table 3: Percentage of Total Workers to the Total Population by Social Groups (Work Participation Rate) in 1991

	Schedule Caste	ST	Non SC/ST
Persons			
India	39.25	49.30	35.80
Tamil Nadu	48.43	52.10	41.97
Males			
India	51.48	54.74	51.24
Tamil Nadu	55.78	59.39	56.50
Females			
India	25.98	43.71	19.08
Tamil Nadu	40.93	44.51	27.04

Source: Thangaraj, M., "Demographic and Occupational Characteristic of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India", MIDS Working paper No. 134.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Labourers to the Total Workers by Social Groups (1991)

	SC	ST	Non SC/ST
Persons			
India	49.06	32.69	19.66
Tamil Nadu	64.29	43.76	26.21
Males			
India	42.72	26.40	15.40
Tamil Nadu	56.27	36.73	19.05
Females			
India	66.53	44.28	37.00
Tamil Nadu	76.88	54.93	44.77

Source: Thangaraj, M., "Demographic and Occupational Characteristic of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India", MIDS Working paper No. 134.

Conclusion

Agricultural labourers are highly unorganised. Several attempts were made by the left parties to organise them but they failed miserably. The leaders of the left parties argue that the caste system is the major obstacle for the unionisation of agricultural labourers in India. It is hoped that the establishment of the agricultural social security scheme will pave the way for the organisation of agricultural labourers. Now they have to be organised and if they are not organised, they won't be able to get the gratuity and provident fund. Mr. S. Thirunavukkarasu, state secretary of the AIAWU, also a member of the Kolappan Committee Report is still demanding the implementation of the Kolappan Committee Report. However, the social security scheme will definitely help the Scheduled Caste people as most of them are engaged in agriculture as landless agricultural labourers.

Suggestions

The criticisms leveled against the agricultural labourers social security and welfare scheme are given below: (i) There is no mechanism or agency to implement the minimum wage fixed by the government for agricultural labourers; (ii) Minimum age for registration in the agricultural labourers social security and welfare scheme has to be reduced from 18 years to 16 years; (iii) There has to be a provision in the agricultural labourers social security and welfare scheme to provide gratuity and provident fund to the agricultural labourers. But such facility is being extended in our neighbouring state viz. Kerala, although there is no such agricultural labourers welfare board; (iv) Employer's contribution to the board as given in section 13(5) of the notification should include another item viz. a proportion of land revenue to the total land revenue; (v) The government also should contribute to the welfare board on par with the agricultural labourers and pay Rs. 100 per agricultural labourers; (vi) If an agricultural labourer dies naturally, the compensation given to the nominee has to be increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000; (vii) The sons or daughters of agricultural labourers have to get their regular scholarship even if they get such assistance from the board as a member belonging to agricultural labourers; (viii) Marriage assistance has to be increased from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 10,000 to the members of registered agricultural labourers; (ix) Assistance for delivery or miscarriage of pregnancy for the members of agricultural labourers has to be increased from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000; (x) Adequate provision will be made to provide minimum health care to the members belonging to registered agricultural labourers. Members of the agricultural labour family should be made to enjoy the facilities available in the Employees State Insurance; (xi) As mentioned in the Kolappan Committee Report, agricultural labourers who attained 60 years of age should get a pension of Rs. 200 per month and a gratuity of Rs.50,000.

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Valedictory Address*

B S Baviskar**

Mr. Chairman and friends, it is indeed a great honour for me to be asked to deliver the valedictory address at the end of this national level workshop. I remember looking at the Gokhale Institute with a great deal of awe when I was an undergraduate student in the neighboring college in the early 50s. It was a well-known place with high reputation in academic and government circles. We were told how difficult it was to get entry into the Institute as a student or a faculty member. Those who got in must be really bright, we thought. Occasionally, we had a glimpse of young people who were engaged in Ph.D. research in the Institute including Professors N. Rath, N R Inamdar, and M P Mangudkar. We used to listen to them with great respect, whenever they said something. Later on in the early 60's, when I was working on the Co-operative sugar factories in Maharashtra, I used to meet Professor D R Gadgil. This was one of his major interests. He was the chairman of the National Federation of the Co-operative Sugar Factories during those days.

The subject of Scheduled Caste landless labourers is very important and I am glad that Dr. Chahande and the Institute jointly organized this workshop. The more I listened to the various papers, the more I became aware of the gaps in our knowledge in this particular area. It is good that a beginning has been made in this respect. It is politically a very sensitive subject. There are not many occasions when scholars seriously and freely discuss this subject as it has been done during the last two days.

Let us see what we learnt during these last two days. One thing, which came out again and again, is that the Scheduled Castes constitute the poorest section of the population. Second, so far as the rural areas are concerned, they have either no land at all or have poor quality land or it is not cultivated properly because they do not have the necessary resources. Third, the Scheduled Castes also suffer from a great deal of social disabilities. However, this does not mean that no improvement has taken place during the last fifty years. There is some evidence that some changes did take place. Some individuals and groups have advanced during this period. This has been largely done through the reservation system in education and jobs in the public sector. As is well-known, Dr. B R Ambedkar gave the message that they must educate, organize and struggle. I think many Scheduled Caste groups have taken this message seriously and have consequently made some genuine progress.

The Scheduled Castes have also acquired some share in power. They occupy positions in the state assemblies and the parliament in proportion to their population. So also they are given positions in the state and central cabinets, sometimes for token purposes. I think that the most important recent step has been the 73rd Constitutional Amendment pertaining to the Panchayati Raj system. The Scheduled Castes have been given not only a certain proportion in the membership but also in offices like the Gram Panchayat Sarpanch, Taluka Panchayat Samiti Sabhapati, or Zilla Parishad President. I think the impact of this measure has not yet been really assessed. But in the long-run this is going to be very important. We have to wait and watch carefully.

* Delivered at the National Workshop on "Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers", jointly organised by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune and Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, March 16-17, 2001.

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There have also been some success stories. To my mind, Ms. Mayawati's and Shri Kanshiram's Bahujan Samaj Party is an example of a success story in Indian politics so far as the *dalits* and Scheduled Castes are concerned. I think that the Republican Party of India in Maharashtra has not made that kind of an impact on the state politics. It is quite possible that they have not been able to balance their individual interests with the collective or group interests. There are serious internal dissensions. Moreover, the party does not have any charismatic leaders. The example of Mayawati shows what can be achieved by organizing the Scheduled Castes with certain strategies.

The Scheduled Castes are a differentiated lot and so they should not be clubbed together. There are certain castes among them that are far more advanced than the others. Similarly, there are regional variations. For instance, the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra are different from their counterparts in Bihar. While generalizing about the Scheduled Castes, we should not forget the regional variations. Take for instance Gujarat. It is supposed to be associated with Gandhiji. But there seem to be more atrocities committed against Scheduled Castes in this state than in many other regions. One should go into this to find out why it is so. Similarly, there are wrong impressions of what has been achieved in West Bengal. Atul Kohli has studied West Bengal for many years and he is sympathetic to the left front rule there. He has given data showing the caste composition of the cabinet ministers in West Bengal. He shows that during the Congress rule, the so-called Bhadrakok viz., Brahmins, Kayasthas and Baidyas, who are the top three castes in West Bengal, dominated the cabinet. The left front has been in power since 1977. Given the Communist belief in the ideals of socialism and equality one naturally expected that power would be shared with the lower castes. But this is not the case. There is no sharing of power by lower castes at all. In fact, the Bhadrakok domination has increased during the left rule and the lower castes have not been given any increased share in power either in the government or in the party organization.

This also holds true in the case of land reforms. The left front Government made so much of song and dance about land reforms in West Bengal. What did it do? It gave protection to the sharecroppers and tenants. It recorded their tenancy because they were not registered as tenants. What is so great about all this? Giving protection and ownership to the tenants was done in 1949 in Bombay state including Maharashtra and Gujarat. Hence I am not really impressed by what has been done. As against this, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Maharashtra are successful examples so far as the Scheduled Castes are concerned in both economic and political terms. Social movements and traditions of social reforms play a critical role and that is why different kinds of developments have taken place in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra.

Let me speak a little more on Maharashtra. The story of what the Neo-Buddhists, who were earlier Mahars, have achieved during the last fifty or sixty years is remarkable. To my mind, there is no such group among the Scheduled Castes anywhere else in India. In Maharashtra, in the proportion of children going to school in the age-group of 6 to 14, the proportion of Scheduled Caste children is higher than that of the children in the general population. This also holds good with respect to high school, college and university education. The proportion of Scheduled Caste students is higher than that of general population. All this is because of the teachings of Dr. Ambedkar. The other thing about the Scheduled Caste (meaning Mahars) in Maharashtra is that they are active in every sphere of life - literature, poetry, drama, etc. They are a highly talented people. They have a number of vibrant literary and other artistic and intellectual organizations,

which is again rare elsewhere. This is in contrast with some other social groups in Maharashtra.

Let us take the Marathas for instance. They are, of course, a majority community. They are landowners and constitute nearly 40 per cent of the total population. They dominated Maharashtra politics for over five decades until 1995. Considering their numerical strength and economic and political clout one does not find comparable achievements among the Marathas or Malis for that matter. In the next 20 to 30 years, perhaps the intellectual leadership of Maharashtra, which was with the Brahmins for so many years, may go to the Neo-Buddhists or Mahars. This is because they have the creative element. They have interest in the qualities of the mind - in arts, social sciences and other intellectual matters. The Marathas pursued power and with its loss they seem to have lost their other faculties also. The rise of the Mahars or the Neo-Buddhists and the decline of the Marathas seem to be taking place simultaneously. So far the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra have not been able to acquire a share in power. This is because of the acute factionalism among them as a result of which one party or the other has used them for its own purposes. The kind of strategy that Mayawati is following or the kind of organisation that she has created is absent among them. If they are able to achieve unity, they will be able to claim larger share in power.

Now let me come to the final point. What can be done for the Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers? We know that financial allocations will be made for the betterment of living conditions of Scheduled Castes. They will get employment through the Employment Guarantee Scheme. It should be ensured that they are paid the minimum wages. They should be encouraged to organise themselves as agricultural labourers to fight against exploitation. The redistribution of land is not a practical proposition. Enough surplus land is simply not available. Perhaps a greater stress on education is required. There is also a famous statement of Dr. Ambedkar about the villages. He said that a village was a den of orthodoxy. The Scheduled Castes would increasingly leave the villages and migrate to the urban areas. This cannot be stopped. What is there for them to live in a village and to survive there with respect? The urban areas seem to offer them better opportunities even though there may be some hardships.

So, we should have strategies to cope with this inevitable situation. The Scheduled Castes will continue to go in for education to get jobs and make use of reservation for the purpose. But there are limitations. How many Scheduled Caste candidates can improve their position through education and government jobs? These jobs are also limited. So we will have to have a different strategy for the people who will get educated and also leave the villages. After twenty years or so, many Scheduled Castes may not remain in the villages but migrate to the urban areas. The principal reason for this migration is that the Scheduled Castes want to improve their economic position. This is possible in the urban areas alone, but difficult in the villages.

The reservation system also has limitations. Hence, they will have to use their strength of numbers to become one of the dominant groups. They will have to bargain and negotiate with other groups. A good example of this is Mayawati, who succeeded in bringing in other backward castes to join hands with Scheduled Castes in her party.

The reservation system has its own limitations. Both Phule and Ambedkar preached the annihilation of the caste system. This cannot be done by reservation. Our experience of the last 50 years is that reservation strengthens the caste system. That is why Ambedkar did not support reservation with great enthusiasm. All the same, if the

Scheduled Caste problem has to be solved, the caste system has to be shaken, if not destroyed. This is the bare truth.

Whatever I have said may sound pessimistic to some extent. But I do think that a great deal has been achieved during the last fifty years, but we have to learn the lessons. What is more, the lessons are for the social scientists too. There are many gaps in our knowledge about the Scheduled Castes and their relations with the other communities. We should identify these gaps and undertake studies to fill them up.

One very important lesson that I have learnt from this workshop is that we must do something in this area and very seriously. We should really be grateful to Dr. Chitre and his colleagues in this Institute for organizing this workshop and Dr. Chahande for persuading the Institute to organize this meeting. Thank you again for giving me this opportunity.

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