

## **Socio-Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes, with Special Reference to Agricultural Landless Labourers in Maharashtra**

**B N Kamble\***

*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 become 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

---

\* Reader, Department of Economics, Fergusson College, Pune 411004.

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.