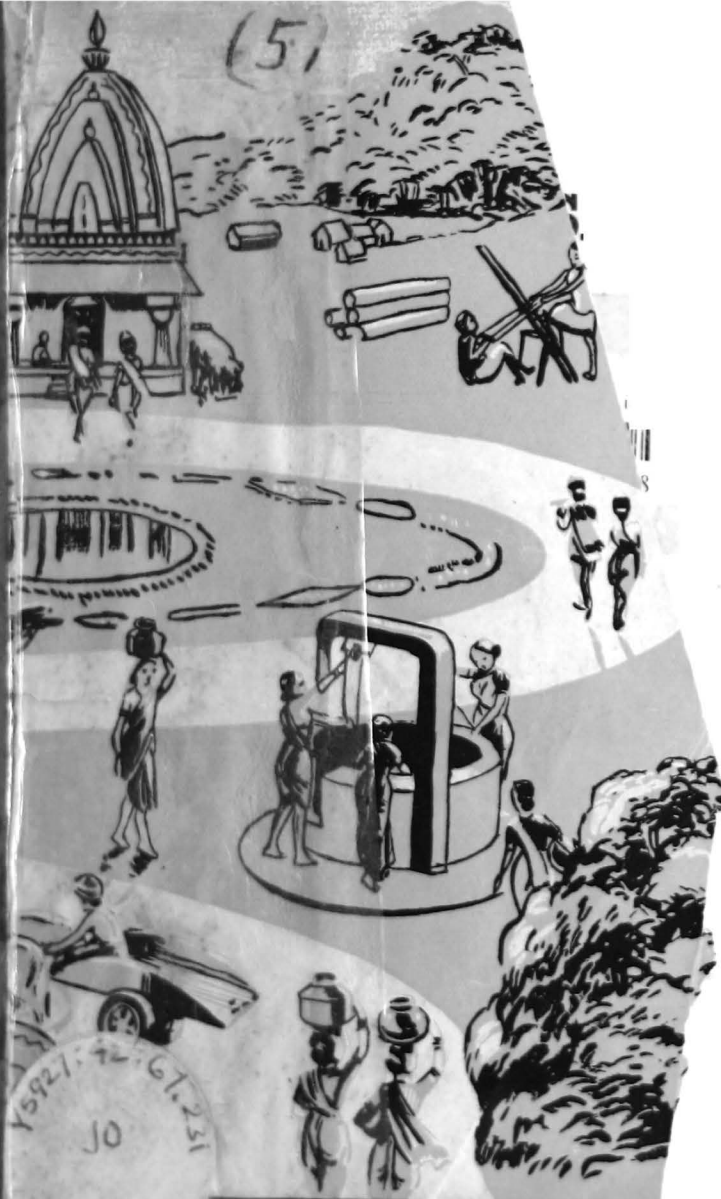


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**BACKWARD CLASS**  
*in*  
**BOMBAY STATE**



# BACKWARD CLASSES IN BOMBAY STATE

*A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF AMELIORATIVE MEASURES*

1950

ISSUED BY THE DIRECTORATE OF PUBLICITY, BOMBAY.

# BACKWARD CLASSES IN BOMBAY STATE

## *A Brief Account of Ameliorative Measures*

On the recommendations of the Depressed Classes and Aboriginal Tribes Committee (the Starte Committee), 1928, the Criminal Tribes Settlement Department which was looking after the administration of the Criminal Tribes Act in Bombay Province was entrusted with co-ordination work for the Backward Classes and was re-designated as the Backward Class Department in 1931. The Criminal Tribes Settlement Officer was similarly re-designated as the Backward Class Officer. He continued to be responsible for the administration of the Criminal Tribes Act. Later, additional responsibilities of administering the Bombay Children Act and the Bombay Beggars Act were entrusted to the Department. In order that the Backward Class Officer and the Backward Class Department may be able to devote their attention wholly to the task of amelioration of the Backward Classes, the Department was reorganised with effect from June 5, 1947. The work relating to juveniles and beggars was taken away from the Backward Class Officer and entrusted to a separate department constituted for the purpose. The Backward Class Officer continued to be responsible for the administration of the Criminal Tribes Act until it was finally repealed on August 13, 1949.

The total population of the ex-criminal tribes in the three major settlements at Sholapur, Ahmedabad and Hubli and in the Free Colonies that were in existence before the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act on August 13, 1949 was as under :—

Settlements	719
Free Colonies	7,253

With the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act from August 13, 1949, the whole population designated as Criminal Tribes was freed from the restrictions imposed on it under the Act.

## CLASSIFICATION

The Backward Classes consist of three sections, viz., (1) the Scheduled Classes, (2) the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes, and (3) other castes which are educationally, economically, socially and culturally considered as backward and lumped together in a miscellaneous section designated as Other Backward Classes. Backward Class refugee students from Pakistan are eligible for capitation grants payable to private Backward Class Hostels and for other educational concessions open to the Backward Classes, such as free-studentships and scholarships in secondary schools, technical and industrial institutions and colleges including agricultural, veterinary and medical colleges.

It is the declared policy of the Government that the Backward Classes as part of the population of the State must share in the beneficent activities of all departments, and directives have been issued that the Backward Classes should on no account be excluded from the benefits of the normal activities of any department. In addition, having regard to the need for combating their backwardness and for bringing them to the level of the rest of the population in the shortest possible time, special facilities have been afforded to them.

## LINES OF POLICY

The policy of the Government with regard to the Backward Classes may briefly be described as a policy seeking to eliminate the backwardness of these communities and to secure their administration with the rest of society on a footing of equality in as short a span of time as possible. The disabilities of the Backward Classes may be divided under three broad categories: (a) Social, (b) Educational, and (c) Economic. The special measures adopted by the Government are designed to overcome all these disabilities, so that within a period of about 10 years, the Backward Classes should be brought on to a level with the rest of the population and the progress of the nation as a whole might be secured smoothly and uniformly. This policy is sought to be implemented

through the existing administrative departments of the Government and the Backward Class Department experts in the main to co-ordinate the work relating to the Backward Classes and to encourage the Backward Classes to take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government through the various departments. Since October 1947, the Department has been considerably strengthened and today there are 16 Backward Class Welfare Officers in charge of one or more districts and 6 Assistant Backward Class Officers to assist the Backward Class Officer in dealing with the problem of the Backward Classes all over the State.

### SOCIAL PROGRESS

The Harijans, who form an important section of the Backward Classes, owe their backwardness and all other associated problems chiefly to the stigma of untouchability. Untouchability has now been made a definite crime in all its aspects. The chief sanction behind it was religion. With the Bombay Harijan Temple Entry Act, 1947, and the Bombay Temple Entry (Amendment) Act, 1948, every temple which means a place, by whatever name known and to whomsoever belonging, which is used as a place of religious worship by custom, usage or otherwise by members of the Hindu community or any section thereof and includes all land appurtenant thereto and subsidiary shrines attached to any such place, is thrown open to Harijans for worship in the same manner and to the same extent as to any member of the Hindu community or any section thereof and Harijans are equally entitled to bathe in or use the waters of any sacred tank, well, spring or water course. Offences under this Act are made cognisable by the police. It is gratifying to record that almost all the important religious places in the State have been voluntarily thrown open to Harijans with the passage of this Act. Once untouchability disappears from the *sanctum sanctorum*, its disappearance elsewhere should not take long.

Under the Harijan (Removal of Social Disabilities) Act, 1946, which was placed on the Statute Book just a few months before Independence, free access to places of public enter-

tainment, shops, sources of water supply, bathing places, burial and cremation grounds, any sanitary convenience, roads, pathways, etc., which members of all castes and classes of Hindus have a right to use or have access to is given to the Harijans. By making the offences under both these Acts cognisable, it is assured that the Acts will not be still-born. The official organisation of the Backward Class Department which has been suitably expanded and voluntary agencies devoted to the cause of the removal of untouchability which are encouraged to carry on propaganda by suitable grants-in-aid towards these activities, strive to see that the benefits of this legislation are availed of by Harijans of all sections in all parts of the State.

The Adivasis, another important section, too, suffer from segregation which was the result partly of imperfect and undeveloped communications between their habitats and the rest of the State and partly of differences in their culture. These facts which kept them aloof from the main stream of educational and social advancement were responsible for their abysmal ignorance, which in turn made them particularly apt and liable to economic exploitation by unscrupulous sowcars and landlords.

### EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Speaking of education, primary education is now free and compulsory in all villages with a population of 1,000 or over. It was realised that in the Backward tracts preponderantly inhabited by the Adivasis where the population was dispersed in small and scattered hamlets, special measures were necessary for the introduction of compulsory education, since the general condition postulated for the introduction of compulsion, viz., a population of 1,000 or over, was not likely to be found capable of fulfilment in these tracts.

A start was made with the Thana District where a special survey was conducted by a committee under the chairmanship of Shri D. N. Wandrekar, M.L.A., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industries, Fisheries and Backward Classes.

The recommendations of this Committee have been accepted by the Government and a start in the implementation of these recommendations is being made with one taluka, viz., the Umbergaon Taluka of the Thana District. Within three years, the scheme is to be extended to the other Adivasi tracts of the Thana District. Similar survey committees have been appointed in the districts of Nasik, West Khandesh, Kanara, Panchmahals and Kolaba, where almost similar problems obtain. In addition to free compulsory education, wherever compulsion is introduced arrangements are made to give slates and books to pupils from the Backward Classes at State cost. In addition, there are several sets of scholarships for pupils in the higher primary classes distributed on merit all over the State.

With regard to secondary education, this has been made free for all boys and girls within specified age-limits from the Backward Classes, subject to good conduct and progress. For higher education, not only freeships but also scholarships varying in value according to the needs of each course are given on the same universal basis as freeships in secondary schools. In addition, special scholarships are given for professional courses. Deserving Backward Class students in secondary schools and colleges are also awarded lump grants for purchasing books and school equipment as well as for their examination fees. During the years 1946-47, 1947-48 and 1948-49, the Government spent Rs. 20,037, Rs. 27,433-8-0 and Rs. 47,581, respectively, by way of payment of lump sum scholarships to Backward Class students.

### NET-WORK OF HOSTELS

All the above facilities are supplemented by a vast network of hostels conducted through District School Boards for about 1,525 primary school pupils in some areas. In addition, voluntary agencies are given grants for maintaining hostels for Backward Class children under special rules. The rates of grants-in-aid paid to recognised hostels were generally enhanced in August, 1948. As a result of this liberalisation of grants, the number of hostels catering for the Backward

Classes has increased to a great extent. There are today 150 hostels for boys and girls catering for about 4,625 students of all sections of the Backward Classes spread all over the State and receiving grants from the Backward Class Department.

As a result of these measures, education among members of the Backward Classes is advancing steadily, as may be seen from the following figures :

Institutions	Year and No. of Students		
	1946-47	1947-48	1948-49
Colleges (excluding medical, agricultural, engineering, etc.)	491	537	689
Secondary schools	8,652	10,354	11,418
Primary schools	2,34,713	3,48,996	5,01,842

In order to enable voluntary agencies to provide suitable buildings for hostel purposes, the Government has approved of a scheme under which building grants are paid for the construction of hostel buildings to recognised agencies on a scale prescribed by the Government. During the period from April 1946 to March 1949, a sum of Rs. 33,800 was accordingly paid as building grants to Backward Class hostels at various places in the State.

### ECONOMIC AMELIORATION

On the economic front, in addition to arrangements for imparting training in various crafts and trades and in the hereditary occupations of the Backward Classes, facilities are given through various schemes for trained personnel to set up in the crafts and trades concerned. The Government has sanctioned 29 scholarships of Rs. 30 per mensem each for being awarded to selected Backward Class students undergoing training in (1) Accountancy, (2) Secretariat Work, (3) Architecture & Commercial Art, (4) Dentistry, (5) Forestry, and (6) Short-term courses in Shorthand and Typewriting. Also 10 scholarships of Rs. 25 per mensem each have been sanctioned for being awarded to selected Backward Class girls or women undergoing training in (1) Nursing, (2) Health Visitor's Course, (3) Midwifery, and (4) Dai's Course.





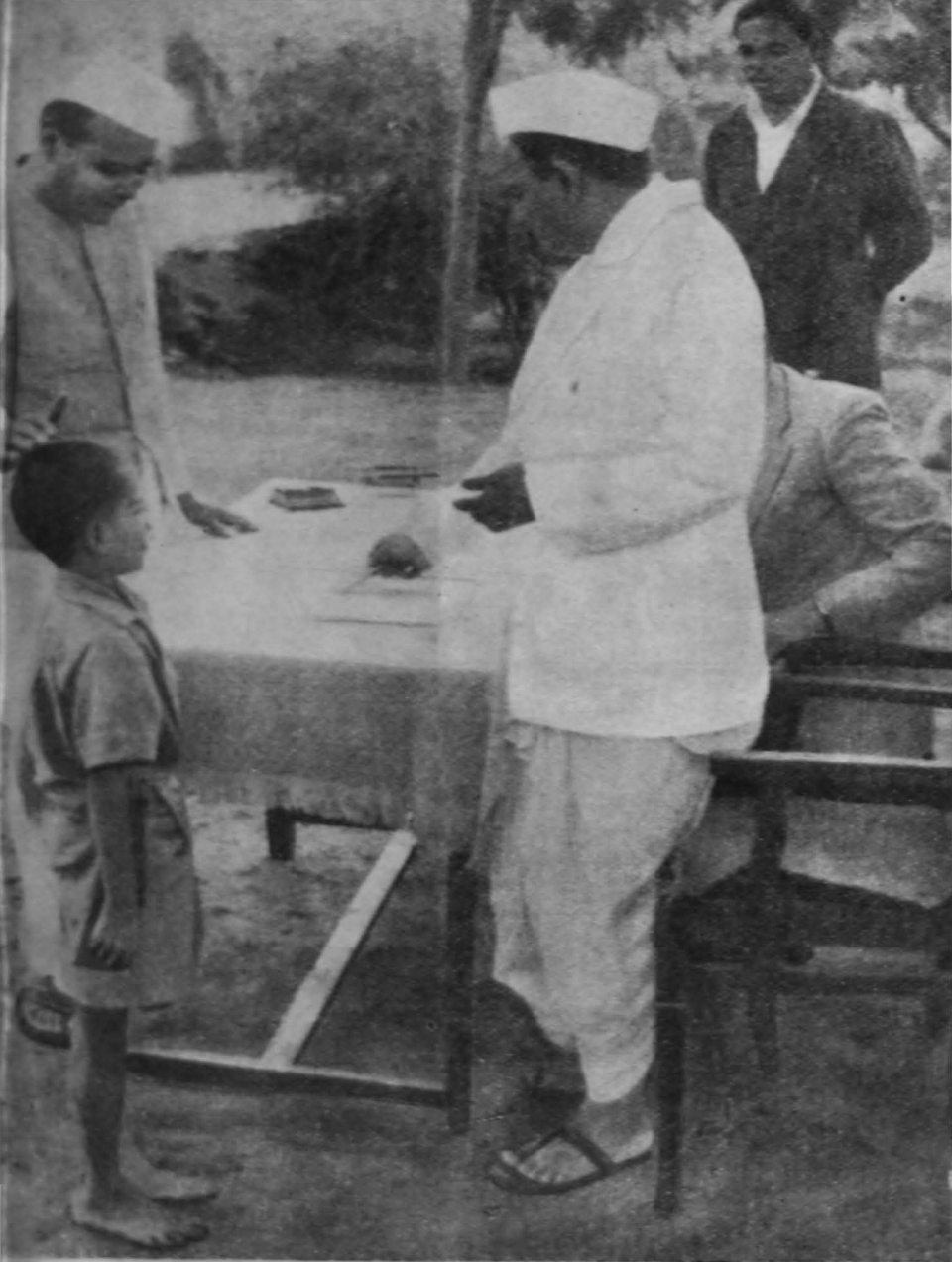
*BREAKING THE SHACKLES OF BONDAGE* is the Minister for Backward Classes, Shri G. D. Tapase, at the Criminal Tribes Settlement, Sholapur, on August 13, 1949, when the Tribes were dismantled all over the State. To his left is the Backward Class Officer, Shri M. N. Heble.



*THE FIRST FLUSH OF FREEDOM* is evident on the faces of these inmates of the Settlement.

*A PERSONAL TOUCH* is here being established with the inmates by the Minister, snapped while engaged in a chat with some of them.



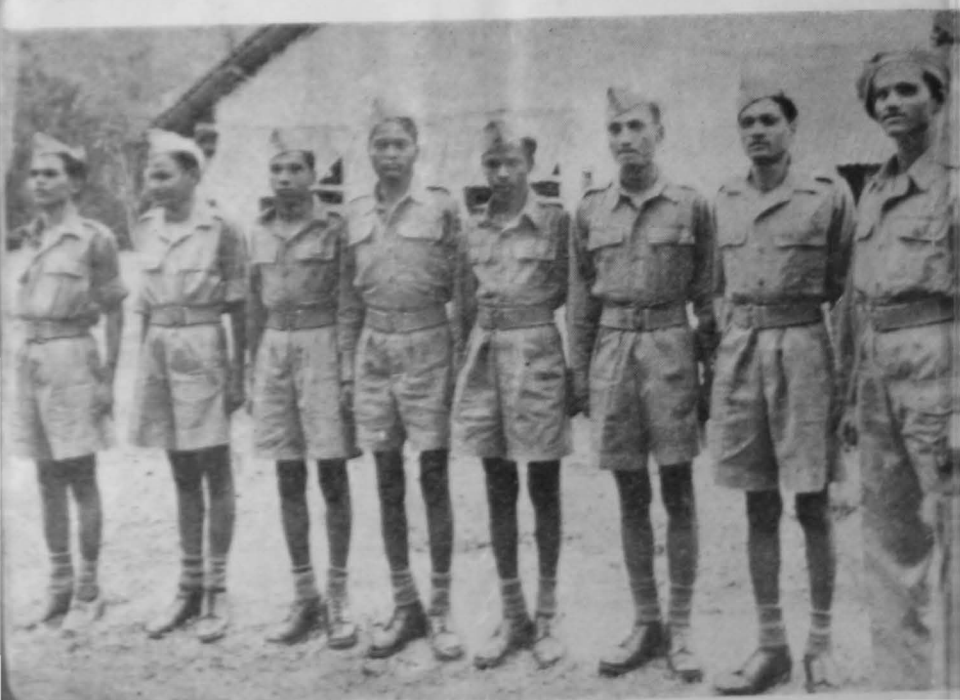


**REWARD FOR GOOD WORK** is being offered to this youngster, once led astray but now firmly on the road to the good life. A pat on the back always provides the needed stimulus to greater and better effort to one and all.



*GOD HELPS THEM.....Self-help is in evidence in all the activities of the inmates of the Backward Class Hostel in Poona.*

*MEN OF BRAIN AND BRAWN will be these youngsters from the Backward Class Hostel who have joined the National Cadet Corps, which is regarded as an important line of India's defence.*



In addition to the facilities available to industrial co-operative societies in general, special facilities are given to co-operative societies formed preponderantly by and of the Backward Classes. In the field of agriculture, to permit of their resettlement on land, the Government has issued orders specifying the preferential basis on which waste lands are to be given out for cultivation to different classes of applicants. The topmost in this order of priority are Backward Class agriculturists from the villages in which the waste lands are situated. The Backward Classes are now growing conscious of these concessions granted to them and, as a result, a number of applications for agricultural lands were received by the Backward Class Welfare Officers during 1949-50. These applications were forwarded to the revenue authorities concerned with due recommendations. Other facilities, such as interest-free tagavi for purchase of implements and cattle, and subsidies and tagavi for irrigation wells, etc., are given on a large scale. A Post-War Reconstruction Scheme for agricultural improvements of the Backward Classes is also under consideration.

A considerable proportion of the Backward Classes are engaged in forestry. Till almost yesterday, they were hewers of wood and manufactures of charcoal whose condition approximated to that of slaves. The forest labourers got a pittance for their labour and were often cheated of their rightful earnings, which the unscrupulous contractors could easily do because of their general level of ignorance.

### NOVEL EXPERIMENT

A new experiment with vast potentialities was started with the attainment of Independence. This new experiment aims at making the Adivasi forest labourers their own masters and at the elimination of the middleman class of contractors. Forest labourers' co-operative societies have been formed which are entrusted with the exploitation of forest coupes, a task which previously yielded much profit to the middleman. These societies not merely ensure that proper wages are paid at prescribed rates and at required intervals but also serve as

very valuable instruments in the task of management of their own affairs, and as a means of development of self-reliance in them. The other financial advantage, viz., that the profit is distributed to working members, is an incidental advantage, in itself of great value no doubt. The Government gave 16 coupes for being worked to such co-operative societies of forest workers in the year 1947-48 and the number of coupes so given out in 1948-49 went up to 31. The coupes are given out to those societies at upset prices and, in addition, other concessions were given to them. Inevitably, at the present level of ignorance among the Adivasis, these societies have to be sponsored by responsible social service agencies. But with experience and training it is hoped that the day will not be far off when these societies will be able to look after their own affairs unaided even by such disinterested friends of theirs.

Some of the problems of the Backward Classes spring chiefly from their poverty and the fact that they belong to the dispossessed classes. The general economic and social programme of the Government in the interests of the dispossessed classes benefits the Backward Classes no less than other sections. Legislation such as the Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, the Moneylenders Act, the Agricultural Debtors' Relief Act, etc., which is designed to benefit the underdog also benefits the underdog from the Backward Classes. Knowledge of such legislation and ability to take advantage of it are no doubt required. These conditions are increasingly secured through propaganda by officials of the Government in the Revenue and the Backward Class Departments as well as by social workers working under the auspices of recognised voluntary agencies which are eligible for grants under approved rules on the basis of certain proportions of expenditure incurred by them on approved items. Organisations such as the Bhil Seva Mandal, Dohad, the Bhil Seva Mandal, Nandurbar (West Khandesh), the Adivasi Seva Mandal, Thana, the Dang Seva Mandal, Nasik and the various Provincial Harijan Sevak Sanghs are given grants-in-aid under this scheme. An amount of Rs. 16,200 was given away

as grants to such recognised voluntary agencies during the year ending March 31, 1949.

### HOUSING AND WATER SUPPLY

The two other problems of considerable importance to the Backward Classes relate to housing and supply of potable water. With regard to housing in urban areas, municipalities are encouraged to undertake slum clearance schemes with promise of liberal grants-in-aid. Municipalities and local bodies are also encouraged to build suitable houses for their sanitary staff under a scheme of grant-in-aid. In addition, there is a Post-War Reconstruction Scheme for housing improvements for the Backward Classes under which the housing conditions of the Backward Classes are sought to be improved wherever possible through the formation of co-operative housing societies which are given free land and interest-free loans. Where the formation of co-operative housing societies is not practicable, similar concessions are given to them on an individual basis.

With regard to water supply, all public sources of water are open to all without distinction of caste or creed. In addition, the Government has agreed, under the village water supply scheme, to provide one public well for every village or hamlet with a population of 100 or more.

### FACILITIES FOR JOINING STATE SERVICE

Special percentages have been reserved for Backward Classes in Government services (5 per cent in the case of electrical cadre, 10 per cent in the posts of Talatis, 10 per cent in those of bailiffs and 10 per cent in respect of posts of peons, etc.). Percentages corresponding to the proportion of the Backward Class population to the total population in each district are fixed for posts of primary teachers. The percentage of marks has been fixed at a lower level, viz., at 45 per cent in the case of the Backward Classes. Other things being equal, Backward Class candidates are accorded preference in respect of appointments. Age limit has been relaxed by three years in the case of Backward Class candidates. In the posting of

Harijan servants, special care is taken to see that they are not handicapped in the matter of residential accommodation.

The provisions made for ameliorative measures implemented through the various departments and financed from the special development fund during the last three years under the different major heads of accounts as shown in the printed Civil Budget Estimates were as under :—

Major Head of Account	Grants for		
	1947-48	1948-49	1949-50
1. 37-Education-E-General			
S. SDF	3,77,000	11,75,000	11,85,000
2. 38-Medical-F-SDF	20,000	2,79,000	—
3. 39-Public Health-E-			
SDF-E-7	30,000	30,000	2,00,000
4. 40-Agri-M-SDF	70,400	1,04,700	11,32,000
5. 41-Vet.-G-SDF	—	800	700
6. 42-Coop.-SDF	99,300	2,38,400	3,57,700
7. 43-Indu-SDF	33,700	45,000	40,000
8. 47-Misc. H-4-B.C.O.			
Charged	10,000	—	—
Voted	3,11,700	7,28,500	8,35,800
9. 47-Misc. K-10 (a)			
Ameliorative Measures for Backward Classes	12,58,800	6,72,000	11,48,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,10,900</b>	<b>32,73,400</b>	<b>48,99,200</b>

The above figures point to a progressive increase in the amounts provided in each of the last three years.

Apart from the above grants, the measures taken by the Government for the amelioration of the Backward Classes and financed from other sources are also considerable. The expenditure incurred through these sources is mixed up with the ordinary and Post-War Reconstruction budget provisions of the various administrative departments and is not shown separately in the budget estimates. For instance, a good portion of the expenditure is incurred by the Government on



the introduction of compulsory primary education, by way of grants to approved primary schools, on provision of medical facilities throughout the State of which advantage can be taken by the Backward Classes in the same manner as other citizens of the State.

Among the benefits received by the Backward Classes, the cost of which does not figure as positive expenditure in the budget estimates, are freeships to Backward Class students in all Government institutions, exemption from payment of room rent in hostels attached to Government institutions, etc. These benefits involve the foregoing of revenues which might otherwise have accrued to the Government. Similarly, assistance is given to the movement for starting forest labourers' co-operative societies by granting forest coupes to such societies at upset prices. If these coupes were sold by public auction, the Government would secure more revenue. The loss to the Government by not putting these coupes to auction but giving them to such societies on the upset price basis, not being loss of actual revenue received, is an indirect subsidy which also does not figure in the budget. All the same, the concession on this account is not inconsiderable.

### BACKWARD CLASS HOSTELS

Control of the Government Backward Class Hostel at Poona as also control over grants to aided Backward Class Hostels was transferred from the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay State, Poona, to the Backward Class Officer, Poona, from April 1934. There were 12 Backward Class Hostels in 1934 which had been recognised for payment of Government grants to them. The number of such aided Backward Class Hostels gradually increased to 149 by the end of March, 1949.

The Government Hostel for Backward Classes at Poona admits students attending secondary schools in the higher secondary classes, i. e., from VIII class onwards and those attending collegiate and technical institutions in Poona. The

Government has recently constructed its own building for the Backward Class Hostel at Poona. The Hostel has accommodation for 80 students. Half the seats are reserved for students offering collegiate and technical courses. If there are any vacancies in this section, they are allotted to students in secondary schools studying in the Matriculation class. The Hostel is open to students from all sections of the Backward Classes without distinction. The students are provided free lodging and board facilities and are given other equipment, such as books, stationery, etc., required for their studies free of charge.

A Government Backward Class Hostel on similar lines has been started since June, 1949 at Hubli in part of the premises of the old Criminal Tribes Settlement there. The accommodation available there is for 40 students and half of it is reserved for students offering collegiate and post-secondary school courses.

The number of aided Backward Class hostels managed by voluntary agencies which received grants-in-aid from the Backward Class Department at the end of the year 1946-47 was 100. The number of these hostels increased to 149 at the end of 1948-49. The number of Backward Class hostels under the control of the Backward Class Department during the period of the last three years and the total grants-in-aid paid to them during each of those years are as follows :—

Year	No. of Backward Class Hostels	Total Grant Paid
1946-47	100	Rs. 1,55,266
1947-48	138	„ 2,44,107
1948-49	149	„ 3,95,574

#### LUMP-SUM SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to scholarships awarded by the Education Department, the Backward Class Department gives monetary help to poor and deserving students from the Backward

Classes studying in secondary schools, colleges and technical institutions by way of lump-sum grants for purchase of books, tools, etc., and for payment of examination fees. The following figures show the total amounts spent in awarding lump-sum scholarships to Backward Class students during the past three years :

Year	Total Amount Spent
1946-47	Rs. 20,037
1947-48	„ 27,434
1948-49	„ 47,581

### ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP

In order that the Backward Class Officer and the Backward Class Department might be enabled to devote their attention wholly to the task of amelioration of the Backward Classes, the Department was reorganised with effect from June 5, 1947. The Backward Class Officer continued to be responsible for the administration of the Criminal Tribes Act until it was finally repealed on August 13, 1949.

The Backward Class Department is concerned with all work of amelioration of the Backward Classes throughout the State. The Department is not ordinarily charged with executive work (except with regard to the administration of grants-in-aid to hostels catering for Backward Class students and of some scholarships, etc.). The execution of the programme in any particular field is the responsibility of the individual departments or offices concerned. The Backward Class Officer seeks to co-ordinate the work in relation to the Backward Classes in accordance with the directives of the Government. He is to see in what manner general development and plans require adaptation so far as the Backward Classes are concerned. Plans and programmes for new schemes are to be prepared by individual departments or officers in consultation with the Backward Class Officer. The Backward Class Officer advises the Government on the general policy and planning of individual schemes, and exercises general inspection to see that

detailed plans are properly and promptly executed. The Backward Class Officer and the staff under him are to take the fullest help and obtain the co-ordination of Revenue and other officers as and when required. They are to be in close touch with other departments of the Government and ensure that the Government's policy and programme for amelioration of the Backward Classes are effectively implemented.

The Backward Class Officer is assisted at the headquarters by one Personal Assistant of the grade of Assistant Backward Class Officer. In addition, the whole State is divided into six zones, each in charge of an Assistant Backward Class Officer. The Assistant Backward Class Officers are drawn from the general cadre of Junior Deputy Collectors. In addition, there are 16 Backward Class Welfare Officers in charge of one or more districts. These officers are of the status of II Grade Mamlatdars.

In addition, the Prant Officers of the Dahanu and Kalyan Prants of the Thana District work as ex-officio Aboriginal Welfare Officers. The work of Bhil uplift in the West Khandesh District is co-ordinated by the Collector. There is the Provincial Backward Class Board to advise the Government on all matters relating to the amelioration of the Backward Classes. For every district, a Backward Class District Committee has been constituted to advise the Government on the special problems of the Backward Classes in the districts.

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