

INDIA

Working Group on
Scheduled Castes &
other Backward classes
during Medium Term Plan
1978-83



REPORT
OF
THE WORKING GROUP
ON
SCHEDULED CASTES AND OTHER
BACKWARD CLASSES
DURING MEDIUM TERM PLAN
1978—83

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, NEW DELHI

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ABSTRACT

The developmental effort for Scheduled Castes so far has been too meagre to make a significant impact on their condition. No clear strategy for their development has been evolved though it is their problem which must be assigned a central position in the national endeavour for growth with social justice. A programme for the development of 15 per cent of our total population, who represent the lowest deciles, must lead to a basic structural change in the national life which is bound to be resisted by the affected sections. The full dimensions of this task have not been clearly appreciated with the result that schemes for development are inconsequential in comparison.

2. The socio-economic situation of the Scheduled Castes has been subjected to a variety of forces in the past few decades. Notable progress has been recorded in education in certain regions and amongst certain communities though the condition of some regions and many communities remains unchanged. The educated class, comprising a very small section though, has acquired some vertical mobility through reservations in jobs and other economic opportunities. But on the other extreme, the position of vast masses is becoming more vulnerable with growing population and keener competition for limited resources. The modernisation of traditional caste-occupations with the use of new technology, better financial support and expanding markets, is ironically pushing the traditional worker to the despised and disagreeable positions, the more articulate groups intruding into the more lucrative and prestigious ones. The new effort for widening of their narrow economic base is meagre, the benefits of general programmes having failed to reach them. Social disability and discrimination continue to be the biggest impediments to economic betterment. Practice of untouchability in malignant form persists in many regions. Overt social discrimination is on the wane in urban areas but the prejudices remain with sophisticated concealment and the push from the villages is swelling the numbers of Scheduled Castes in the growing

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slums. Many of them are engaged in physically strenuous occupations like rickshaw-pulling. The size of the work force engaged in scavenging of dry latrines is increasing in the cities in the absence of minimal civic facilities. The condition of flayers and tanners in the rural areas remains unchanged.

3. We have presented a strategy for development of Scheduled Castes and eradication of untouchability. There are three facets, viz., protective, promotional and social, which would be covered by the following :—

A. PROTECTIVE :

- (i) Protection of existing command over resources ;
- (ii) Prevention of erosion and consolidation of their position in traditional professions ;
- (iii) Professionalisation of “unclean” occupations and delinking them from caste ;

B. PROMOTIONAL :

- (iv) Strengthening of economic base with substantial transfer of resources ;
- (v) Carving out further opportunities in all sectors of national economy at all levels ;
- (vi) Skill diversification for vertical and horizontal mobility by intensive educational and training effort ;

C. SOCIAL :

- (vii) Intensive social work and effective organisation.

4. We take up protective aspects first. All forms of encroachment on their command of resources, whether owned by them or assigned to them, should be effectively checked. The State should become a necessary party in these cases since such disputes cannot be treated as between two individuals ; they are outer manifestations of forces of resistance against a basic structural change. Stringent laws with summary procedure should be enacted by the States forthwith. Tenancy should be recorder correctly and rights and benefits of tenancy legislation thereby made available

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to them; one of the steps which can help in this direction is to fully and quickly enforce the rule of reservation in respect of the posts of village officers and the Survey Departments.

5. The erosion of the position of traditional workers in caste professions should be checked by preparing comprehensive programmes for all those occupations where bulk of the workers belong to Scheduled Castes so as to maximise the share of the primary producer in the net proceeds of the sale of his products. These include leather work, fishing, traditional crafts, mid-wifery, piggery, poultry, bamboo work etc. The centre of these programmes should be the primary worker so that they get full benefit of modernisation both in terms of increased incomes and skill diversification. Further, the industries sector should be oriented to the philosophy of not permitting any government in the modern sector, which will adversely affect the traditional artisans sector or the existing employment and should decide to give first priority to further increasing the scope for traditional artisans and their employment in this sector. There should be a review and revision of fiscal laws especially income-tax exemption for depreciation which tilt the balance against the labour-intensive technology where it is otherwise viable and the resultant distortion should be suitably remedied. This will not only protect existing employment but also channelise future investments in employment-intensive channels.

6. Attention will have to be particularly focussed on the landless agricultural labourers who form the major occupational category amongst the Scheduled Castes. Any plan for Scheduled Castes will have substance only if it is geared towards improving the income of agricultural labourers. This is sound economics because it will in turn increase the consumption of large masses and thereby lay the solid foundation for the growth of secondary and tertiary sectors of the rural economy. For this purpose, apart from strengthening the official machinery for the implementation of minimum wages legislation and making its implementation effective, real success requires that the bargaining power of the agricultural labourers is tilted in their favour. This can be achieved by providing increased employment from all possible sources including the

I. R. D. programme, rural works programme, food for work programme, development of various non-agricultural occupations and various works, all of which should be carefully selected. The resultant increase in employment should be provided not only during the off-season but even during the agricultural season especially at the harvest time so that the agricultural labourers will be able to bargain for better wages for agricultural operations. The content of the additional employment programmes should be so chosen that it contributes to the economic growth of the area while meeting the immediate and supreme purpose of improving the bargaining power of the agricultural labourers and increasing their total annual income. This programme may first be commenced in priority areas where agricultural wages are chronically and indisputably low and where rural unemployment and under employment are highest.

7. Bulk of the Scheduled Castes, however, are landless labourers and marginal agriculturists. The Integrated Rural Development Programme should assume responsibility for their economic betterment on a priority basis. We consider that all blocks with more than 20 per cent Scheduled Caste population should be covered within three years. Benefits in all programmes should be earmarked for the Scheduled Castes in proportion to their numbers in the relevant target groups. The general programmes should be suitably adapted and eligibility norms relaxed. Small irrigation wells should be provided to all willing Scheduled Caste cultivators irrespective of the size of their holding since they can make up with their hard labour the limitation of smaller holdings. Moreover, there is no other alternative. The State owns all land and water resources. A clear Government policy decision should be taken to transfer further resources exclusively in favour of the weaker sections of the community including Scheduled Castes. In production programmes, particularly Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, who is brought into the new production process is equally important.

8. Consolidation in traditional sectors will only help in checking the present slippage, which cannot be our final aim. A massive positive thrust has to be provided to enable them becoming equal partners in all sectors of national economy. On the agricultural

front, one important measure is to increase the present meagre asset ownership of the Scheduled Castes to the maximum extent possible through expeditious distribution of surplus land and expeditious assignment/allotment of land under the control of Government and corporate bodies and other such measures. These and other lands with the Scheduled Castes should be developed by comprehensive and organised mobilisation of inputs, especially water for irrigation. By these means, the value of their assets should be maximised and the grant of lands and their development should be made simultaneous. On the non-agricultural front, besides consolidating reservations in government and public sector through advance identification of job opportunities and training, further opportunities should be carved out in all other spheres. Acceptance of the national policy on employment should become a pre-condition for eligibility to institutional finance. Reservations should be made in all regulated distribution channels ensuring simultaneously necessary financial support. Training in relevant skills, upgradation of professional competence and support for self-employment, particularly in the tiny sector, should be provided so that substantial mobility can be induced towards non-traditional sectors. Since a large proportion of Scheduled Castes is engaged in occupations based on leather, it will be useful to have Leather Development Corporations in the States, which will look after the occupations based on leather from the raw-material point to the final processing and marketing stage, geared towards maximising the income of the primary producers and craftsmen. The dichotomy between labour and ownership of means of livelihood like rickshaws and carts should be eliminated, and thereby the income of those who depend on these occupations increased. Simultaneously research and development should be directed towards finding technical improvements which will reduce the physical strain of these occupations. In order to achieve all these purposes, it is necessary to create sound organisations of the poor, keeping in view the objectives spelt out by the Planning Commission of enabling the poor, through their organised pressure, to counteract the inadequacies of administration and opposition of the vested interests and claim as a right the benefits that should accrue to them.

9. Scheduled Castes Development Corporations should be set up which should give necessary back-up for the entire economic thrust without assuming direct operational responsibility. They should assume the role of promoter, guaranter and gap-filler ensuring complete flexibility in their operation, the prime consideration being solution of the problems at hand. At least 50 per cent of the Scheduled Castes families should be covered during 1978—83. These Corporation should be helped through the participation of the State Governments and the Central Government in their financial structure, which should have a share capital component and a grant-in-aid component, to respectively cover commercially viable operations and essentially promotional activities which may not be viable in commercial terms. Through the agency of the Scheduled Castes Development Corporations as well as various other measures suggested by the Working Group, adequate and timely availability of credit should be ensured. This should also include an element for consumption.

10. Education has a special role to play. It is not only a basic input for economic development, but it provides inner strength to the community to face new situations on terms of equality. Wastage and stagnation is very high amongst the Scheduled Caste children in the first few classes. There should be a substantial programme of financial assistance even at elementary stage, priority being given to the communities and areas at extremely low literacy levels. Sub schools may be established in smaller Scheduled Caste hamlets. It should be a constituent part of the elementary school in the main village catering to the children in 6-9 age group. In the adult education programme, highest priority should be given to the Scheduled Castes and their hamlets. At the same time, keeping in view the perspective of social integration, which is our ultimate goal, wherever new schools are opened there should be common schools for all communities, but located in the Scheduled Castes localities.

11. The rate of scholarships for scientific, professional and technical courses at all levels should be increased so as to fully cover the cost of resident scholar. A preparatory year may be added to higher professional courses for Scheduled Caste students

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not attaining the minimum entry standards. The Central Government should give financial assistance to the States having backlog in elementary education of Scheduled Castes. Education, text books and mass media should be all focussed in a tremendous effort at social conscientisation and mobilisation against untouchability.

12. The Health Services in the country should give special attention to the problems of the Scheduled Castes hamlets. All Scheduled Caste children should be provided nutritional cover. Each Harijan hamlet should have a safe drinking water source. Again from the point of view of social integration, wherever in future a single well is adequate for a village, a common well should be dug for all communities but it should be located in the Harijans locality.

13. Care of the child and mother has been accorded a high priority in the national health service which, however, at present is largely confined to urban and semi-urban areas. There is no link between the modern mother and child care system and the extensive net work of the traditional service supported by caste-groups. The remuneration to the traditional dai is paltry and only a fraction of the cost of the equivalent service in the modern system. This service should be 'municipalised', a fee being paid for each delivery to the dai by the panchayat to be reimbursed by the State.

14. A massive programme of rural housing should be taken up in clusters adopting local design, using local material and providing financial support so as to capitalise the community labour in the form of a permanent asset. Since the provision of houses for the members of Scheduled Castes will take some time, simultaneously, as a shorter measure, an operation "House Sites for All Houseless Poor" should be undertaken to provide house sites for all landless poor persons and implemented within two years. House-sites should be so located as to serve the purpose of social integration and they should be developed before being handed over to the beneficiaries. In the urban areas also, a programme of conferment of ownership rights of sites should be undertaken in favour

of the houseless poor. In both urban and rural areas, it is necessary to provide various social facilities and amenities.

15. All unclean occupations should be professionalised and delinking them effectively from the caste. A scheme for immunising the social and personal life of those engaged in scavenging of dry latrines from their working life has been presented. The community must adequately remunerate those performing the essential service so that those who keep these cities clean can also lead a healthy and honourable life. This service should be municipalised and its cost should be a charge on Municipal resources. It should be accepted as a national programme. At the same time a phased programme of conversion of dry latrines should be undertaken, taking care that those who are now engaged in cleaning dry latrines are simultaneously found alternative employment. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission should specially attend to flaying and tanning professions. Minimum remuneration should be ensured for all processes.

15. An action plan for removal of untouchability within the next four years has been suggested. Concentrated social action should be taken up in identified virulent pockets accompanied by family-based intensive economic programme to be backed by Scheduled Caste Development Corporations. Broad based committees at the district level should implement this scheme, each member of the committee taking personal responsibility for selected villages.

17. The economic life of nomadic and semi-nomadic communities is under heavy strain in the face of severe competition for limited resources, growing population and inroads in the traditional occupations by more organised sections. Folk entertainers like nats, bajigars, snake charmers etc. are losing ground in the whirl of modern life and changing tastes. Many of the denotified Community continue to live with the stigma and mark of their past making them vulnerable socially and economically. Problem of each small groups amongst them is likely to be different. Therefore, no single scheme will do. Comprehensive programmes with

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equal accent on social and economic aspects should aim at rehabilitating them as a group for which adequate funds should be provided by the State and Central Governments.

18. The task outlined by us above can be undertaken only by a strong department whether at the Centre, in the State or in the field. This organisation should not be saddled with direct responsibility of implementing small schemes. We have commend exclusive Departments for Scheduled Castes Development. Hand-picked persons should be given these assignments. A committee headed by the District Magistrate, assisted by a senior officer, should be responsible for effective implementation of the Action Plan in the district. The Committee's directions on matters relating to Scheduled Caste Development should be binding on all departments. Another important requirement in this context is a new personnel policy covering all public services, as detailed in this report, which will secure better talent for this priority sector and also secure better service for the weaker sections. To facilitate the implementation of various programmes, a provision of Rs. 500 crores is necessary in the plan, for special programmes for Scheduled Castes. Further an effective high-level committee in the Government of India is essential, with the powers and competence to give mandatory directions to ensure that the requisite steps are fully, promptly and competently taken by the various Central Ministries and other agencies.

19. Lastly, there should be national consensus on the Action Plan for development of the Scheduled Castes and removal of untouchability. This will help in effectively overcoming sporadic, sometimes strong, resistance to the structural change likely to emerge as we proceed further. The forces of reaction should not have an opportunity to consolidate. This endeavour must assume the forms of a national movement in which each organisation, within its sphere of activity, assumes the responsibility of eliminating discrimination and disability on the caste consideration and accepts promoting the economic interests of the weakest sections as its legitimate task. The Working Group has kept the perspective of a casteless society, which is our ultimate goal. From this point of view, it has recommended that the children of marriages, where

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one of the spouses belongs to the Scheduled Caste, should be entitled to the same benefits of reservation as provided for the Scheduled Castes, and in respect of marriages, where one of the spouses belongs to the Scheduled Castes, each of them be given the highest priority in employment in the quota/category to which he/she will be ordinarily entitled. From the same point of view, the Working Group has also recommended the setting up of common schools for all communities and the construction of common wells for all communities, locating them in Scheduled Castes localities and locating house-sites for Scheduled Castes in such a manner that segregation is avoided. These steps, it is hoped, will, alongwith the various programmes, for the eradication of untouchability and removal of economic weakness, help to lead the society to a Casteless Tomorrow.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Ministry of Home Affairs appointed a Working Group on the 8th December, 1977 for the formulation of strategy and programme priorities for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes during the Medium Term Plan, 1978—83. The terms of reference of the Working Group were as follows :—

- (a) to review the programmes in respect of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes;
- (b) to advise on the approach, strategies and programme priorities in the next five years; and
- (c) to formulate concrete proposals and suggest phasing of the programmes indicating financial and other requirements.

1.2 The Working Group held its first meeting on the 24th January, 1978 and discussed the broad approach on the various aspects of the development of Scheduled Castes. The second meeting of the Working Group was held on the 26th May, 1978. The Group constituted five Sub-Groups to consider in depth the aspects of the development of Scheduled Castes. The second meeting of the Working Group was held on the 26th May, 1978. The Group constituted five Sub-Groups to consider in depth the aspects relating to :—

- (i) Educational development and social service;
- (ii) Economic development programmes for Scheduled Castes including financing of these programmes;
- (iii) Problems relating to those engaged in unclean occupations;
- (iv) Action plan for eradication of untouchability within a period of five years;
- (v) Development of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes.

1.3 It was expected that the Sub-Groups may finalise their reports by the end of July 1978. However, while all the Sub-Groups have met, yet their final reports have not been received. On the basis of their deliberations in the meetings and notes thereof, the present report is being presented because of urgency.

1.4 One of the most important tasks which remains to be completed is to determine the financial outlays involved in the proposed recommendations. Actually, this can be arrived at only after the concerned Central Ministries after the present recommendations, evaluate the sectoral flow from their General Sector programmes. For our purpose concerned Ministries may have to enter into a dialogue with their counterparts in the State Governments. Ministry of Home Affairs will have to tie up their this aspect assiduously and thereby arrive at a conclusion to have a clear idea in regard to special central programmes wherever supplemental action is called.

1.5 A note of caution may be sounded here. The present report reviews briefly as to what has been done and what should be done further keeping in view the dual handicap of Scheduled Castes, namely, poverty and untouchability and to bring them with the national stream a goal which has eluded so far the present recommendations are bare minimum that should be carried out, a lot more is desired to be done. The strategies of development suggested are with reference to what we see today and are in broad general terms. The perception and strategies may have to undergo a change in not so distant future and also in case of certain special circumstances. Thus there has to be a constant thinking on the subject. Here comes the pertinent role of the Central Coordination Committee on the welfare of Backward Classes, comprising of representatives of Central Ministries who will have to provide a constant guidance within the broad accepted national policies and priorities.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE SCHEMES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE FIVE YEAR PLANS

2.1 The Scheduled Castes numbering about 82.5 millions and forming 15 per cent of the total population in the country, suffer from the dual handicap of social disabilities arising out of the stigma of untouchability and educational and economic backwardness. The bulk of the Scheduled Caste population is agriculturists and the majority of them are either landless or have marginal holdings. As their income from agricultural pursuits is quite meagre, they have to depend on their traditional occupations such as leather work, weaving, handicrafts etc. These occupations being in the unorganised sector, largely providing employment to these communities, they have also to resort to disagreeable professions of carrying night soil as headloads, flaying and tanning because of their special low economic status.

2.2 In the Five Year Plans, programmes were undertaken for meeting the special needs of these communities. These programmes in the Backward Classes Sector are conceived as a supplement to the total developmental efforts to be made by the general sector of development for promoting social and economic well-being of these people. Under the successive plans, Rs. 322.25 crores were spent on this sector. Of these, more than 60 per cent were spent on educational schemes, 10 per cent on economic schemes and the remaining 30 per cent on health, housing, drinking water supply and grant-in-aid to voluntary organisations, etc. It would be thus seen that very little attention was paid to the economic development of the Scheduled Castes in the previous Five Year Plans.

2.3 The major schemes for the Scheduled Castes in the Central Sector consisted of post-matric scholarships, girls hostels, coaching and allied schemes and aid to voluntary organisations. In the State Plans the educational programmes included pre-matric

scholarships and stipends, exemption from payment of tuition and examination fees, books and stationery, mid-day meals, uniforms, boarding grants and hostels. The schemes for economic development have been largely in the nature of aids to individuals for the purchase of agricultural implements, bullocks, fertilizers, land reclamation and for taking up village industries and handicrafts.

2.4 A review of the achievements made in the earlier plans showed that the nature of plan outlays in the Backward Classes Sector, namely that it was essentially supplemental to the sectoral programmes, was not fully recognised. In actual practice, the schemes were formulated in an *ad-hoc* manner without having a long term perspective and further this sector tended to substitute the general developmental funds for these classes. In the Fifth Plan, therefore, a new strategy was evolved to ensure flow of benefits from general sector to these people. The State Governments were requested to quantify funds from identifiable programmes and orient the programmes, as far as possible to the needs of the Scheduled Caste communities. Relaxations were made in the norms of Minimum Needs Programmes in favour of these groups. However, no worthwhile efforts were made by the Central Ministries and the State Governments in this regard and the strategy in effect lost its relevance.

2.5. The expenditure incurred during the Fifth Five Year Plan was of the order of Rs. 149 crores as against the allocation of Rs. 208.12 crores (Rs. 86.94 crores in the Central Sector and Rs. 121.18 crores in the State Sector). The break-up of this amount on the major heads of development is shown in the following table :

Major scheme	State Sector	Central Sector	Total
	(Rs. in crores)		
Education	37.77	45.04	82.81
Economic Development	14.40	-	14.40
Health, Housing and others (Drinking Water, Legal Aid, Adminis- tration and Misc.)	48.49	3.22	51.71
Total :	100.66	48.26	148.92

Post-matric Scholarships .

2.6 This Central Sector Scheme was rationalised in 1974-75 and the rates of scholarships were suitably enhanced. In addition to the maintenance allowance being paid to the students, all compulsory non-refundable fees etc. are reimbursed to them. Recently the rates of scholarships for Medical and Engineering students studying in the hostels have been further increased by Rs. 60 p.m. The number of awards to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students which stood at 3.25 lakhs at the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan is likely to have crossed the figure of four lakhs during 1977-78. 500 scholarships have also been earmarked for the children of those persons (not belonging to Scheduled Castes) who are engaged in unclean occupations like scavenging, flaying and tanning etc.

2.7 The aspirations for higher education need to be related to the capabilities of students and employment prospects. In working out the criteria, consideration needs to be given to the extremely wide disparities in educational development among different Scheduled Caste communities, great variations in literacy among male and female students, means, age, merit and types of courses. It is also necessary for the State Governments to take steps to improve the quality of pre-matric education of Scheduled Castes, provide career guidance and facilities for vocational education at the middle and higher secondary school stage and give special incentives to talented students.

Construction of Girls Hostels :

2.8 The object of this Central Sector Scheme is to develop these hostels as a multi-purpose institutions where Scheduled Caste girls could be trained in arts, crafts, house-keeping etc. The total number of girls hostels likely to be constructed upto the end of 1977-78 was 817. The progress of this scheme has been rather slow and it was very difficult to verify whether a hostel for the girls has been actually constructed within the allotted money and specified time. After a hostel is constructed a lot of delay takes place in its actual working because the expenditure on running of the hostel is to be borne by the State Governments.

It is, therefore, necessary that an integrated plan for meeting the requirements of hostel facilities for girls is prepared for each State in consultation with the Education Department so that a suitable scheme can be developed for hostel facilities at various stages of education which may help to bridge the gap in literacy between males and females.

2.9 A new scheme of pre-matric scholarships to the children of those who are engaged as scavengers of dry latrines, flayers and tanners has been introduced from 1977-78. The scholarship amount of Rs. 145 p.m. covers expenses of tuition fees, boarding and lodging books and equipment, uniform and other incidentals. The scheme is proposed to be implemented by the State Governments through the non-official organisations like Harijan Sevak Sangh, Rama Krishna Mission etc. Though this scheme is still in its initial stage, some difficulties in its implementation have developed, like absence of hostel buildings with the non-official organisations, exorbitant rate of rent of hired buildings and non-availability of students at a particular place. In order to obviate these difficulties the State Governments should hire buildings at cheaper rates and efforts may be made to locate these Centres at a place where the children of these communities are available. The idea of the scheme is to wean away the children from non-healthy surroundings under which their parents live.

Coaching and Allied Schemes :

2.10 Coaching and allied schemes for improving the placement of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes candidates in various categories of employment and pre-examination training centres have been set up in various States and Union Territories. There are 7 All India Centres at Delhi, Allahabad, Madras, Patiala, Jaipur, Shillong and Hyderabad for IAS, IPS and other Central Service examinations, two Centres at Allahabad and Tiruchirapalli to prepare these candidates for combined Engineering Services Competitive Examinations and 13 Centres in the various States/Union Territories for State Civil Services and other examinations. The number of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates selected for appointments to IAS, and IPS etc.

on the basis of 1976 examination through these Centres was 49. The number of candidates selected for the year 1977-78 examination was 47. It is now necessary to consolidate the working of these institutions after a careful review of admission policy, assessment of manpower needs of not only Government Departments but also of public sector undertakings and nationalised banks and developing appropriate syllabi and coaching techniques.

Aid to Voluntary Organisations :

2.11 The Government of India continues to give grant-in-aid to the Voluntary Organisations of all India character who are engaged in the work of upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. An allocation of Rs. 70 lakhs was made for this scheme during 1977-78 which has been increased to Rs. 80 lakhs during the current financial year. It is desirable to provide support to the Voluntary Organisations to strengthen the organisational side technically by providing financial assistance for appointing technical personnel for programme, planning and supervision.

State Sector Programmes :

2.12 The State Sector Programmes are financed through the system of block grants and block loans. The State Governments have got the liberty to reappropriate funds from one head to the another according to the need of the situation. The formulation of State Annual Plans for the Backward Classes Sector continues to be weak though the guidelines for the formulation and implementation of the programmes are sent to the State Governments every year by the Planning Commission. This weakness can be seen all along the line. Generally speaking, though there are some exceptions to a limited extent, the various sectoral programmes in the State Plans do not have an identifiable component pertaining to Scheduled Castes. They do not specify the financial and other inputs and/or benefit outputs which will go to the share of the Scheduled Castes. Even where some efforts, limited and inadequate, have been made by some State Governments in this direction, details which will make precise and concurrent monitoring and evaluation possible, are absent. The result is that Scheduled Castes continue to be the largest social group in the

lowest economic category. They are generally landless agricultural labourers and where they possess land they are usually marginal farmers. Handicrafts and other traditional industries practised by Scheduled Castes are among the lowest-paying among such industries. In the urban areas, usually the largest social group living in slums is the Scheduled Castes. They are one of the largest groups plying trades like rickshaw pulling, cart pulling etc., apart from what are considered to be "unclean" professions which keep the rest of the society in whatever state of cleanliness they are found in.

Housing & Physical Environment :

2.13 The programme of housing or house-sites for Scheduled Castes does not appear to have made much headway in spite of the emphasis on this scheme in the Fifth Plan as well as the guidelines sent to the State Governments. Similarly, the programme of providing drinking water facilities to the Scheduled Castes has also not made much progress. There is still a large number of Harijan bastis which have no source of safe drinking water facility.

2.14 In the Fifth Plan, unfortunately, programmes for improving the working and living conditions of those engaged in "unclean" occupations and those for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities were given up. This was a great leap backward.

Implementation of Legislative and Executive Measures :

2.15 Weakness in the implementation of legislative and executive measures for the protection of the interests of Scheduled Castes continues. No systematic review, however, has been made of the actual implementation of legislative and executive measures in different States to protect the Harijans from exploitation. It is necessary to ensure that the protection of Harijans in the matter of eviction from land, issue of pattas and simultaneous and effective placement in possession, scaling down of debts, regulating money lending and controlling the rates of interest and providing alternate credit facility should be properly enforced at the field level. The weakness in the administrative machinery and

loopholes in legislation need to be removed, so that the administrations can identify cases of by-passing of laws and rules, and assist the Harijans in getting their lawful dues.

2.16 Very little attention was paid to the economic schemes for the Scheduled Castes. It is, therefore, necessary to give more importance to the schemes for employment generation and removal of poverty during the next plan. It is noticed that in an attempt to achieve wide distribution of benefits, the expenditure on assistance given under these schemes generally falls far short of requirement. The development strategy also does not take into consideration the wide variations in levels of development between different castes.

The Working Group has tried to look at the situation and the future programme from the point of view of the Scheduled Castes and what they feel their needs are. This approach emerges from the Draft Five Year Plan, 1978—83. In the review chapter of the Draft Plan, the Planning Commission has defined the principal objectives of planning as follows :

- (i) the removal of unemployment and significant under-employment ;
- (ii) an appreciable rise in the standard of living of the poorest sections of the population ;
- (iii) provision by the State of some of the basic needs of the people in these income groups like clean drinking water, adult literacy, elementary education, health care, rural roads, rural housing for the landless and minimum services for the urban slums.

This has to be achieved within a period of 10 years. The Planning Commission refers to unemployment, poverty and inequality as related phenomena and has very wisely observed that the prevalence of poverty and inequality, virtually unchanged over the years, can be seen most clearly in the conditions of life of the two disadvantaged groups in our society, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. To quote the Planning Commission further, on account of "the social disabilities from which a large number of Harijans continue to suffer in many part of the country

are in a large part connected with the economic status and the lack of bargaining power which marks their role as landless agricultural workers in a situation of overall labour surplus." The Planning Commission has spelt out clearly the basic criterion for a relevant Plan, as follows :—"For 'development' to have some meaning, the living standards of these two groups, and their economic and social status must be seen to have risen significantly : so far they have been only marginally involved in the process of development." From this basic concept arises the approach in the Plan "to integrate provisions for assisting backward classes in the general development programmes" through the mechanism of specific earmarked provision in the general development programmes and through welfare schemes and the employment-orientation of the Plan.

From this it should be amply clear that the programme directed towards the Scheduled Castes should be thought of as a scheme for employment on an adequate scale, thereby contributing towards removal of poverty and inequality and thereby building up socio-economic independence and individual dignity. Adequate financial support should be made available for such schemes so that the benefits do not get thinly distributed on account of paucity of funds. The development strategy should also take into account the differential levels of development among the various groups of Scheduled Castes and seek to help particularly those groups who are lagging behind.

Once the strategy for the Scheduled Castes programmes is thus built on the sound foundation of economic development programmes, the undertaking of other programmes of a social, and educational type will have a significant impact in the removal of social inequality and injustices like untouchability.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Our review of the Scheduled Castes scene shows that so far no clear strategy for their economic development has emerged notwithstanding the fact that formal decisions have been taken for earmarking of outlays in their favour in proportion to their population. The limited success so far has been only as a result of vertical mobility with the spread of education and gradual tightening up of the reservation provisions in the jobs. Even here the absence of a closer tie-up between the emerging demand of the national economy and the educational input has resulted in quite a few opportunities being out of their reach. Our study team on economic development and transfer of resources for development of Scheduled Castes have examined the various aspects in details and have come up with a number of far reaching recommendations. We are in general agreement with the approach of the study team and their findings.

3.2 The population of the Scheduled Castes is dispersed. Therefore the problems of their economic development are co-extensive with the problems of the other weaker sections of the community. In their case, however, there is one more handicap which, in some cases, is a crucial impediment that is, social disability. Therefore, the quickening pace of economic development in the country has accentuated the difference between the levels of development of the Scheduled Castes and upper sections in the community to a much larger extent than between the poor and the better off sections in general. It is imperative that the impediments arising out of their social disability in the accrual of benefits to the members of the Scheduled Castes in the general development programmes are effectively stamped out.

These impediments are both sociological as well as economic. Measures will have to be devised for both these categories separately.

3.3 The Scheduled Castes have been generally identified with certain traditional occupations. This position, however, must have changed very early when the upper castes began to depend on their labour for agricultural operations. Therefore, many of the occupational castes were forced into casual agricultural labourers. In many cases, their links with the original occupation was tenuous and marginal. Nevertheless, till the beginning of this century, there were a substantial number of Scheduled Castes who were identified with specific occupations. The diversification of the national economy and the introduction of mechanisation has affected the traditional occupations of some of these communities forcing an ever increasing number to join the army of landless labourers. The growing urbanisation also pulled a substantial number of landless labourers into low occupations in the growing cities with the result that the Scheduled Castes comprise a substantial population of the growing slums there. The growth of the cities has also created a demand for keeping them clean, which again drew upon the lowest communities amongst the Scheduled Castes who were finding it difficult to maintain themselves in the rural areas. The municipalisation of services in the urban areas has not been able to cope up with their growth except in the localities inhabited by the better off sections in the community. Therefore, in terms of total occupational distribution, the members of the Scheduled Castes in the past decades have receded back towards the more disagreeable occupations and towards the uncertain existence of the landless population, though, as already noted, there has been some upward mobility for a very small section amongst the educated class on the other extreme. The problem in terms of its numbers and variety is gigantic by any measure. It is, however, not uniform qualitatively or even in terms of number throughout the country or within the same State or within the same area. It will be necessary to particularise this problem in terms of specific groups so that each one of them can be attended to according to a clearly drawn up programme.

3.4 For the purpose of attending to the economic development of the Scheduled Castes they can be grouped broadly in the following categories :

1. (a) Landless agricultural labourers .
(b) Marginal farmers ;
2. Artisans and skilled workers ;
3. Those engaged in "unclean" occupations---
(a) Flaying and tanning largely in rural areas ;
(b) Scavenging of dry latrines largely in urban areas.
4. Those engaged in strenuous or hazardous occupations like rickshaw-pulling, cart-pulling etc.

Landless Agricultural Labourers/Marginal Farmers

3.5 Although a large population amongst the Scheduled Castes depends on agriculture and allied sectors, they own only a small fraction of the total land area in the villages. Most of them are landless labourers and the better off amongst them are marginal agriculturists. In many States they are share-croppers. There is no organisation on economic lines so far, making their position extremely weak in the local economic structure. Their precarious economic condition forces them to borrow sometimes heavily, which results in alienation of land as also the sale of their crops in advance and getting into debt bondage. It is necessary, therefore, in the first instance that this process of deprivation of the community of whatever meagre assets it has and even the benefit of a free labour market must be halted.

3.6 It is only in a few States so far that the alienation of land belonging to members of the Scheduled Castes has been regulated by law. Therefore, they have to depend on the normal processes of law for protecting thier ownership of land, which, in an unequal economic and social situation, becomes an impossible task. Even in those States where special provisions have been made for protecting the land belonging to Scheduled Castes, the procedure continues to be tardy and even when the verdict is in his favour, it becomes difficult for him to get actual possession.

The allotment of land in pursuance of the policy of the Government to transfer the available resources in favour of the weaker sections of the community also proves to be illusory in many cases forcing them into disputes without the effective support of the authority, making their position vulnerable and resulting in financial disaster not infrequently. The first important step, therefore, has to be to ensure that whatever land is owned by the members of the Scheduled Castes or has been allotted to them by due process of law is in their effective control. We consider that the special provisions should be made in the laws for regulating the transfer of land belonging to the Scheduled Castes and protecting them from encroachment by others. Their case cannot be treated as a case between two private citizens. It has to be viewed in the context of the broad objective of our developmental planning for growth with social justice. The State, therefore, has to be a necessary party in all such disputes where the social and economic disabilities stand in the way of their continued enjoyment of the property which they own.

3.7 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Special provisions should be made in the land laws of the States to regulate transfer of land and to ensure continued possession of land belonging or assigned to members of the Scheduled Castes ;
- (ii) The State should become a necessary party in all cases of illegal alienation, trespass and obstruction to taking of possession in cases of assigned land ;
- (iii) Special summary procedure should be prescribed under the law for dealing with the cases in which one of the parties is a member of the Scheduled Castes.
- (iv) Penal provisions, of a sufficiently effective and deterrent nature, may be made in the existing land laws to deal with those who, after any land is allotted to the Scheduled Castes, occupy or reoccupy it. These provisions may provide for graded punishment for each repetition of the offence.

3.8 Land to the tillers is an accepted policy of Government. But in many States share cropping is prevalent in numerous

forms. There are not even firm records in many cases with the result that the bulk of the share cropping continues to be informal and unrecorded. The social composition of the lower bureaucracy makes it almost impossible for the Scheduled Castes share croppers to get any relief even where he may, formally, have a right. In some States, where the share croppers have been given rights under the new law, the practice acquired informal character and the condition has further deteriorated. In view of the large number of persons involved in share cropping, if they could be given a right that would be one of the most important landmarks of economic development for the Scheduled Castes. This matter, therefore, has to be taken up with earnestness in all the States and the persons actually tilling the land should be given the right in the land which they till. It is particularly necessary that in categories of public services which are connected with land records, mainly Village Officers, and especially Village Accountants referred to as Patwaris, etc. and survey officials, the rules of reservation are fully and quickly enforced.

3.9 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) All share croppers should be recorded according to a time-bound programme in all the States and rights as envisaged in the legislations are made available to them;
- (ii) The definition of personal cultivation should be amended so as to make absentee landlordism illegal, facilitating the transfer of land in favour of actual tillers; and
- (iii) In categories of public services connected with land recording like village offices, survey department, etc. reservations should be fully and quickly implemented.

3.10 As the Planning Commission has noted, one of the characteristics of the Scheduled Castes is that "They have few assets and are generally dependent on share cropping or on agricultural labour". Therefore any plan seeking to serve the Scheduled Castes has to maximise the output from their existing assets and ownership. From this point of view this Working

Group noted with concern the observations made by the Planning Commission about the implementation of land records so far. Since as correctly observed by the Planning Commission, "Even the possession of small holdings will improve the social status of the landless, particularly Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and enable them to have better access to other means of production", this Working Group feels that the implementation of ceiling laws should be expedited, associating with this work village committees with adequate representation of potential beneficiaries and with necessary powers provided to them by special legislation and backed by the necessary machinery along the lines advised by the Planning Commission. It will also be appropriate to distribute 50 per cent of the surplus land to landless and poor members of the Scheduled Castes. The rationale of adopting the figure 50 per cent is explained elsewhere in this chapter.

3.11 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Implementation of ceiling laws be expedited; and
- (ii) 50 per cent of the allottees of the surplus land may be chosen from the landless members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3.12 Despite the various measures recommended above for the preservation of the limited assets of the Scheduled Castes and for its augmentation through the expeditious and satisfactory implementation of the land ceiling laws, a very large proportion of Scheduled Castes are bound to depend upon agricultural labour wholly or substantially for their living. Since the major occupational category among Scheduled Castes is thus going to be landless labourers in the near future, any plan for the Scheduled Castes will have substance only if it is geared towards improving the income of agricultural labourers. This will in turn increase their consumption and thereby lay the solid foundation for the growth of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the rural economy. For this, it is necessary to ensure that the income from wages of the agricultural labourers is stepped up. Hitherto for securing this end, reliance has been placed only on minimum wages legislation. While such a legislation is necessary and its implementation should be made effective by strengthening the official machinery

for the purpose, real success will be possible to a significant extent only if the bargaining power is tilted in favour of the agricultural labourers. That is obviously why the Planning Commission has recommended that the extension of minimum wages legislation should go hand-in-hand with measures for assuring increased employment. This increased employment should be provided not only during the off season but even during the agricultural season especially at harvest time so that the agricultural labourers will be able to bargain for better wages for agricultural operations. The alternative and additional employment programme will consist of rural works programme, food for work programme and non-agricultural occupations. The works chosen for this purpose should be selected carefully so that they contribute to the economic growth of the area while meeting the immediate and supreme purpose of improving the bargaining power of the agricultural labourers and also increasing the total annual income of the agricultural workers. Since it will not be possible to implement this everywhere at once, priority areas may first be chosen where agricultural wages are chronically and indisputably low and where rural unemployment and underemployment are highest. While it is important that the Central Government provide a reasonable part of the financial resources for the various programmes of the Scheduled Castes recommended by us, it is particularly necessary that for this programme Central funds should be made available generously as this will benefit the largest number of socially and economically dis-advantaged groups.

3.13 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Minimum wages for agricultural labourers should be strictly enforced and the implementing machinery adequately strengthened in quantity and quality.
- (ii) The food for work programme of labour mobilisation, rural works programme and similar other activities including the programme of integrated rural development should also be planned so as to provide alternative and additional employment opportunities to the agricultural labourers throughout the year or for as large part of the year as possible, necessarily including the agricultural seasons so that the agricultural labourers' bargaining position, at present

hopelessly adverse to them, may be improved in their favour and they may be able to bargain for better wages and their income may be maximised. Such measures should be taken in a planned manner with priority for chronically low agricultural wage and high unemployment and underemployment areas.

- (iii) Similarly, the non-agricultural occupations should also be taken up on an extensive scale in such areas with accent on Scheduled Castes, through various possible agencies like the I.R.Ds., Scheduled Castes Development Corporations and other organisations as they will also help to improve the bargaining power of the agricultural labourers as well as increasing their income, purchasing power and consumption of wage goods.

3.14 In view of the dispersed population of Scheduled Castes in the rural areas any programme for their economic development has to be built into the general programme of the development in that area. A variety of programmes both area-wise and target group oriented had been taken up in the past Five Year Plans, the notable among them being Small Farmers Development Agencies, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agencies, Drought Prone Areas Development Projects, Whole Village Development Programme, Tribal Development Agencies etc. All these programmes are now being converted into a single programme of Integrated Rural Development in which the unit of planning will be a block. In the current year this programme is being intensified in about 2,000 out of the above 3,000 (three thousand) blocks covered under any one of the above on going programmes. Besides these, it has also been decided to take up 300 blocks under Integrated Rural Development scheme every year so as to cover the remaining blocks by the end of the current medium term plan. The blocks with more than 20 per cent Scheduled Caste population have been given a high priority for inclusion under the Intensified Integrated Rural Development programmes. It is a welcome step. While the bulk of the blocks with more than 20 per cent Scheduled Castes population will be taken up in the current year itself, the remaining blocks should be covered latest in another two years. It will thus be possible

to concentrate attention on these selected blocks for development of the members of Scheduled Castes.

3.15 We, therefore, recommend that :

All the blocks with more than 20 per cent Scheduled Castes population should be covered under the Intensified Integrated Rural Development programme within the next two years at the latest.

3.16 The bulk of the I.R.D. programmes is family based. There is also a reservation of benefits for the Scheduled Castes/Tribes upto 20 per cent of the total investment. In the earlier phase of the SFDA, MFAL programmes there was no reporting system to assess the quantum of benefit flowing to members of Scheduled Castes. The reporting system now has been suitably modified. The review shows that still the quantum of benefit in various schemes is not adequate. There is another aspect which needs to be considered. The proportion of Scheduled Castes in the population varies considerably from one block to another. Moreover the number of Scheduled Castes amongst the rural poor, for whom these programmes have been specially drawn, is substantially larger. In fact, in most of the cases the bulk of the population belonging to the categories of marginal farmers and agricultural workers is Scheduled Castes. Therefore, a reservation on a uniform basis or even on the basis of their proportion in the total population of the block still leaves them far behind their due share in the benefit of these programmes. It is, therefore, necessary that the reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the Integrated Rural Development programmes is based on the proportion of their population in the target group. It is not likely to be less than 50 per cent. Therefore, in those cases where firm figures are not available, at least 50 per cent of the benefits should be reserved in their favour. We are happy to know that this practice has been adopted in a number of programmes in Andhra Pradesh.

3.17. We, therefore, recommend that :

The benefits in the Integrated Rural Development programmes should be earmarked to the extent of the

proportion of Scheduled Castes amongst the target groups in each case and till such figures are not available it should be 50 per cent of the total benefits.

3.18 While earmarking of outlays will help in focussing attention on these groups, it may not ensure accrual of benefits unless some other concrete measures are also taken. In some cases, it may be necessary to change the structure of schemes with reference to the economic situation of the members of Scheduled Castes. For example, the average holding of the members of Scheduled Castes is very small and he may not be eligible even to get a small irrigation well. The irrigation well is expected to have about 3 acres under command, but in actual practice it may irrigate only a fraction of that area. It is also observed that the weakest groups compensate for larger land area by intensive application of family labour. Therefore, a Scheduled Caste with a much smaller holding can become a viable cultivator provided he is given the necessary support for a well. Similarly, the quantum of subsidy may also have to be liberalised for these communities particularly because they are the persons who have the land just on the margin whose development requires a much larger investment giving a smaller return. They may also be denied the benefits of various programmes since they may not be able to bring a surety. Briefly, in their case it will be necessary to have a second look at all the schemes under the Integrated Rural Development Programme. This exercise will have to be done in a conscious way. There should be a separate chapter in each Integrated Rural Development Project dealing with the problems of the Scheduled Castes and steps taken to adapt the programmes, tie them up wherever necessary with other inputs and arrangements for proper feedback evaluation and directions.

3.19. We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) The various economic programmes should be reviewed with a view to adapt them to enable the members of Scheduled Castes become eligible for those programmes and partake in their benefit to the desired extent.
- (ii) The quantum of subsidy may be suitably revised in all programmes keeping in view the sub-marginal

land and weak economic conditions of the members of Scheduled Castes.

- (iii) The condition of minimum holding for small irrigation wells should be removed and all those members of Scheduled Castes who want to have a well should be provided on priority basis.
- (iv) A separate chapter in all Rural Development Projects should deal with the development of Scheduled Castes, especially highlighting the adaptation of programmes ; relaxation of norms and arrangements for review of accrual of benefits and taking up timely review wherever necessary.

3.20 Since the asset ownership of the Scheduled Castes is limited, it is a matter of high priority that the value of their assets is maximised through full and quick development. The main objective of the integrated rural development programme is to extend the benefits to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from the various schemes on a priority basis, in a phased manner, making necessary modifications in eligibility norms, provision of common services, creation of the co-operative form of organisations, etc. Keeping these facts in view the Sub-Group on Economic Development Programmes has made certain valuable recommendations which are endorsed.

3.21 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) There should be a programme to cover all the holdings of Scheduled Caste land holders, most of whom are marginal farmers, with irrigation wells to the fullest possible extent.
- (ii) Groundwater Irrigation units, which should be self-contained, including specialists from the fields of geology, hydrology, drilling, etc. should be created to provide organisational support for quickly identifying and exploiting the groundwater resources. These units should be adequate in number to exploit the entire groundwater potential in areas where there is a fair amount of land-holding by Scheduled Castes in a time-bound programme of three years. Such units should be provided with sufficient physical and financial resources including drills etc.

- (iii) Similarly, in respect of surface water irrigation, it should be ensured that the Scheduled Caste land holdings in the command areas are fully covered through channels and necessary physical and financial support is made available.
- (iv) An Integrated Project for Development of land held by Scheduled Castes, whether by distribution of ceiling surplus lands or by assignment or by long-term base of temple land etc., should be formulated so that the grant of land and its development are simultaneous.

3.22 Economic development essentially means more intensive utilisation of the land and water resources. The bulk of the cultivable land is already under plough but there are still substantial resources which can be put to alternative economic use. Some land may also be available out of surplus land or in those areas where it has not become scarce as yet. It would be necessary that we have a clear state policy that the command over the residual resources now shall be given to the members of the weaker sections only. Some effort has already been made in this direction but this will need be pursued vigorously. The sectoral programmes at present do not distinguish as between the beneficiaries since they are interested in certain physical targets being achieved. Thus if the target is to have higher food production, this can be achieved perhaps more easily by tackling a few cultivators rather than by convincing a large number of marginal cultivators. This approach result in the flow of new investments in the hands of the more articulate group. The procedural complexity further accentuates the same process. A change in this approach is crucial in programmes like animal husbandry and fisheries which have the potential of being developed on the basis of optimal utilisation of marginal land and water resources which are still State property. Animal husbandry programmes (which are neutral as between beneficiaries) will be taken up by those who can afford to grow fodder crops and take care of their marketing. But a programme oriented to the weaker sections must have fodder cultivation as a part of the scheme. Here again a distinction will have to be made. Fodder cultivation can be on irrigated lands or in some marginal lands,

like growing of fodder trees. The former alternative will benefit the better off sections. But if a programme of growing of fodder trees on sub marginal lands, which can be assigned to the weaker sections, is devised, the programme can become a self-contained and viable one helping the weaker sections economically. The same will be the case with the fisheries programmes where the individuals could be helped to acquire a right in the water resources as also the necessary investments for improving and adopting better fishing techniques.

3.23 There is considerable ambivalence in the policies relating to the allotment of lands. There is no reason why all lands under corporate ownership or any description—religious, commercial philanthropic—should not be assigned to the actual cultivator. Even the State sometimes takes recourse to the easier alternative of putting it to auction and leaving the management to the contractor. Arrangements must be made by organising Farmers Cooperatives or other suitable mechanisms to see that all future allotment of cultivation rights in lands go in favour of the members of Scheduled Castes and other weaker sections of the community. There are considerable extents of lands, classified as reserved forests under the control of the Forest Department which are really lying waste or are not optimally developed. It is recommended that a mechanism should be devised whereby such lands may be made available to members of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, who reside in the vicinity, for growing of fruit trees with usufructory rights. The mechanism may include provision for meeting the consumption needs of the beneficiaries during the period of the growth of the trees through food for work programmes etc. Thereby the spirit of forest policy and the spirit of the policy for the development of weaker sections will be watched.

3.24 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) the various sectoral programmes particularly in animal husbandry and fisheries should be family oriented. The individual family should be helped to acquire command over the land or the water resources which forms basis of his economic activity. While drawing

up these programmes, the required inputs and other facilities like fodder and milk collection and marketing arrangements for animal husbandry schemes, should be tied up, so that Scheduled Castes beneficiaries of this sectoral programme may not be handicapped.

- (ii) All assignments of lands for cultivation in future by corporate bodies of any description should be in favour of the Scheduled Castes and other weaker sections of the community. A suitable legislation, if necessary, may be brought for this purpose.
- (iii) All forest waste lands should be allotted to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes staying in the vicinity for growing fruit trees with usufructory rights tying the programme with the food for work programmes.

Artisan Groups :

3.25 A sizeable population amongst Scheduled Castes till follow skilled occupations which are low in social categorisation. Some isolated efforts have been made in a variety of directions like training for higher skills, the supply of improved tools, grant of working capital, marketing of products etc. These efforts have been insignificant compared to the massive economic forces let loose by the new developmental process which have rendered the artisan helpless in competition with the better organised groups. One of the striking processes which have made their position increasingly vulnerable is growing specialisation in different facts of the same economic activity. Take the case of leather work which spans flaying and tanning on the one extreme and marketing of finished products on the other. The village cobbler was perhaps doing all this by himself though even there, the more disagreeable part of flaying and tanning became the speciality of a still lower caste among them. With the economic compulsions of better organised markets, the marketing function got into the hands of stronger sections. The management of factories manufacturing leather goods also was taken over by others, reducing the traditional communities to the condition of low paid wage employees. The techniques of leather work itself got improved and some of the items became more respectable, attracting the educated and higher

class people pushing the traditional craftsmen to the more disagreeable parts of the work. This process continues and with the increasing use of science and technology the community is gradually being pushed out from the more lucrative parts of this profession. The entire benefits of the package of economic programmes is taken by the middleman, the manager and the overseer. If this process could be stopped and reversed and the entire leather activity could be organised so as to ensure that the benefit of diversification is available to the members of the working community itself and the benefit of the growing market gets passed on to the primary worker, their economic condition would improve substantially. The organisation of the Handloom Weavers is a good illustration of ensuring that the improvement of technology and diversification and specialisation of different facets of that activity does not force the weaver into a vulnerable position and that the benefit of new development goes to the weaver himself. A similar story is being repeated in a number of other professions like fishermen, weavers belonging to Scheduled Castes, village craftsmen engaged in making idols, dhokra art, conch shells, basket making, carpet weaving, mid-wifery etc.

3.26 It will be necessary that each profession is looked at in its totality and a comprehensive plan is prepared covering all its aspects. Any profession in which more than 50 per cent of the participants belong to Scheduled Castes would be a fit case to be taken under the ambit of Scheduled Castes Development programme. The plan for this profession will have to be revised and reoriented with the Scheduled Castes workers at the Centre. In the case of leather work, as large an area within the profession as possible, should be brought under the command of the worker. The sectoral Ministries, therefore, should immediately prepare these comprehensive programmes for each professional group with this end in view. This approach will take advantage of an on-going economic activity, the basic question only being that the benefits from it should get diverted to the actual workers. Therefore, it can yield visible results within a short period without high investment. What is required is a determined effort and effective planning and organisational sup-

port. The concerned Ministries, therefore, must attend to this problem immediately and work out a plan of action within the current year itself. Adequate provision should be made on an ad-hoc basis and the scheme should become operational from 1979-80 onwards so that the full impact can be felt within the next four years.

3.27 We, therefore recommend that :

- (i) Comprehensive programmes may be prepared for those occupational groups in which a large number of participants are members of the Scheduled Castes covering all phases including processing, manufacture and sale. These programmes should have the primary producer at the Centre, and should have as their objectives maximisation of the share of the primary producer in the net proceeds of the sale of the products.
- (ii) In the light of the above the concerned Ministries may prepared a broad frame for development of the relevant occupations as a part of the general sector plans within the next three to six months to effectively cover all the participants therein within the medium term plan 1978—83. These programmes should become operational with effect from 1979-80.
- (iii) Wherever the demand pattern warrants training up of new entrants into any such occupation like carpet weaving, cane and bamboo-based crafts, crafts based on palm leaf, grass, reeds and making of matches at cottage industry level, at least 50 per cent of the candidates for training should be selected from among the Scheduled Castes. In the District Industries Centres, (D.I.Cs) which have become the main agency for the development of small, cottage and village industries especially in rural areas, and in which there is one manager designated to look after the cottage and village industries ; the entire organisation should be oriented to the philosophy of not permitting any modern sector industry which will adversely affect the traditional sector or the existing employment, and should positively give first priority to further increasing the scope for traditional artisans and employment in this sector. This ap-

proach should also be enjoined upon the various co-ordination groups at the State, regional and national level dealing with the guidance as well as monitoring of D.I.Cs.

- (iv) Since a large proportion of Scheduled Castes are engaged in occupations based on leather, it will be useful to have a leather development corporation in the States which will look after the occupations based on leather from the raw-material point to the final processing and marketing stage, geared towards maximising the income of the primary producers and craftsmen.

C. "Unclean" Occupations

3.28 Flaying, tanning and scavenging are the main occupations regarded as uncleaned. Flaying and tanning is generally limited to rural and semi-urban areas since in the urban areas it has now been professionalised. On the other hand, the scavenging of dry-latrines is largely a problem in the urban and semi-urban areas because in villages latrines within the house are generally non-prevalent. These professions are entirely linked to certain specific castes because they are considered the lowest amongst the Scheduled Castes. These occupations have to be professionalised so that they get delinked from the caste and their working conditions gradually improve. Since this concerns the weakest sections amongst the Scheduled Castes who suffer maximum from the evil of untouchability, we will be discussing the approach and programmes for them in a separate chapter.

Organising the Rural Poor

3.29 Before we conclude our consideration of the traditional sectors associated with the Scheduled Castes which are mostly unorganised, it will be necessary that the common problems arising from the fact of their being unorganised are considered in some detail. This aspect has come into focus in the national economy as a whole. It has been accepted in the approach of the medium term plan 1978—83 that growth with social justice will require organisation of the rural poor who have not got their due share in the fruits of economic development. The

Ministry of Labour have taken some initiatives recently in starting a national dialogue on organising the rural poor. The bulk of the Scheduled Castes will come in this category. In their case, the social disability will be an additional factor to be overcome. The wages in most of the rural sectors continue to be low notwithstanding the legislative measures to fix minimum wages. Even in the semi-organised sectors where the Scheduled Castes are engaged in a sizeable number, the wages are extremely low, the lions share of the productive effort being mopped by other participants. The incidence of bonded labour also is highest among the members of the Scheduled Castes. The practice of bonded labour has been made a penal offence and a centrally sponsored programme of rehabilitation has recently been initiated by the Ministry of Labour. The National Labour Institute is also engaged in creating awareness amongst the bonded labour so that they can get effectively rehabilitated with the State assets. All these efforts which have been initiated in some measure here and there will have to be intensified almost in the form of a movement so that the average poor is able to appreciate the nature of his rights and organise wherever necessary to demand for justice in an unequal situation where he finds himself today. The administration can provide a support system so that justice is done and the individual is able to fight for the just cause. The task beyond this line will have to be that of the voluntary organisations and will be a part of the larger political process.

3.30 With regard to the content of the programme of the organisation of the poor, the Planning Commission has made some very pertinent observations in the Draft Five Year Plan 1978—83 which bear repetition in view of their importance as this is almost a new area of activity. "Critical for the success of all redistributive laws, policies and programmes is that the poor be organised and made conscious of the benefits intended for them. Organised tenants have to see that the tenancy laws are implemented. Organisations of the landless have to see that surplus lands are identified and distributed to them in accordance with the law within five years.... The Planning Commission is proposing a massive shift of resources in favour of rural areas with an in-built redistributive character in almost

every programme. But whether the larger resources will have the desired equalising effect will depend on the extent to which the organised pressure of the beneficiaries counteracts the weaknesses of the administration and the opposition of vested interest.... The poor and the dispossessed will not come into their own only by plans and programmes, however, well-conceived, by declarations of intent or by exhortations to thrift and labour. If the Plan is to succeed, they have to be helped to organise themselves to claim as a right the benefits that should flow to them, so that in turn they may make due contribution to society."

3.31 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) The strategies and programmes of assisting the creation of sound organisations of the poor should be devised keeping in view the objective of enabling the poor, through their organised pressure, to counteract the inadequacies of administration and opposition of vested interests and claim as a right the benefits that should accrue to them.
- (ii) The process initiated by the Ministry of Labour for organising the rural poor should be further intensified and effective programmes chalked out in the light of the above.
- (iii) The programme for bonded labour undertaken by the Ministry of Labour should be intensified, covering the process of identification, release from bond and simultaneous rehabilitation by providing an economic programme along with organisation.

3.32 A good number of members of Scheduled Castes are in physically strenuous occupations like rickshaw pulling the cart pulling, etc. especially in the urban areas. The economic development programmes should also cover them. In their case, the programme should be directed towards increasing their income from these occupations so long as there is no better alternative for them outside these occupations. At the same time, research and development in the country should address itself to the task of making technical improvements which would reduce the physical strain. For this purpose they (rickshaw pullers etc.) should be made owners of their means of livelihood and necessary

provisions should be made whereby only those who personally and physically work in this sector should own rickshaws, carts, etc. The dichotomy between labour and ownership should thus be eliminated, thereby increasing their income.

3.33 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) Legislation should be undertaken to make rickshaw pullers and cart pullers etc. owners of their means of livelihood and to prohibit others from owning or plying rickshaws, carts, etc.
- (ii) Research and development should be required to undertake studies to bring technical improvement which will reduce the physical strain of these occupations.

Modern Sectors

3.34 So far we have confined our attention to consolidating the position of members of Scheduled Castes in their traditional sphere and ensuring that they are not subjected to exploitation and other disabilities as also that the benefit of the advances brought about by new technology also accrue to them. The task of development of the Scheduled Castes, however, is much wider since they have to be brought to a stage where they can mix with the rest of the community on terms of equality. As already mentioned a small section of the new educated group has the vertical mobility in different spheres of the new economic system. These movements, however, are extremely limited and confined to a small part of the public sector so far. This has now to be made as broad-based as possible. In fact, it should become co-extensive with the entire national economy horizontally and vertically.

3.35 There are two aspects which will have to be considered. A larger number of young members of the Scheduled Castes will have to be prepared for the growing needs of the new economy which needs to be clearly identified. This aspect will be discussed while considering education and other social services. Secondly a place has to be created and reserved for them in various spheres of the economic life so that they are not subjected to unequal

competition in attaining those positions. Ours is a mixed economy in which public sector occupies an important place, the principle of reservations in the public sector have now been well settled though some loose ends need to be tied up areas on the periphery like the Banking and educational fields. The Bureau of Public Enterprises should assume a leadership role in respect of the enterprises within its jurisdiction, to ensure that the due share accrues to the Scheduled Castes. The other concerned Ministries should closely oversee this aspect in their respective jurisdictions. The Department of Personnel at present oversee only the services in the Central Government. They should now assume the responsibility of coordinating and overseeing this aspect in the States and at the Centre as also in the public sector.

3.36 The Private Sector, however, which accounts for the bulk of the economic activity has still to accept this national responsibility for giving to the members of the Scheduled Castes their due position in the economic life. Even the private sector depends to a large extent on the finances provided by the public sector through the Financing Institutions and other facilities and assistance provided by the Government and public bodies. They owe this responsibility and suitable measures have to be devised for ensuring that they accept this responsibility. Acceptance of suitable employment policy in consonance with the national objective should be the condition for all advances and other facilities and assistance to the private sector for business, trade and industry.

3.37 Next comes the sector of self-employment and those jobs which are assigned to individuals by the Corporate Sector. There should be adequate reservations in favour of members of Scheduled Castes in all these areas. The members of the Scheduled Castes have an initial disadvantage in most of these areas because they do not have the experience of the family behind them nor the support of the community which new entrepreneurs in other groups have when they venture into new unexplored areas. They will need the support of an umbrella institution which makes good these deficiencies of the family and the community backup as

also give them the knowhow of the ventures which they propose to take. A beginning will have to be made in the small and tiny sector first. However, the medium sector should also be thrown open to those who can take up the challenge by introducing preferences or even by earmarking certain advances by the concerned institutions in favour of members of the Scheduled Castes.

3.38 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) Adequate opportunities should be made available and wherever necessary reservations made for members of the Scheduled Castes in all spheres of economic life to promote professional diversification and vertical mobility. Reservation should also be made in the governing bodies of institutions which will promote and facilitate professional diversification and mobility such as elective posts in co-operatives, particularly including their President; Board of Directors of banks and other credit financial institutions; Board of Directors of various promotional organisations; bodies governing education such as University Senates, Boards of Intermediate Education; Boards of Secondary Education, Boards of Technical Education. Elective posts in institutions of local self-Government including posts of Chairman/President of Panchayat Raj Institutions, at the district, block and village level and municipal Chairman.
- (ii) The steps taken in the Government and Public Sector services need to be fully consolidated and extended to any branch of Government and public services to which they do not apply now, closely monitored and remedial measures suggested promptly. The Bureau of Public Enterprises should be responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating for all industries under their purview. Other Ministries and Departments in the Centre and States should similarly be responsible for organisations under their jurisdictions. The Department of Personnel should oversee the reservations in services in the Centre, States and Public Sector.
- (iii) Acceptance of a suitable employment policy in consonance with the national objective should be a precondition for all advances and other facilities and assistance to the private sector for business, trade and industry.

- (iv) The Department of Banking and the Ministry of Industrial Development together may be responsible for ensuring observance of compliance by the private sector of the employment conditions.
- (v) Suitable reservations in all licences, quotas and permits including fair price shops, milk vending shops, coal depots, kerosene shops, etc. for members of the Scheduled Castes be ensured. This should be tied up with suitable assistance programmes suggested elsewhere.
- (vi) Special efforts should be made to bring about vertical mobility through intensive training and professional guidance. In order to make it effective, employers in the public sector as well as private sector should be required to make advance identification of job opportunities in their organisation, so that suitable candidates for training may be selected jointly by the potential employer, the Education Department and the Harijan Welfare Department and such candidates put through an appropriate course of training with pre-identified employment being made available at the end of the training.
- (vii) The members of Scheduled Castes who are nominated to posts like directors, members of governing bodies, etc. and also Scheduled Castes representatives on D.P.Cs. and selection committees, etc. should be given orientation courses in order to enable them to effectively play their role in channelising the benefits of development as well as employment within the sphere of their respective organisations and bodies.
- (viii) Self-employment schemes should be so devised by every Department incharge of it so that reasonable participation of not less than their percentage in the population, should go to members of Scheduled Castes who are capable of undertaking such schemes.

3.39 The above suggestions have been made keeping in view the fact that there is no legal backing for reservations and at present reservations are made in the services under the State and Public Sector on the basis of Directive Principles. The enforcement of reservations to the extent State policy has laid down, will be implementable with maximum effect when it is given statutory backing. At present executive directions regarding

reservation are made on the strength of Article 16(4) of the Constitution. This was framed as an exception to Article 16(1) which provides for equality of opportunity in employment or appointment to any office under the State. Clause 4 is not mandatory, only permissive. That is why it is not possible to extend it to private employment. Therefore, the Working Group feels that Article 16(4) should be replaced by a new overriding Article which should make it mandatory for the State to provide for reservation of appointments and promotions for Scheduled Castes in all services under the State and Public Sector and those sections of private employment where reservation can be enforced and monitored; provide for reducing the backlog over a period of time and for carrying forward vacancies from year to year if qualified candidates are not available at a particular selection. The Working Group also feels that the policy of reservation should reflect the perspective towards a casteless society and therefore certain facilities in employment should be given to those who inter-marry, one of the spouses being a member of the Scheduled Castes, and to their children.

3.40 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) The Constitution should be amended by the abolition of Clause 4 of Article 16 and the introduction of a new Article overriding all other provisions making it mandatory for the State to provide for reservation in employment or appointment to posts and promotions for Scheduled Castes in services under the State, public sector and those sections of private employment where reservation can be enforced and monitored, provide for reducing the backlog over a period of time and provide for carrying forward vacancies from year to year if qualified candidates are not available at a particular selection. This should be followed by a comprehensive legislation.
- (ii) The children of marriages where one of the spouses belongs to Scheduled Caste should be entitled to the same benefits of reservation as provided for the Scheduled Castes.
- (iii) Where one of the spouses of a marriage belongs to the Scheduled Castes, each spouse may be given the highest priority in employment in the quota/category

to which he/she will be ordinarily entitled so long as there is no separation or divorce.

3.41 The success of the employment policy depends on its implementation not only by the Central Government but also by the State Governments. Encouragement should therefore be given to State Governments to implement this effectively.

3.42 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) The Government of India should prepare a package of guidelines regarding reservation in services, training for eligible candidates to fill the reserved posts, etc. along the above lines and implement it.
- (ii) Government of India should advise the State Governments to follow the guidelines and provide an attractive incentive in the allocation of plan resources, for State Governments which follow it.

3.43 The advent of new enterprises in the Modern Sector whether industrial or pertaining to major irrigation projects and the like, dislocates the occupational and income patterns of large numbers of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers including a number of Scheduled Castes. It should be an integral part of every such project to satisfactorily rehabilitate such persons in the matter of employment in the project and availment of social services and ancillary social services generated by the project.

3.44 We, therefore, recommend that :

When approving any large project it should be ensured that it contains a component for the economic rehabilitation of the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers with priority to Scheduled Castes who are dislocated by the location of the project.

3.45 In keeping with the employment orientation of all sectoral programmes laid down by the Planning Commission, it is necessary to study the fiscal laws which make capital intensive projects more advantageous than labour intensive projects, even when labour intensive projects are viable, particularly on account of the provision regarding income tax exemption for

depreciation. As the extension of the labour intensive sector will expand avenues of employment, of which Scheduled Castes would have a substantial share, the fiscal laws should be reviewed to make labour intensive technology advantageous wherever it is basically viable. Wherever there are problems of viability, research should be directed towards evolving new appropriate technologies.

3.46 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) There should be a review and revision of fiscal laws especially income tax exemption for depreciation which tilt the balance against labour intensive technology where it is otherwise viable.
- (ii) To the extent such exemptions for the capital intensive sector are found to be necessary, countervailing benefits will have to be provided in the fiscal law for the labour intensive sector.
- (iii) Research and development should be directed towards evolving new appropriate technologies which will make labour intensive projects viable, wherever they are not viable.

FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES

3.47 The programmes for consolidating the position of members of Scheduled Castes in their existing positions and for giving their economy a broader base in the national economy will require a massive effort on the part of all concerned. It involves 15 per cent of the total population of the country numbering about 8 crores. If a dent is to be made in their economic conditions, it can be done only if all organisations concerned with different facets of the national economy accept it as an important goal. Although this has been accepted in principle, it will take considerable time before it gets a self-generating momentum impelled by the inner will of each organisation. It will mean an extensive review of the plans and programmes adapting them wherever necessary to ensure that the members of the weaker sections of our community get their due share in the fruits of development. The process of adaptation itself is likely to be time consuming since the new spirit has to inform all members of every organisa-

tion. But we cannot wait for this ideal situation to come and some arrangement has to be made for the intervening period when these adjustments are in the process of being worked out and made effective.

3.48 We have noted earlier that even after a certain proportion of benefits has been earmarked, the eligibility condition may not be in keeping with the economic condition of the weaker sections. The individual may not have even the small seed money which may enable him to take a large loan. In some cases, he may not have even a few rupees to become a member of the society. The traditional artisan may require only a few rupees to purchase new tools. In the extreme case a labourer must have something to eat before he can go for work for which he must be provided something or else he may be forced to mortgage his own labour for petty amounts. The matrix of economic forces for the weaker sections of the community is of an altogether different order which will have to be tackled at that level if the benefit which we have envisaged above has to reach them in real terms.

3.49 We consider that an arrangement has to be made for meeting all these requirements and others which may not be foreseen at one place. The central point in this arrangement has to be the individual whose problems have to be solved, everything else must be relegated to a second position. It means that this arrangement has to be flexible.

3.50 No single organisation can afford to carry the entire responsibility for the development of Scheduled Castes. It has to intervene at crucial points and must ensure that all organisations play their role and wherever any impediment occurs it comes forward to remove it by suitable assistance whether as financier or as a guarantor or as a promoter. Such a system can be envisaged outside the normal governmental hierarchy though as an integral part of it so that the interaction is intimated and it can draw upon the authority of administration but may not get entangled in the routine of the system. We consider therefore these demands of the situations can be answered by establishment of Development Corporations for the Scheduled Castes.

3.51 (a) A variety of Corporations with similar objectives have been set up in various States and we have generally reviewed their structure and function. We consider that the Corporation should not assume any direct responsibility for implementation of programmes which should remain the function of the concerned sectoral organisation. It should also not directly advance loans or run institutions. It should come as a guarantor, a promoter, provider of missing inputs by way of contributing to the seed money or making other advances through the concerned institutions.

3.51(b) The Corporation should be organised at the State level with branches at the district level in the first phase to be extended further suitably according to the needs. The Managing Director of the State Corporation should also have a suitable secretariat status and in that capacity deal with all matters relating to the corporation at the State Government level. The district branch should be headed by the Collector and with representatives of all the concerned Departments and Financing Institutions as its members. The official of the Corporations should be its Member-Secretary who will co-ordinate the variety of activities under the authority of the Collector and other officers of Government at that level. The Corporation should concentrate on smaller programmes with maximum financial implications of not more than Rs. 5000 to the Corporation or Rs. 20000 to all institutions put together. Even here this should be the outer limit. The bulk of involvements should be of the smallest financial order. The Corporation must aim at covering at least 50 per cent of the Scheduled Caste families by the end of the medium term plan 1978—83. The Central Government should participate in the Corporation by providing suitable assistance.

3.52 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) Corporations for the development of Scheduled Castes should be established in all States which should function as guarantors and promoters and also provide missing inputs wherever necessary. They should operate through the sectoral authorities and other organisations providing the necessary backup for the programme.

- (ii) The Corporation should have branches upto the district level to begin with in the first phase to be extended as its functions expand. The district branch should be headed by the Collector with district heads of concerned departments, financial institutions as the Members and official of the corporation as the Secretary. The Managing Director of the State Corporation should have a suitable secretariat status.
- (iii) At least 50 per cent of the Scheduled Castes families should be covered by some economic development programmes by the end of the medium term plan 1978—83, by the active initiative of the Corporation to locate suitable beneficiaries, with a reasonable proportion of women, who can be linked with appropriate schemes through concerned sectoral organisations and financial institutions, as done by the SFDAs.
- (iv) The Central Government should help the Corporations suitably through participation in their financial structure along with the State Government. The participation of Central Government and State Government should both have a share capital component and a grant-in-aid component to respectively cover commercially viable operations and essential promotional activities like surveys, subsidies for electricity and managerial assistance which may not be viable in commercial terms.

Reorientation of Backward Classes Sector Programmes

3.53 With the major thrust of development of the Scheduled Castes being provided by the concerned authority the programmes in the welfare of backward classes sector will need to be reviewed. This sector is an omnibus containing small schemes relating to education, health, economic development, housing, nutrition etc. The bulk of the outlays, however, goes to education leaving little for economic programmes. The responsibility of the Scheduled Castes Development Department has to be to assist the members of these communities where they find it difficult to avail of the benefits from the general developmental processes in the area. The small programmes taken up covering up a wide spectrum are so insignificant compared to the total problems that they do not have any impact whatsoever on their overall

economic conditions. On the other hand, these programmes give an impression of something substantial being done merely by laying verbal enumeration and statistical presentation of growths which in absolute terms does not mean anything. Therefore, no exclusive programme should be supported by the welfare of backward classes sector. The outlays in this sector should be used to make the benefit of other sectoral programmes available to the members of the Scheduled Castes. We have already discussed this approach while considering the role of the corporation. The substantive programmes under the backward classes sector should be taken over at the end of the current year by the concerned sectoral authorities and the outlays under the backward classes sector should be exclusively used as gap-fillers in other sectoral programmes. This will give a substantial multiplier effect to the outlays provided for the Scheduled Castes in the next medium term plan.

3.54 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) All substantive programmes under the backward classes sectors should be taken over by the concerned sectoral authorities in their new plans.
- (ii) In order that the above goal clearly laid down by the Planning Commission is achieved, the Planning Commission can effectively help by laying down that every Sectoral Plan including Area Plans should have an optimal Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes and should earmark a substantial share of their Plan provisions therefor ; wherever the pattern of expenditure is not amenable to such allocation they should contain a specific optimal share for the Scheduled Castes in the resultant employment, training and other benefits of such Plan schemes ; the Special Component Plan should also have an adequate in-built mechanism of concurrent monitoring and evaluation ; and make the above measures a pre-condition for the Planning Commission's consideration and acceptance of the sectoral plan of all Central Ministries. A similar approach should also be adopted as a condition for the release of share-capital to Co-operative/Financial Institutions and other public sector organisations. Such funds should be non-divertible and their satisfactory utilisation should be

made a condition for further allocation of resources. In the case of the State Plans, the Planning Commission can help by providing for attractive incentives in the allocation of Plan resources for States which accept and implement this approach of an optimal Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes. The Planning Commission may also insist on a concurrent monitoring and evaluation system being part of the Special Component Plan of every Sectoral Plan as a pre-condition.

- (iii) The outlays under the backward classes sectors should be used for adapting all going programmes suitably which may include relaxation of the norms liberalising subsidy, providing nucleus money, etc.
- (iv) It should be ensured that outlays under the backward classes sector have a substantial multiplier effect, their use is made extremely flexible and any scheme of direct relevant to the Scheduled Castes and immediate concern should qualify for accommodation therein.

Blocks with predominant Scheduled Castes population

3.55 There are some blocks in U.P. and West Bengal where the population of Scheduled Castes is more than 50 per cent. In U.P. this area lies on the border of M.P. and Bihar and the communities are largely Kol and Gond who are enumerated as Scheduled Tribes in M.P. In West Bengal this area lies in Cooch-Bihar and 24-Parganas.

3.56 The level of investment in these blocks have got stepped up substantially with the intensification of Rural Development Schemes. The capacity of absorption of the weakest sections of the community is extremely circumscribed by the weakness of their organisation, scanty economic base and low educational levels. The continued deprivation even afflicts them physically so that the benefits of new development bypass them notwithstanding earmarking, reservations, etc. In these blocks where the predominant population belongs to Scheduled Castes, it is necessary that the focus of developmental activities should be development of the members of Scheduled Castes. This will be possible only if a comprehensive view of the total socio-economic process in

the region is taken. In the areas with predominant tribal population a similar approach has already been adopted throughout the country where the Government of India is giving only supplemental assistance to the States General Plan effort for development. A similar approach can with advantage be adopted for the pre-dominantly Scheduled Castes blocks also. The Ministry of Agriculture is giving substantial assistance for these programmes. The assistance should be intensified, if necessary, and may be made more flexible. A committee may be set up comprising representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Home and Planning Commission who may co-opt representatives of other Ministries. This Committee may consider the Integrated Development Projects prepared for these blocks and provide guidelines for their development.

3.57 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Special comprehensive Integrated Development Programmes may be prepared for those blocks where the Scheduled Castes population is more than 50 per cent.
- (ii) The Ministry of Agriculture may step up assistance to these blocks if considered necessary and this assistance may be allowed to be used more flexible.
- (iii) A committee may be set up comprising representatives of Ministry of Agriculture, Home and Planning Commission which may consider these projects and provide guidelines for their development. The Committee may co-opt members from other Ministries also.

Credit

3.58 One of the major problems in the implementation of development programmes for Scheduled Castes is that very little institutional finance flows to members of Scheduled Castes and others, similarly placed economically. This has been taken note of by the Planning Commission in the Draft Five Year Plan 1978—83 as follows :

“However, the major beneficiaries especially of the banking system, have been the wealthier part of the population, both in urban and rural areas, and the vast majority have barely been touched.”

Since the prompt and adequate availability of credit on terms viable to Scheduled Castes beneficiaries is a very important input, it is necessary to consider the measures that should be taken to make this input available.

3.59 The recommendation made in an earlier section of this Report for the establishment of Development Finance Corporations for Scheduled Castes will facilitate the flow of credit to a certain extent. But apart from this, there may be many occasions, areas and sectors where Banks and other financial institutions may disburse credit directly without the medium of the Corporation. In such cases the Banks should give up asking for third party surety or security for immovable property other than the assets created with the financial assistance given. Their procedure should also be simplified. The basis for providing credit should be the viability of a scheme. It is also necessary to segregate and disclose in the Annual Reports of the banks/financial institutions/cooperatives the amount of assistance that has gone to members of Scheduled Castes in each category of activity for which credit is given, so that those institutions as well as the Government may be aware of the credit situation and may be able to take further appropriate steps to increase the credit outgo on sound schemes wherever it is inadequate.

3.60 In respect of cooperatives it is necessary to earmark a certain percentage of credit for the weaker sections including Scheduled Castes and their needs should be met fully and on priority basis.

3.61 In case of all these institutions flow of credit will be facilitated if in their respective decision-taking bodies like Board of Directors, Executive Committees etc. a reasonable proportion of membership is reserved for the members of the Scheduled Castes for the appropriate occupational groups who are the target for assistance. In the case of Cooperatives the majority of the members of the managing committee should be from small farmers and below economically, and a reasonable portion of this should be reserved for Scheduled Castes. Further, a certain proportion

of the posts of Presidents should be reserved for Scheduled Castes by rotation.

3.62 The differential rate of interest scheme is relevant to weaker sections like the Scheduled Castes but it is not available to the extent required. Arrangements should be made whereby credit will become available for economically weak members of the Scheduled Castes at differential rates of interest.

3.63 It is also necessary to introduce the concept of the consumption element in all loans and the credit institutions should look after the needs of the borrowers of weaker sections until the scheme bears fruit and yields returns. Unless this is done it may compel the borrower to go to private money-lenders for this purpose and often it may in effect result in his having to part with a portion of the benefits of the scheme.

3.64 At the level of IRD Block and districts, the credit needs of agricultural labourers should be worked out and met in a comprehensive manner so as to enable them to acquire other means of livelihood like animal husbandry, which will enable them to improve their income, and an adequate credit programme devised on its basis.

3.65 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) Where the Financial Institutions disburse credit directly to Scheduled Castes, third party surety for immovable property other than the assets created with the Finance assistance should not be asked for.
- (ii) All banks, Financial Institutions and Cooperatives must segregate and disclose in their annual reports the quantum of credit that has gone to Scheduled Castes in each category of loan in the year.
- (iii) A certain percentage of Co-operative credit should be earmarked for the weaker sections including Scheduled Castes and their needs should be met fully and on priority basis.
- (iv) Weaker sections including Scheduled Castes should be effectively represented on the Board of Directors, Executive Committees etc. of Banks, Cooperatives and other Financial Institutions.

- (v) In the case of Cooperatives the majority of members of the managing committee should be from small farmers and those who are below economically and a reasonable proportion of this should be reserved for Scheduled Castes. A certain proportion of the posts of Presidents should be reserved for Scheduled Castes by rotation.
- (vi) The credit needs of agricultural labourers should be studied comprehensively and credit programmes mounted to enable them to organise additional means of livelihood and improve their income.
- (vii) Consumption credit should be given to borrowers of weaker sections as an essential component of the credit given to them for economic development.
- (viii) The Ministry of Cooperation, the State Governments and Reserve Bank of India should draw up programmes for the coverage of all weaker sections specially Scheduled Castes bearing these factors in mind.
- (ix) Arrangements should be made whereby credit will become available for economically weak members of the Scheduled Castes at D.R.I.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES

4.1 The developmental effort for Scheduled Castes so far has largely been confined to educational programmes. It has yielded some results in certain areas although the general pace of educational advancement has not been adequate. When we examine the educational development region-wise and caste-wise, the situation is extremely unsatisfactory. In some States the general level of literacy amongst the Scheduled Castes continues to be as low as 5 per cent, some of the communities have hardly any educated person amongst them. The condition of education amongst the women is extremely unsatisfactory, in most cases it has hardly begun. There is heavy drop-out amongst the Scheduled Caste students just in the primary school in the first two classes and specially at the end of class one. The situation continues to be depressing through middle school to high school. The position stabilises once a student has passed the matriculation stage when he gets the benefit of post-matric scholarship.

4.2 The vicious circle of backwardness is quite evident even in the matter of education amongst the Scheduled Castes. In the absence of a substantial assistance programme at the primary, middle and high school level, the children belonging to the weakest sections amongst the Scheduled Castes drop out in the earliest stages. It is those who can afford to see their children through the higher stages that are able to take advantage of higher education and it is to them that all the new economic opportunities in the growing national economy, which we have discussed earlier, would be available. Without the benefit of even elementary education the weakest sections are not in a position to even protect their legitimate rights and property. Education undoubtedly is an important investment for economic development as is now universally accepted. In the case of the weaker sections of the

community it is something much more. It provides him a key to the modern socio-economic structure to understand it so that they can defend themselves in an unequal situation. Therefore, investment on education has to be considered as an input for providing protection to the weakest sections as also giving them an opportunity for partaking in the benefit of development in the country. The educational development amongst the Scheduled Castes is lagging behind in the economically backward States who are not able to provide for the necessary cost which a poor man can ill afford to bear if he has to send his child to primary or middle school. A child in a poor man's family particularly the Scheduled Castes has to partake in the economic activity just to eke out a living. The family can hardly bear the cost of his education and, therefore, if these families have to be brought up the States must at least neutralise the educational cost of the child. Since it may be difficult for the economically backward States where bulk of the backlog in the elementary education exists it will be necessary for the Government of India to share this cost wherever necessary.

4.3 In the event of constraint of resources it is necessary that even within the backward States attention is concentrated on those communities and areas which are lowest in the ladder of educational development. The benefit of scholarship and stipend and other facilities should start with the most backward communities and the most backward areas for which objective criteria could be adopted like that of level of literacy attained by the community or the area.

4.4 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Education in the case of Scheduled Castes should be accepted as an essential input for social and economic development as also for providing them effective protection against exploitation;
- (ii) The cost of education of a child in the elementary school should be borne by the State by providing mid-day meal, uniform, text books and if possible suitable scholarships and stipend;

- (iii) The assistance programmes should begin with the communities and areas at the lowest level in literacy in case there is a constraint of resources; and
- (iv) The Central Government in the Ministry of Education should give assistance to the States for providing these facilities to the Scheduled Castes children particularly in those States where their level of literacy is extremely low.

4.5 Besides the economic reasons there are important social and psychological reasons also for the present state of education amongst the Scheduled Castes. There is reluctance on the part of the teacher to approach these families and treat their children at par with others. The child himself may avoid the school which may be located in the main village. Although the distance between village and the Harijan family may be small yet the psychological distance may be large which inhibit the children effectively from attending them. Here we face a dilemma. Establishment of an educational institution in the hamlet would inhibit the process of social integration yet in the absence of such an institution the children are denied the basic elementary education itself. Practical methods should be found to overcome these problems. The local community itself or the village panchayat should be entrusted with the responsibility to see that the enrolment of the Scheduled Castes children is to the desired level. Similarly, the teacher should also be entrusted this responsibility. This should be a matter of special review by the visiting officials of education and general administration departments. This could also now be an important point for consideration in the block and district committees where officials and non-officials meet.

4.6 Many of the Harijan hamlets are quite sizeable even though they may not be big enough to have a full-fledged primary school. The habit formation for school going has to be inculcated at an early age. It would be worthwhile if even in a small hamlet a sub-school catering to the children of age-group 6—9 could be started as a part of the primary school in the main village. This will, in the first instance, bring out the teachers from their narrow limits and force them to look out to the Harijan hamlets

also. Secondly, the teacher or the part-time employee who may be attending to the sub-school can also be expected to take initiative to see that children in class IV get admitted in the primary school. This will help the bulge of the drop out in class I and II being smoothened and a larger number of children going to the higher class. It will also help the girls to attend at least the sub-schools in larger numbers.

4.7 At the same time in the interest of social integration, which is the ultimate goal of our society, it is also necessary to bring together Scheduled Caste and non-Scheduled Caste students in the same educational institutions. Keeping in view the psychological factors mentioned above, this purpose can best be achieved by locating in the Scheduled Caste localities all new educational institutions which will be started in future. These institutions will of course be common institutions for all communities.

4.8 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The village panchayat and the teacher at the village level, the block level committee and the district level committee at those levels should be given special responsibility for the desired level of enrolment of Scheduled Castes children in the school. This should be specially reviewed by the visiting officials and the committees periodically ;
- (ii) There should be an incentive to the institution or teachers in charge of those schools in case they are able to contain wastage and stagnation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes within a permissible limit ;
- (iii) In the Harijan hamlets with population of 50 or more there should be a sub-school catering to the children in the age-group 6—9 which should be a branch of the primary school in the main village.
- (iv) All new educational institutions that may be started in future, other than those referred to in (iii) above, may be institutions common to all communities including Scheduled Castes, but should be located in the Scheduled Caste localities.

4.9 There is a growing differential between the level of education in the rural and the urban areas because of inadequate educational facilities. The opportunity for joining the general course is also extremely limited. Besides the effort for improving general enrolment there is now a sufficient base where it would be useful to select talented children who can be admitted to better schools so that they can subsequently join higher education and profession providing the first link between the weakest communities in the remote areas to the modern economy. A number of general schemes have been taken up in this regard from time to time, notable being the selection of two children from each block for admission to a selected high school in the district. The scheme for Scheduled Castes on similar lines should be taken up to start with which may be expanded gradually as experience is gained in this regard.

4.10 We, therefore, recommend that :—

The talented Scheduled Castes children may be selected at the end of Class V on the basis of a competitive examination who may be admitted as resident scholars in selected high schools in the district, the cost of which may be borne by the State. The Ministry of Education may modify their existing scheme so as to include two Scheduled Caste children from each block.

4.11 With the increasing number of educated matriculates and post-matriculates amongst the Scheduled Castes unemployment is increasing notwithstanding the fact that there are a large number of posts which go unfilled. This is a result of the general educational scene in the country but in the case of Scheduled Castes it further points out to the lack in planning of educational career of these children since their education is supported largely by the States at the post-matric level. It will be necessary that the likely opportunities in the national economy in different fields are broadly assessed and suitable facilities in those fields are provided to Scheduled Caste students through proper vocational guidance. Since these institutions are not likely to be nearer

their homes it will be necessary that the scholarships are adequate to cover the cost of resident students as has been done in selective way now for the higher professional institutions. The impact of similar facilities at the middle technical level is likely to be much more pervasive and can be taken advantage of by the average run of Scheduled Castes students.

4.12 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) A continuous assessment should be made of those opportunities where adequate number of Scheduled Castes entrants is not available and suitable occupational guidance should be given to the students coming from schools to enter relevant courses ;
- (ii) The rate of scholarships for all technical and professional courses at all levels including industrial training institutes should be revised so as to cover the entire cost of the resident scholars.

4.13 There is now reservation for Scheduled Castes in all the professional and technical courses. The number of students qualifying for entry into these courses is, however, quite small even with relaxed standards. Those who join these courses with relaxed standards find themselves at considerable disadvantage and are required to spend much longer period than normal for this course. The cumulative deficiency of students particularly those coming from rural background is difficult to remove in a normal course of study particularly in the higher technical level where the take off is fast and even one false step may become a permanent disadvantage. It will, therefore, be necessary that some other innovation is tried in the professional courses so that adequate number of Scheduled Castes students get advantage of the reservation. The concerned faculties may consider adding a year of preparatory course for those students who may not attain the desired level in the entrance competition yet who may have attained a minimum prescribed standard for entry into the preparatory class. This will add one year more in case of the weaker students but will be to their advantage in the long run because they can then move with other students in the professional courses and complete it according to the schedule. The preparatory course should be

treated as a part of the technical course and the students should be entitled to full scholarship at the rate for the first year.

4.14 We, therefore, recommend that :—

For all professional and technical courses spread over four to five years, a preparatory year may be added for Scheduled Castes students attaining a minimum standard but not the desired standard for entry into the regular course. This year should be treated as a part of the technical education for the purpose of scholarships and stipend.

4.15. The post-matric scholarship has assumed a considerable size from a small beginning in the early years. In a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, the expenditure at the end of a Five Year Plan gets committed to the non-plan side of State Budget. The Finance Commission takes into account this expenditure while considering devolution to the States. The cumulative result of this scheme has been that a sizeable portion of the expenditure is now met from the States' non-plan budget. At the end of the current year it is expected that the committed expenditure will be of the order of Rs. 35 crores per annum making a total of Rs. 105 crores over a five year period while the plan outlay may also be of a smaller order. We have already referred to the uneven development of education in different States and amongst different communities within the same State. The absence of adequate scholarship programme at the middle and higher secondary level makes it difficult for the weakest group to come upto the college stage when they can claim a post-matric scholarship to enable them pursuing further studies. The benefit of post-matric scholarship, therefore, to different States and different communities is directly proportional to the level of their development; the more developed a State the greater is the benefit which it can take about. At a stage now when the States themselves will be sharing about an equal burden of the post-matric scholarship scheme, it would be desirable if the structure of scholarships at the pre-matric and

post-matric level is comprehensively re-reviewed. The Central Government, as already suggested, could make available suitable assistance for the pre-matric scholarships also in the case of more backward States or the grant under the post-matric scholarship could be converted into a lumpsum amount which could be utilised by the States suitably for pre-matric and post-matric levels.

4.16. The rates of the post-matric scholarship also need a review. It is the weakest sections who cannot pursue higher studies in case the scholarship is inadequate because their parents cannot supplement this amount. This is particularly true in the case of science and technical and professional courses. Some differential has been built into the scholarship scheme but it is not as yet adequate. These courses have to be pursued by students away from their homes. Unless the full expenses of resident scholar are met in these courses, they cannot be expected to pursue their studies satisfactorily.

4.17. The administration of post-matric scholarship, which is one of the biggest Centrally sponsored scheme also leaves much to be desired. A system of disbursement through the banks on the production of entitlement card endorsed by the principal as token of the student having taken admission as also being regular has been introduced in some States. This can with advantage be followed by others. Nevertheless, there are a number of other aspects of this scheme which also now need to be further tightening up. There are cases of impersonation and ineligible candidates getting these scholarships. It will, therefore, be necessary that the administration of the scholarship scheme is now streamlined and is provided for out of the non-plan or the plan expenditure as may be decided, but as an integral part of the scheme.

4.18. We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) The anomaly, because of big difference in the policy relating to pre-matric scholarship and post-matric scholarships should be examined quickly

particularly taking note of the fact that in the coming years bulk of the expenditure on the post-matric scholarships will be borne by the States' non-plan outlays ;

- (ii) The rates of scientific, technical and professional courses at the middle and lower level including I.T.Is may be revised so as to provide fully for resident scholars ;
- (iii) The disbursement of post-matric scholarships should be done through the banks on the production of entitlement card endorsed by the Principal of the College ;
- (iv) The administration of the post-matric scholarship scheme may be streamlined and strengthened. The system of random check of scholars may be introduced. The administration should be a part of the post-matric scholarship scheme.

ADULT EDUCATION :

4.19. For the first time adult education has been accepted as a national programme. A large section of the members of the scheduled castes are illiterate and it will take considerably long period before the present children entering the primary school for the first time will come to assume leadership roles in these communities. The crucial age-group in their case, therefore, is that in 15-35 brackets who have to be addressed immediately about the social and economic problems relating to their community. The adult education, therefore, can become a powerful instrument of educating, in a broad sense of the term, for these groups. In the adult education programme, therefore, the members of the Scheduled Castes should be given the highest priority. The adult education programme in any village should start with the Harijan hamlets localities as a matter of rule. It is only then that consciousness about taking education to these groups can be engendered in the entire movement. This will also help the general enrolment of children in the elementary classes. The sub-schools, which we have suggested elsewhere for being established, could become the focal point both for normal education for the children upto class III and adult education in the hamlets localities.

4.20. At this stage we would like to stress the role of adult education in combating the social evil of untouchability. Elsewhere we suggested an action plan for eradication of untouchability within the next four years. Adult education should become an important medium for carrying this message to the community at large.

4.21. We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Members of the Scheduled Castes should be given the highest priority in the adult education programme. They should be included to the maximum extent in the earlier phase of the movement ;
- (ii) In every village the adult education programme should begin with the Harijan hamlets localities in suitable cases the sub-schools, which we have pressed elsewhere, should also become the centre of adult education ; and
- (iii) Adult education should be recognised as an important instrument for eradication of untouchability and the message relating thereto should be carried to all sections of the society through this medium.

Health Services :

4.22. Since the Scheduled Castes population is interspersed with the general population, the health services have to be co-extensive. The basic problem in their case is that the health administration tends to neglect their problems since they are located in the separate hamlets or on the outskirts of villages. Moreover they may not have access to these facilities because of social disability or economic problems. The Harijan habitation may also be located at unsuitable places because they have to be satisfied with whatever marginal *abadi* land are available, they may be unhealthy in some cases. The poverty and malnutrition may also be taking a heavy toll of life particularly amongst the children. There may be a higher incidence of several infectious and contagious diseases. The fact is that not much is known about the health condition of the members of the Scheduled Castes as a group. These are just some conjectures.

4.23. In this context the first task will be to make the health services aware about the problems faced by these communities and the need for extending these facilities to them removing any social or economic hurdles. This re-orientation will have to be brought about at all levels starting from the district, block to the village level. The duties of the community health workers should be so defined that the visits to the Harijan hamlets get reflected in his assessment as also in the reporting system. Similarly the reporting system should also bring out the extent of medical attention given by him to individuals belonging to the Scheduled Castes. The doctors in charge of primary health centres should not remain passive and satisfied with attending to patients coming to them. It should be one of their tasks to visit Harijan hamlets whenever they visit any village and specially look into their health conditions. They could also launch special health survey of hamlets known for higher incidence of general or specific diseases through their para medical staff. The special attention to the health problems of Harijan and their hamlets should specially figure in the review of health services at the block and the district level. The reporting system at the State and the national level should also reflect this aspect regularly.

4.24. We therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The medical department should take special measures to acquaint themselves with the health conditions prevalent in the hamlets inhabited by Scheduled Castes ;
- (ii) The duties of the community workers should be so organised that visit to Harijan hamlets are ensured and they get reflected in the reporting system. The extent of assistance given to individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes should also get reflected in their report ; and
- (iii) The doctors at the P.H.C. and district level should specially visit Harijan hamlets while touring in the rural areas and personally assess the health conditions therein. Special surveys may also be undertaken in the known pockets of high incidence of general or special diseases.

Traditional Dais :

4.25. Midwife in the rural society is a caste-based profession followed by Dhanuks, Baseres and others. The ladies belonging to these communities attend to the pregnant women, help them during delivery and provide assistance in the after care of the child and the mother. They also perform a number of connected menial services. Child and mother care have been the most important features of extension of primary health services in the rural areas. The Central figure in the sub-centres is the midwife. Providing all the necessary facilities for delivery is now accepted as one of the legitimate functions of the health services system. There is already a substantial coverage in the urban areas but the rural areas stand out in contrast since even the basic health service is not available. Therefore, the care of the mother and delivery largely continues in the traditional form and the responsibility of the traditional castes.

4.26. Attention has been drawn from time to time to the conditions of dais and the traditional care system of child and the mother. Programmes have already been taken up to train the dais to provide them better kits and pay them remuneration for deliveries attended by them after training. But all these attempts so far have been isolated and have not made any impact either on the profession or on the condition of the traditional dais. Since the care of the mother pre-natal and post-natal, have been accepted as a legitimate responsibility of the health delivery system, the inadequate attention to the traditional dais, their condition of working, etc., is rather anomalous. They are performing an important service for which they are being remunerated by the individual according to the custom established over a long period. In fact, they are not a free agent of service in many cases.

The remuneration which they get is much too inadequate in the changing economic situation where all other services are getting monetised while these traditional services continue to be linked with custom. The payment in kind is more in nature of a gratuitous payment rather than remuneration for a service rendered. With the modernisation of these services, the nation

is bearing the cost of child delivery which is quite heavy, may be a few hundred rupees in the urban areas. There is no reason why the society should not pay for the essential services rendered by the traditional system to the average citizen, whose paying capacity is extremely limited and, therefore, who has to fall back upon tradition which means paltry remuneration to the actual worker. Thus, the person performing the same service in the organised sector gets remunerated many times over compared to members of these communities rendering the same service at the other end of the social spectrum. It is, therefore, necessary that the service of the dai is 'municipalised' under the aegis of the Panchayat system. It is not necessary that they should be on the pay rolls of *panchayats* but they can be given a suitable fee for each delivery. This expenditure of the panchayat should be reimbursed by the State on a hundred per cent basis.

4.27. This will be only one side of the picture. It is also necessary that the professional competence of the traditional dai is raised. If this remuneration is paid it can be made incumbent on every practising dai in the villages to undergo short training and refresher programmes in the sub-centres and primary health centres. They should also be given better instruments and other first aid medicine for safe hygienic delivery and also for pre-natal and post-natal mother care. This single step will link the modern medical care system to the vast indigenous network of traditional child and mother care system in the country and help in modernising the outlook of the community as a whole because through the dai every mother will come in contact with the modern system.

4.28. We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The existing isolation between the modern mother and child care system and the traditional system: service by dais should be removed so that the benefit of the former can reach the lowest strata of society through the traditional net work.
- (ii) The services of dais should be 'municipalised' under the aegis of the panchayats, each dai being paid a

minimum fee of Rs. 25 for each delivery performed by her. The expenditure on this service of the panchayat should be fully reimbursed by the State being suitably shared between the Government of India in the Ministry of Health and the State Governments. The total expenditure on these schemes would come to roughly Rs. 25 crores per annum.

- (iii) All dais within the jurisdiction of a primary sub-centre should undergo intensive/refresher training periodically. They should also be provided scientific instruments and first aid medicines for pre-natal and post-natal services.

Drinking Water Wells :

Provision of a source of water to all is an accepted programme under the Minimum Needs Scheme. It is, however, observed that the Harijan basties are the last to get this service. In many cases they have to be satisfied with the drinking source being provided in the main village since the village as a whole is taken as a unit for this purpose. The precise position about the drinking water problem in relation to Harijan hamlets has not been specifically assessed because of this reason. Now that provision of drinking water wells has been given the highest priority under the medium term plan, it is necessary that the problem of Harijan basties is separately assessed and their needs are met on a priority basis. The number of wells allocated to the Harijan basties should be at least in proportion to their number in problem villages for which the programme is prepared. Along with this, as a measure of social integration, wherever there is scope and need only for a single well, it may be taken up for all including the Scheduled Castes, but the location of the common well should be in the Scheduled Caste locality.

4.30. We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The availability of drinking water source in the Harijan basties should be separately assessed treating the hamlet as a unit in all the villages.

- (ii) The harijan basties which have no source of drinking water should be provided drinking water wells on a priority basis, the numbers allocated for them each year should be in the same proportion as the number of harijan hamlets without drinking water sources in the total number of villages in the State.
- (iii) Common wells for all including Scheduled Castes may be dug wherever the scope and the need exist for a single common well, but such common wells should be located in the Scheduled Caste localities.

Housing :

4.31. The distribution of house-sites to landless labourers particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes was an important programme during the Fifth Five Year Plan. The provision of house-sites did give them a foot hold but that by itself was not adequate. In some cases the house-sites were not suitable as house-sites and, therefore, the allotment was national. In many States besides allotment of house-sites substantial programmes of building up the houses has also been taken. Here again the pattern varies considerably from one State to another. In some cases the scheme is to give houses fully free of cost while in others there is a substantial loan element. The method of execution of the programme also varies considerably. In those States, where a large programme is taken up, it is operated generally through contractors which in many cases proves to be costly and the actual benefit to the individual is limited. In some cases the quality of houses constructed leaves much to be desired. They are hardly habitable. The type designs are preferred in the mass programmes which may not answer the need of individual families. Helping the landless labourers, particularly belonging to Scheduled Castes to acquire a house, has now been accepted as national policy. It is, therefore, necessary that all these aspects are reviewed thoroughly and a long term programme of housing is evolved on sound lines.

4.32. Since it may take some time to provide satisfactory housing for all landless labourers including Scheduled Castes, simultaneously another short-term programme should be taken

up, comparable to the sites and services programmes in urban areas. Many members of the Scheduled Castes are in occupation of unobjectionable Government and other public land in villages. They should be immediately given ownership rights of those sites. To accommodate houseless poor persons who are not in occupation of any unobjectionable public site, all vacant land in the main village site area should be allocated to such persons including Scheduled Castes. In addition, suitable public land adjoining the village site should be earmarked or private land acquired under the Land Acquisition Act and developed plots allotted to each such houseless poor persons including the members of Scheduled Castes. In due course of time such areas should be covered by housing programmes. A quick programme in this direction can make all houseless poor persons including the Scheduled Castes, owners of at least house-sites in the course of a year or two. Another source of land for house sites would be agricultural ceiling surplus land close to the village site. While making land acquisitions, care should be taken that the policy of segregation and isolation of Scheduled Castes is avoided. As far as possible land available within the village should be allotted/acquired. Where no such land is available within the village, land adjacent to the present inhabited area of the village should be acquired. An operation "House-sites for All Houseless Poor" with the procedure of teams of officers visiting village after village and clearing the problem of house sites for houseless poor Scheduled Castes and other houseless poor persons, cutting through the delays of customary procedures, can make this possible. In the new house-site areas, as in the case of existing residential areas of Scheduled Castes, it is necessary to provide all the living and social amenities like safe drinking water, electricity, drainage and convenient access to the main road, to burial/cremation grounds and to educational and medical institutions. Wherever electricity has reached the main village, it should be extended to the Scheduled Castes localities also and in future electrification of a village should first start with the electrification of the Scheduled Caste localities of the village. Works of the above types should be allotted to labour Co-operative Societies of the beneficiaries.

4.33. In any programme concerning such a large population in the lowest rungs, it is necessary that certain broad principles are settled. A programme with high per unit cost cannot go far enough and will be limited only to a section of this population in the foreseeable future. Secondly the type designs, which are in the image of our urban housing, will not do in the rural areas. Their specification may be higher than that of an average house in the village but the accommodation will be much smaller. They may be depending on material purchased from outside while not using the locally available material. The programme may be so phased that it may be necessary to import the labour from outside both skilled and unskilled, the members of the community themselves being passive participants. This entire approach will have to be changed. The objective of the housing schemes should be to bring up the level of the housing of an average member of the Scheduled Castes to that of the average villager in the area. The style and design has also to be local. It should meet his requirements satisfactorily. The material has also to be locally procured as far as possible and the construction programmes has to be so phased that the members of the community themselves are able to provide labour for the entire programme. This will mean that besides getting a house, their income during that period will also be increased which will make them economically viable. Briefly the State Government should provide them support to construct their own house according to the local specifications using local material and capitalising their labour in the process.

4.34. Such a programme cannot be organised in small dribbles spread over in area. Bulk of the housing programme should be taken up in clusters so that the community can pool its labour resources and take up the work according to a clearly drawn up time schedule. It will also help them in organising the various services for construction of the house efficiently and economically. Such a cluster housing will also bring all the landless labourers together including the members of the Scheduled Castes and thus help them in social cohesion. It may also pave the way for organisation of the rural poor.

4.35. We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) A strategy for a massive programme of house building for rural poor including members of the Scheduled Castes should be evolved to improve the housing condition according to a phase programme.
- (ii) This programme should be based on local designs, local material and local skills. The contractor should not be allowed to come into the picture.
- (iii) The State would give assistance for enabling the landless persons to construct their own house with their own labour thus capitalising it in the process.
- (iv) This programme should be taken up on a cluster basis, so as to bring about social cohesion and optimal services.
- (v) No Housing Cooperatives will be registered unless they have 15 per cent of the members from the Scheduled Castes communities, except if, and to the extent exempted with the approval of the Social Welfare Department for want of members of Scheduled Castes interested in joining. The societies including those already registered, which do not follow these instructions and also do not provide for the needs of the Scheduled Castes members should not be given financial or other assistance by the Government or any financial or promotional institutions.
- (vi) While the massive housing programme is in progress according to its time schedule, simultaneously as a short term measure, an operation "house sites for all houseless poor" should be undertaken to provide house sites for all houseless poor persons and implemented through teams of officers, with emphasis on Scheduled Castes, moving from village to village and solving the problems in totality within two years.
- (vii) Wherever members of the Scheduled Castes and other houseless poor are in occupation of Government land and other public land, ownership rights be conferred on them immediately.
- (viii) All vacant land in the main village site area should be allocated to such persons including Scheduled Castes.

- (ix) In addition, suitable public land adjoining the village site should be earmarked, or private land acquired, and developed plots allotted to houseless poor persons who are not in occupation of any unobjectionable land already.
- (x) While making land allotments, land acquisition etc., care should be taken to see that the policy of segregation and isolation should be avoided and wherever lands are available, Scheduled Castes are brought into the main village and where no such land is available in the village, land adjacent to the main village of the area should be allotted/acquired.
- (xi) In all the above new housing areas and existing residential areas of Scheduled Castes, all the living and social amenities like safe drinking water, electricity, drainage and convenient access to the main road, to burial/cremation grounds and to educational and medical institutions should be provided.
- (xii) All house site areas allotted for houses to poor persons including Scheduled Castes should be covered with housing programmes as far as possible.
- (xiii) Wherever electricity has reached the main village it should be extended to the Scheduled Castes locality.
- (xiv) In future electrification of a village should first start with the electrification of the Scheduled Caste localities of the village.
- (xv) All works of above types may be allotted to Labour Cooperative Societies of the beneficiaries.

Urban Housing :

4.36 The housing problems of Scheduled Castes in urban areas also needs systematic attention. A large number of the members of Scheduled Castes in urban areas live in slums. The largest single social group amongst the slum dwellers are Scheduled Castes. A number of steps have to be taken to make living conditions in these slums human. Protected drinking water, drainage schemes, electricity facilities and proper communications should be provided in the slums and other localities wherever there is a concentration of Scheduled Castes population. Wherever possible and preferred by residents, instead of total shifting or slums, improvements may be made there and ownership rights

may be given to deserving and genuine residents, who do not have any residential property. Residents of slums which are beyond repair and surplus residents of slums who cannot be accommodated at the same place may be provided accommodation elsewhere with all essential social and municipal facilities. For this purpose 50 per cent of surplus land under urban ceiling legislation should be earmarked for house-sites for Scheduled Castes. Both in the case of improvement of slums as well as re-located slums, social facilities like education institutions, Community Halls with radio, library and reconstruction arrangements should be provided. In both these types of Slums and also in other parts of urban areas ownership rights should be given to houseless poor Scheduled Caste members, where their huts/houses are located on unobjectionable public land—since such ownership will enable them to get credit for development purposes. Private lands should be acquired, where such huts/houses are located in private lands, and ownership rights given to them. All work relating to slum improvement and slum re-location and various types of construction in slums as well as other Scheduled Castes localities in urban areas should be allotted to Labour Cooperative Societies of the beneficiaries. The priority task of urban local bodies, Central and State Land urban developing and housing finance bodies and Urban Development Authorities should be this category of work. It should also be the priority task of State Housing Boards to the extent of their activity in urban areas. This should be reflected in their physical programmes and their allocation of resources. By this means, a programme should be drawn to make upgrade living conditions of slum dwellers to acceptable standard within the Sixth Plan period.

4.37. We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) In slums, which do not have to be re-located, the living conditions should be upgraded to acceptable levels by providing municipal and social amenities like protected drinking water, drainage, electricity, internal roads connected with the main road, fair supply shops of essential commodities, educational and medical facilities and community halls with radio, library and recreation arrangements.

- (ii) In order to accommodate surplus residents of the above type of slums and residents of slum which are beyond repair and have to be re-located, 50 per cent of surplus land under Urban Ceiling Legislation may be earmarked for Scheduled Castes.
- (iii) Social and municipal facilities as prescribed in (i) above may be provided in re-located slums and also in localities other than slums which have a concentration of Scheduled Castes.
- (iv) Ownership rights on the sites in slums and other localities with Scheduled Castes concentration should be vested in genuine and deserving residents, wherever their huts or houses are located on unobjectionable public land, wherever they are located on private land, ownership rights be given to them.
- (v) Work relating to slum improvement, slum re-location should be allotted to Labour Cooperatives of beneficiaries.
- (vi) The above task should be taken as the priority task of urban local bodies, Central and State level urban development and housing finance bodies, urban development authorities and State Housing Boards and these should be reflected in the physical programmes, as well as in the allocation of resources.

CHAPTER V

PROFESSIONALISATION OF UNCLEAN OCCUPATIONS

5.1 The members of the Scheduled Castes engaged in unclean occupations are the lowest in the caste hierarchy in our country. They also suffer from extreme disabilities, social and economic, because of the nature of the occupation in which they are engaged. Here we find a contradictory situation emerging. In the urban areas enlightenment and education has nearly eliminated the overt forms of social discrimination yet in the cities numbers of those engaged in the unclean occupations like scavenging of dry latrines has substantially increased.

5.2 No occupation can be really called as unclean so long as it is essential for the existence of a society. The stigma of uncleanliness arises from the fact of the occupation getting inseparably linked to specific communities. The communities carry this mark even when they leave that profession. Uncleanliness is also linked to the method of performing the task. Scavenging of dry latrines with hand, carrying of night soil on heads is decidedly an unclean occupation because of the method of its working whatever may be the social extraction of the person performing it. If the method of handling the night soil changes it can get delinked from the mark of uncleanliness. Similar is the case with the method of flaying and tanning. The modern slaughter houses do not carry any mark of uncleanliness, in fact they are certified for cleanliness by the competent authorities.

5.3 The basic tasks in relation to the unclean occupations, therefore, are two-fold, viz.,

- (i) The delinking of the occupation from the caste and
- (ii) Improving the method of working in these occupations. So far some efforts have been made in relation to the second aspect only with limited success.

We would like to shift this emphasis to the first part so that the occupation gets professionalised. The problems of the working condition of the occupation are not relatable to a caste but to that profession and can be dealt with in ordinary course similar to those in any other modern profession.

(A) *Scavenging*

5.4 Scavenging covers a broad spectrum of activities viz., cleaning of roads, carrying of refuse, cleaning of water borne systems and cleaning of dry latrines. All other aspects of scavenging except cleaning of dry latrines will be a permanent feature of civic services. It is only the cleaning of dry latrines which is the most disagreeable occupation in its present form which has to be tackled as a special case. We, therefore, delimit our problems to this group. Other sub-groups of scavenging will be treated as a part of general economic development of Scheduled Castes.

5.5 The first step to professionalise this occupation will be to delink the working life from the social life of the individuals following this profession. The analogy of a miner's life being completely segregated from his personal life will help in understanding the implications. A miner has to go into the mine to do his task fully equipped with overalls after obtaining a gate pass and is simply a mine worker and nothing else after he passes that gate. But before getting into his uniform, he is indistinguishable from those who follow other professions. Similarly it could be envisaged that the work of cleaning dry latrines could be organised in such a fashion that all those engaged in this occupation will have to get through a transit house where they are required to change into their working dress, take their implements, go out for work, complete it, return the implements, remove the working dress, have a shower bath and get into clean dress of an ordinary citizen. Carrying of the working dress or the implements to home could be an offence, removing thus the last possible traces of his occupation from his domestic environment. The method of cleaning the dry latrines could also be strictly regulated according to the conditions feasible in a municipal area.

5.6 The second step could be to recognise cleaning of dry latrines as a hazardous or unclean occupation requiring very special remuneration. The minimum remuneration for those engaged in this occupation should be equivalent to class III employees by attaching suitable "occupation allowance" to their basic emoluments. To make the point clear beyond doubt, we consider that they should not be treated equal to class IV which are unskilled coveted assignments even for educated youngmen from higher castes. Besides, adequately compensating the individual worker for an unagreeable occupation, it will also gradually change the character of the profession itself by induction of persons from different castes.

5.7 It is an irony that the living conditions of those, who clean the cities themselves, are not themselves clean which leads to their colonies getting a stigma and a mark. A concerted effort, therefore, has to be made that the existing colonies of the scavengers are provided all civic facilities to make them clean and livable. This will be in consonance with increase in income which we have suggested earlier. Simultaneously action has also to be taken that they get inter-mingled in the community at large. They should be helped by giving liberal loans with suitable subsidies to construct their own houses in better colonies as a crash programme so that those engaged in cleaning of dry latrines get a reasonable abode by the end of the medium term plan interspersed with other citizens.

5.8 The next effective measure to delink the caste from this profession could be to take care of their children and disperse them in other professions so that the base for recruitment from within the professional group itself gradually disappears and future scavengers are drawn from a wider social spectrum purely on considerations of supply, demand, emoluments, working conditions, etc. Two steps will be necessary for this purpose. Firstly, engaging children under the age of 16 in the unclean occupation should be prohibited by law as has already been done in some States. Secondly, all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 should be given elementary education as resident scholars; their full cost being subsidised by the State. There should be

Balwaris for all the children in the age group 3 to 6 in each locality which should be attached to the transit house.

5.9 Professionalisation of occupation cannot merely be a scheme; it has to be accepted by the community as a goal to be achieved. Therefore, it will be necessary to create consciousness amongst those engaged in these occupations that they get out from the vicious trap and can see a better future for the next generation. This will require work by dedicated social service organisations. The level of income amongst these sections even today is not very low compared to their expenditure on essentials which are the barest minimum since education, housing, clothing, have not acquired a high place in their "need schedule". Money, therefore, flows in certain social evils like gambling, drinking, which are started and sustained by the vested interests who have an evil eye on their earnings. A strong social movement has, therefore, to counter these evils effectively and urgently.

5.10 This scheme, however, hinges on one central decision, viz., municipalisation of services relating to cleaning of dry latrines. There may be some resistance from members of the community themselves because of their lack of understanding and immediate interest taking precedence over their long-term interests. But this decision has to be taken if the link between the caste and the occupation has to be broken for ever. Municipalisation of this service and making financial provision for all the elements of professionalisation suggested above are within the realm of feasibility. The city must bear the full cost of keeping itself clean. The present system is the worst form of implicit exploitation of a social situation where there are limits to personal aspirations and inadequate appreciation of the damage suffered by those who bear the cross. The scheme only envisages that the person who is engaged in the most disagreeable of the tasks in the city should be provided a reasonable abode, a reasonable salary to keep himself in good health and spirit, adequate arrangements for his children for education, good working conditions which make the occupation less disagreeable and all this at a scale which will take him barely to the fringe of lowest in the bulging middle class of our urban society depending largely on the expansion of secondary

and tertiary sector in the national economy. Moreover all these schemes are in operation for different sections of the community, even in the middle and higher income groups with a high element of built-in subsidy. Therefore, it is not a question of additional resources being found anywhere but the flow of the existing resources being diverted to those corners in the society which have been by-passed so far and taken for granted. Even in financial terms the cost of all these schemes is not likely to exceed Rs. 100 crores over five years, which will give the nation the privilege to claim that the uncleanest of the occupations has been professionalised and delinked from caste origine.

5.11 A substantial part of the outlays for implementing this scheme will come from the on-going sectoral programmes by earmarking them and pooling them for this purpose at the municipal level. The cost of higher wages, etc., have to be borne by the municipalities. However, it cannot be entirely left to their initiative discretion or goodwill. This has to be tackled as a national programme and the Government of India must step in by providing suitable legislation if necessary as also by giving subventions to the local bodies for implementing this programme according to a clearly drawn up time-schedule. We consider that a minimum outlay of Rs. 20 crores may be provided for this purpose by the Central Government, the balance to be met by the State Governments and municipalities. The programme of pre-matric scholarships for children belonging to these communities should be suitably expanded.

5.12 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The occupation of scavenging of dry latrines should be professionalised within a period of four years in all the municipalities through out the country. The Ministry of Works and Housing should provide necessary funds say Rs. 25 crores to States within their Budget for this purpose.
- (ii) The working life of persons engaged in scavenging of dry latrines should be completely segregated from their personal and social life.
- (iii) The wage of a scavenger of dry latrines should be sufficiently high and not lower than that of a class

III employee. He should be given a suitable 'occupation allowance' for this purpose.

- (iv) A phased programme of conversion of dry latrines should be undertaken, taking care that those who are engaged in cleaning dry latrines are simultaneously found alternative employment.
- (v) Employment of children below the age of 16 in this direction should be made illegal.
- (vi) The localities inhabited by scavengers should be made liveable forthwith. Each family engaged in this occupation should be provided adequate loan and grant for residential house to be constructed in general localities. The grant portion should be met by the Central Government, the State Government and the voluntary share of large industries, who should be persuaded to associate themselves with this. The loan and grant element should be so proportioned as to fit in with the realistic repaying capacity of the family.
- (vii) All the children in the age group 6 to 14 should be provided education compulsorily in residential schools to be fully subsidised by the State. There should be Balwaris for all children belonging to these families. The Central Scheme of pre-matric scholarships should be suitably expanded.
- (viii) Professionalisation of this occupation should be taken as a National Programme for which Government of India should assume the responsibility by providing funds and directions wherever necessary. An outlay of Rs. 20 crores may be made for this scheme in the Central Plan for the next medium term plan.
- (ix) Strong social reform measures should also be initiated through voluntary effort for improving the social conditions of these communities.

Flayers and Tanners

5.13 The flayers and tanners, particularly the former, are dispersed throughout the rural areas. They have to work in and around the villages, sometimes even in their own house. This results in extreme unhygienic conditions and their low social status.

Some isolated programmes so far have been taken up for improving their working conditions, particularly that of tanning, by the State Governments as also by Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The programmes relating to tanning have had some limited success because it is amenable to centralised working but there has been no success worth a note in relation to flaying because it concerns individuals pursuing this occupation in every village. The centralised working is extremely difficult unless there is a good communication system and special facilities are available for transporting the dead animals. This could be possible only with the general infrastructural development in the rural areas.

5.14 If we closely examine the full spectrum of the activities involved from the moment an animal dies, to the final disposal of the processed skin and collected bones some broad approach for tackling the problem will become available. We do not know at the moment even the practice which is followed in the rural areas with regard to lifting of the cattle and the price which a flayer gets for the skin himself. The techniques used by him in flaying continue to be traditional. The relationship between the flayer and tanner and the final skin market is also entirely in the control of the traders. In the organised sector better techniques for flaying and further processing have been developed. But whether those techniques can be taken to the individual in a practical form acceptable to him and within his means is not known. The extent to which improved tanning practices have been adopted by the tanners is also not clearly known. The task involved in flaying and tanning throughout the country by any standards is gigantic. Each aspect of this process, viz., flaying, tanning, marketing of skin and marketing of bones needs to be brought into some form of an organised effort with a view to maximum benefit of the final economic value passing on to the flayer and the tanner, particularly to the former. In case the final value is not considered commensurate with the type of work involved in this occupation, it will be necessary that the State compensates the primary worker by paying him minimum service charges.

5.15 Since this activity concerns the weakest section in the rural areas, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission under the aegis of the Ministry of Industrial Development would be the most appropriate organisation to organise it on the lines suggested above. The State Boards and concerned departments should provide the necessary field level support. The Indian Veterinary Institute may look into the problem of evolving appropriate technology for the flayers. Tanning is a developed process and the technology is known to Khadi and Village Industries Commission should arrange to transfer the technology of flaying as well as of tanning to the individual worker in the field.

5.16 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The entire spectrum of activities from lifting of the animal to the final stage of bones collected and processed skin should be appropriately organised by K.V.I.C. under the aegis of the Ministry of Industrial Development.
- (ii) The field level support for this organisation will be provided by the State Board and the concerned State Departments.
- (iii) A quick study should be made of the practices adopted by the flayers and tanners and their remuneration by way of conventional payments or commercial value of products in different parts of the country.
- (iv) A suitable scheme should be prepared to ensure minimum return to the flayer for each animal flaying either through a system of purchasing the skin at a support price or paying him fees for flaying the animal. Similar approach may be adopted for other processes also.
- (v) Tanning should be organised in villages on modern lines throughout the country.
- (vi) The Indian Veterinary Research Institute should study the traditional techniques of flaying and work out a package of transferable technology to individual flayers dispersed in the villages.
- (vii) A time-bound programme should be prepared for professionalising this occupation on the lines suggested above within the next four years for which adequate financial provision should be made.

CHAPTER VI

DEVELOPMENT OF DENOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI-NOMADIC COMMUNITIES

6.1. There are 258 communities which are designated as Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities. These are the only groups besides the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which are included in the definition of Backward Classes as adopted by the Govt. of India. The three groups have their distinctive features and within them each community has its own socio-economic and historical background. Broadly speaking the Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic groups have been subsisting on a large geographical region because of the compulsion of their profession and its place in the regional economy. The Gujars, for example, are linked to the availability of pasture lands whereas the Gariah Lohars can expect work only for a few days in any small area and must move to the next place for rendering the same service there. It is a complex mix of resource utilisation, skill endowment, social and economic relationship which determined traditionally the life pattern of the Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities.

6.2. The quickening of the pace of economic development and restructuring of the economy resulting in alternative uses of the same resources, opening of new supply lines, growing pressure of population, competing demand for limited resources have led to upsetting of the life style of these groups. Some of them have fallen off the traditional patterns joining the mass of landless population in the rural areas or unskilled workers in the urban areas; some of them are still struggling with their traditional patterns; cases they still have their position intact in the local economic structure.

6.3. There are a number of professions which are on the margin of socio-economic life like those of traditional entertainers—Nats, snake charmers, fortune tellers, bajigars, puppeteers, etc., who depend on the community, entertaining the children and living off with the meagre collection they may make. The organised forms of entertainment change in the taste of people particularly in urban areas and the faster pace of life are forcing them out gradually from their traditional occupation. They are a highly skilled people but are not able to find any alternative.

6.4. The other group is that of Denotified communities which once were kept under surveillance because of their proneness to take to the life of crime. The stigma continues on most of them notwithstanding their being Denotified. They are forced into vicious circles of crimes, being accosted whenever a crime is committed in the area rendering their families helpless when they are taken for questioning or kept in custody, making them ineligible for any regular job or occupation, forcing them into undesirable activities just for bare subsistence and finally into a criminal way of life. Some of them have been able to get out of their miserable life and taken to other occupations by virtue of the traditional or acquired skills but a considerable section of these communities still finds mention in the register of suspects making them the most vulnerable section in the society.

6.5. A variety of programmes have been taken up for the Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and Denotified communities in the past. However, most of them were concerned with opening of educational institutions and sometimes technical training. Some social organisations have also been active in this field. These efforts, however, have not produced any perceptible impact and these communities have been finding themselves out of tune in face of tremendous socio-economic forces resulting in the wake of new development. Some have been able to take the advantage; many have fallen prey to destitution; and some are still struggling to get a firm foot-hold. Even the meagre schemes taken up earlier were discontinued at the end of Fourth Five Year Plan presumably on the ground that they did not have any impact on

the condition of these communities and the concerned authorities could not even utilise usefully the allocated resources. We are not able to appreciate this logic since the story of development is punctuated with a series of failure. One learns from the past mistakes, rectifies them, makes a further determined effort and, thus, goes on. These communities who have been accepted as vulnerable and who have been caught in the whirl of change which is beyond their comprehension cannot be left to themselves simply on the ground that the administration failed to rise to the occasion. This would mean penalising a community who may not be able to articulate their plight simply because the State failed to discharge its responsibility. We do not see any other alternative but to make a determined effort again and again till we succeed in solving this problem. This time this effort must be made with all determination making amendments for the lapses of the previous plans and complete omission in the preceding one.

6.6. We, therefore, recommend that :—

A substantial programme for the development of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic and Denotified Communities should be taken up in the medium-term plan 1978-83 jointly by the Central and State Governments special financial provisions being made under their respective plans.

6.7. The socio-economic condition of each community is entirely different from that of the other. As discussed earlier all members of the same community or all groups within a community have had different experiences in the past half a century to which they have responded differently and, therefore, each one of them finds itself in a unique set of circumstances against which it has to fend its position. One important consequence of this situation is that we cannot have a generalised programme for each of these three categories or for each community amongst them. The problem will have to be assessed for each identified group and a specific solution for their situation will have to be evolved. Another important noteworthy feature is that the problem in their case is not that of an individual but of a group. To illustrate : if a person belonging to one

of the denotified tribes is put into school, the moment he is out of that group his problem gets reduced to getting support during his education and getting a job in the same way as the students belonging to other communities. This, however, does not solve the problem of the group from which he comes since they are faced with the life situation in which they have found themselves and from which they can get out only as a group. Therefore, while individual programmes will have some impact the main thrust has to be on solving the problem of the group as a whole and making them economically viable and socially acceptable as early as possible. Similar is the case of the Denotified and Semi-Nomadic Communities. As soon as an individual gets detached from the group, he gets identified with the rural poor or the urban labourer and no longer suffers from the handicap of the group. Here again the problem of the group as a whole will have to be studied and a viable alternative will have to be given to them if they have to be helped out from the adverse socio-economic situation.

6.8. Two distinct situations will be found if we proceed further in planning for development of these communities and implement them. Some of the groups are quite small while others will be substantial in number. It has been accepted as a national policy that the General Sectors will provide the main thrust for the development of the Backward Classes including the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities. In pursuance of this strategy the programmes for the tribal communities are now being firmly grounded. A course of action is now being charted in relation to Scheduled Castes as a whole which we have outlined in the earlier sections. In the case of these large groups, there is no other alternative but to draw upon the General Sectors and adapt them suitably. This task though difficult has to be performed and is feasible because of the large numbers involved. In the case of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities, however, it would be unexceptionable to accept in principle that the general sector should provide the main thrust, but distinction will have to be made when we come to very small groups.

These communities in many States may not form even 1 per cent of the total population. Although the endeavour is that the General Sector Programmes should become family oriented and cover the entire population as quickly as possible, a substantial universal coverage can be expected only in the next decade or two. We are in such a situation where large sections of the population are below the poverty line. It will be difficult to link a variety of general sector programmes addressed to this mass, to the tiny minicule group in each area. In the case of smaller groups the efforts involved in tying up the various programmes will be herculean and may push into the back ground the main objective. This approach has been appreciated in the case of primitive groups though on different considerations. We consider that in the case of these communities particularly, the tie up with the general sector programmes at least in the early phase of the developmental programmes should not be insisted. Critical programmes should be taken up within the special allocations in the State and in the Centre which should further draw upon the General Sector Programmes as they proceed further and the general sector programmes themselves acquire a wider coverage.

6.9. We, therefore, recommend :—

- (i) That the programmes for development of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities should be group oriented addressed to the problems identified for each specific group.
- (ii) Since it will be difficult to trace and tie up the flow of benefits from general sector programmes to each tiny group, their contribution may not be insisted upon in the case of smaller groups and in the earlier phase of developmental programme of even the bigger groups.

6.10. Our knowledge about the present condition of most of these communities is extremely scanty. After the discontinuance of recording of caste even their numbers and their geographical distribution is not known. The estimates have to be made on the basis of projection made with 1931 Census figures as the base. The Criminal Tribes Enquiry Committee (1949-50) made

for the last time an overall review of the denotified tribes. There is no such account of the Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Community. Some scholars in the universities have investigated the conditions of some of these groups which, however, have not been consolidated at any level. The first problem, therefore for evolving a programme for these communities will have to have a reasonable information base.

6.11. It will not be possible to have their enumeration as a part of Census operation since it may run counter to the general concept of not enumerating population on caste basis. However, some of the communities are also recognised as Scheduled Tribes and as Scheduled Castes. Their numbers and geographical location upto the Tehsil level can be collated to begin with so that at least the picture relating to those communities becomes clear. With regard to the other groups the State Governments may undertake special enumeration based on local knowledge of the officials about those groups. While this enumeration may be taken up with the help of the various institutions in the State depending upon their work schedule etc., each State Government should also in the first instance make an overall assessment of the communities therein. Some detailed studies should also be commissioned for some of those whom the State Government consider are facing special problems which need urgent attention. In this way there will be action at three levels, namely—a general appraisal of the situation by enumeration ; a more detailed but rough idea about the location, area of operation and the mode of living of these communities based on the knowledge of local officials and lastly, a detailed systematic study of some of the selected communities facing special problems by universities, tribal research institutes or other institutes specially commissioned for this purpose. In this way it should be possible to have a broad assessment of the overall situation and a detailed understanding of selected groups.

6.12. We, therefore, recommend that :—

Each State should make an overall assessment of the situation relating to Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities by a general enumeration of

these communities; a detailed but rough documentation of their present condition, mode of living etc. based on information already available and detailed study commissioned for specified groups.

6.13. The proposal to make the overall assessment detailed study, should not become an alibi for non-action. Efforts should be initiated immediately in whatever manner possible for the development of these groups. For example, special programmes can be immediately initiated for all those communities which are recognised as Scheduled Tribes. There are ample resources available both in the State Plans and the Central Plan for tribal development. The programmes for those groups could be prepared on the model of primitive communities drawing upon the special central assistance wherever necessary since, as already discussed above, this is the case which needs to be tackled urgently by properly motivated persons. The programmes for all those groups, which are included as Scheduled Castes, can also be taken up immediately because in their case the information base is already available. It only needs to be systematised and a programme prepared. In the case of other groups, the programme will depend on the availability of resources as also on how quickly some basic information can be collected. We have already suggested above that these programmes have to be group oriented. Therefore, it is not necessary that the study which we have suggested above should be complete for each community. As soon as a group is identified, which we consider can be done by the local administration based on the knowledge of the local officers, a quick reconnaissance survey can be taken up for that group and a programme can be launched. These small programmes will give feedback for preparing bigger programmes.

6.14. We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) Programmes should be prepared immediately for such of these groups as are enlisted as Scheduled Tribes as a part of the tribal development programme on a model similar to that for the primitive groups.
- (ii) Programmes should also be prepared for those groups which are enlisted as Scheduled Castes drawing upon

the funds available under the Backward Classes Sector and the special allocations for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities recommended by us earlier.

- (iii) Programmes for identified groups may be taken up for others also based on reconnoital survey of each group identified.

6.15 Lastly we come to the most important question about the programme content for these groups. Isolated programmes will not do. It has to be a comprehensive programme of economic development as also social rehabilitation particularly in the case of Denotified Communities. Unless the problem is attacked from all sides, these programmes cannot have any impact on the overall condition of these groups. In the case of Denotified Communities, they have to be first helped to get out of the vicious trap of criminality through immunising them from harassment merely on suspicion and instant help in the case of distress if the group is prepared to take to honourable ways forgetting its past. Any time lag in the plan leading to agreement with the group and its implementation on any consideration-formal, procedural or otherwise is bound to result in a failure and, more important, in loss of faith of the community in their own future and in the ability of the Government to help them. These programmes, therefore, have to be extremely flexible and must adopt problems solving approach par excellence. Economic development programmes, engendering a social consciousness and educational effort have all to go hand in hand in the case of Denotified Communities.

6.16 In the case of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities the areas of friction between these communities and the local communities have to be identified. Many of these communities are not economically backward since their vocations do yield them substantial income. But their way of life deprives them the facilities of education and other social services. In their cases these services may have to be provided on a priority basis. It will be difficult for us to delve on these aspects in detail. As we have already stated it has to be a comprehensive programme for each group and no aspect of their social and economic life should be outside the ambit.

6.17 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The programmes for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities should be comprehensive in coverage and no aspect of their social and economic life should be outside its ambit.
- (ii) In the case of Denotified Communities, it will be necessary to immunise them from harassment on mere suspicion and instant help in distress should be built into programme, if the group agrees to follow the path of honest living, forgetting its past.
- (iii) In the case of, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities their adjustment to the new economic forces and provision of social services should be given priority.
- (iv) Flexibility and problem solving should be the by words in the programmes of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities.

CHAPTER VII

A TIME BOUND PROGRAMME FOR ERADICATION OF UNTOUCHABILITY

7.1 The worse form of social discrimination gets manifested in the practice of untouchability. This is the most difficult barrier in the social and economic mobility of members belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Unless we effectively eradicate this evil from our national life, the goal of growth with economic justice, where all sections of the society partake in the national life on terms of equality, cannot be achieved. All the measures which we have suggested in the previous chapters, therefore, are subject to an important condition, viz., eradication of untouchability which we propose to deal now. If this single exception remains, all other measures are bound to be frustrating and all developmental programmes meaningless. The Prime Minister has given concrete form to the National Will when he announced that untouchability should be eradicated within a period of five years. We accept this as a workable time-frame for which an action plan can be prepared.

7.2 The practice of untouchability gets expressed broadly in two ways, viz., (a) in the personal behaviour of individuals and (b) in their social relationship. There are strict conventions about food and marriage which fall within the regime of personal behaviour and relationships. Social interaction covers the relationship between groups. Access of individuals belonging to different castes to community facilities, religious and education institutions and professional services are some of the important things, which define the quality of social interaction. These comprise the overt forms of social discrimination leading to untouchability, which have been brought under the ambit of law and penal provisions. The personal behaviour which we have discussed earlier is not amenable to that treatment. It can be influenced only through enlightened public opinion. Eradication

of untouchability, therefore, must in the first instance hit at its outward manifestations, viz., discrimination and disabilities in relationships between individuals on the basis of caste.

7.3 Untouchability has at its root the linkage of castes with occupations, which are termed as 'unclean'. The stigma and marks of untouchability continue even when a caste or a group no longer follows its traditional 'unclean' profession. This is the case with most of the members of the Scheduled Castes in the rural areas who are now landless labourers. However, members of some of these communities do continue to follow professions which are 'unclean' in their present form. The association of the community with these professions reinforces the segregation and traditional disabilities. The extreme poverty, deprivation and illiteracy amongst these groups, who are at the lowest ladder in the social hierarchy become further contributing factors. Poverty and social segregation forces them to adopt forms of personal behaviour and living which strengthens the socio-psychological background of untouchability.

7.4 Eradication of untouchability is difficult to define. But it should be possible and is in fact necessary, to enumerate the specific tasks which would lead to elimination of social discrimination in all forms. It will also be necessary that these tasks are amenable to periodical assessment. In our view the accomplishment of the following tasks will lead to achieving the objective of eradication of untouchability as a time-bound programme :—

- (i) Stamping out of discrimination or disability, in all forms in relation to access to public places and social and religious and economic services;
- (ii) Professionalising those occupations which are treated as unclean with a view to delink the occupation from the caste;
- (iii) An effective programme of social and economic development, particularly for the weakest sections amongst the Scheduled Castes with clear targets for the next four years;

- (iv) A national endeavour to bring about an order eliminating discrimination on caste considerations. All organisations must accept this responsibility as their legitimate tasks;
- (v) Creation of general consciousness amongst all sections of Society to treat the practice of untouchability in all forms as an evil and eliminate it.

7.5 The overt form of untouchability is not found prevalent to the same degree and intensity in all the States throughout the country. The problem, therefore, has to be particularised so that a concerted effort can be made in selected areas with high incidence. In the first instance, therefore, the States having the problem of untouchability in endemic form may be identified. Within each of these States, the most virulent districts and within these districts the most afflicted Blocks should be identified. The problem will not be uniform even within the same block. Therefore, the next step should be to have a quick survey in those identified blocks so that all villages which need special attention can be enumerated and the prevalent conditions in them can be ascertained. This task should be completed within the next three months or so. A phased programme should be prepared to cover all the identified villages within the next three years, so, that the problem can be effectively tackled in all the afflicted Blocks by the target date.

7.6 There should be a Committee at the district level in the identified districts for preparation of the action plan and implement it. This Committee should be broad-based and should have representatives of political parties, social organisations and the administration. There should be a Sub-Committee in all the identified blocks also. This Sub-Committee should have members from the district committee and may include leading persons from the block also. In such programme, the committee cannot remain a deliberative body. Eradication of untouchability is basically an action on the economic front, with the support of social mobilisation and conscientisation. Therefore, each member of these Committees should assume direct responsibility in relation for social component, as also to some extent economic component, of the

action plan for each village. Each member should adopt one or more villages for intensive action. The members should also prepare economic, educational and social components of the plan for these villages. These plans should be sent to the appropriate development agencies in the District for adoption and implementation. A convention should develop that they will be given the highest priority in the Project Plan.

7.7 These committees should have an extensive review of the progress in each village every quarter. As soon as the conditions under the first set of villages get stabilised to the satisfaction of the Committee, fresh group of villages should be taken up for intensive action. It may be possible that some of the villages may be difficult to tackle and the concerned member may require assistance of the other members of the Committee. These villages, therefore, should be specially attended to. The members should also bring to the notice of the District/Block Committee the cases of violation or abrogation of civil right in the concerned villages for appropriate action.

7.8 Intensive economic programmes for the afflicted pockets should be prepared by the concerned Project Authorities on the basis of the recommendations of the District/Block Committees. Resources should be no constraint in their case because bulk of these programmes can be accommodated within the on-going general sector schemes. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to supplement the outlays provided by the Project Authorities because some of the programmes may need adaptation and, in some cases, the norms may have to be relaxed. It is also possible that in some afflicted pockets, substantial additional funds may have to be provided for even the general programmes because the size of the problem may be unmanageable within the given resources. The formulation and implementation of programmes in these afflicted pockets will have to be extremely flexible and solution of the given problem should be the chief concern to which all formal procedures, rules, etc., should get adjusted. The Scheduled Castes Development Corporation, which may be established in pursuance of our recommendation for general development of Scheduled Castes, should help in achieving this end by

assuming the role of a promoter and provider of all missing inputs.

7.9 Untouchability is not very visible in urban areas but the usual prejudices to exist though concealed with sophistication, and segregation and social disabilities in severe form do operate against those engaged in scavenging of dry latrines. The flayers and tanners in villages also suffer from extreme forms of social disability. A comprehensive programme of separating the personal life of those engaged in scavenging of dry latrines from their working life should be drawn up which will include (i) municipalising and professionalisation of services, (ii) strict regulation of their working condition, (iii) higher remuneration for the work (iv) prohibiting the children to take to this occupation and providing them free residential education facilities, (v) diversifying the economic base by preferential treatment in other fields for their employment, (vi) discontinuance of having exclusive colonies for scavengers and providing them adequate housing in mixed population and (vii) an intensive social movement in the community to engender necessary will amongst them for having a new life. The cost of implementing this programme should be borne by the municipalities, the State Governments and the Central Government for which a suitable scheme should be drawn up. The professionalisation of scavenging dry latrines should be completed within the next four years.

7.10 All programmes of economic development will need a review and intensification. The problems of different sections among the Scheduled Castes will have to be specifically attended to. Bulk of them are landless labourers and marginal farmers. In all rural development programmes a minimum outlay equal to the proportion of Scheduled Castes in the target group should be earmarked. Next to the landless persons are sizeable professional groups like those of leather workers, fishermen, weavers, basket-makers, etc. In the wake of economic development and introduction of higher technology, the traditional workers in these occupations are being displaced from those parts of their activity which are no longer considered disagreeable. A comprehensive programme for each profession should be prepared so that the

benefit of technological improvement and diversification in the profession becomes available to the traditional workers. Efforts will also have to be made to diversify the economic base of the Scheduled Castes by extensive technical training and helping them in adopting new professions.

7.11 Thus the scheme for eradication of untouchability within four years will comprise intensive programme to stamp out all forms of overt discrimination and disabilities in identified areas with high incidence of social discrimination according to a village by village time-bound programme. The occupations like scavenging, flaying and tanning, whose present forms lead to social discrimination, should be professionalised. A massive effort will have to be made for economic and educational development of the Scheduled Castes, particularly the weakest sections amongst them, who suffer from added disabilities because of the nature of their occupation or low economic base. For each profession, comprehensive programmes have to be made so that the benefit of new technology and diversification accrue to traditional workers. Their economic base will have to be diversified through intensive technical training and financial support in self employment sectors. All organisations in the national economy must get involved in the task of economic upliftment of the S.Cs. and they should be required to quantify their effort in this behalf and ensure effective implementation. All this effort should get translated in meaningful terms relevant to the last man at the village level. The responsibility for implementation at the block and district levels should rest with broad-based Committees. There should be national consensus for the action programme for eradication of untouchability so that any resistance at any point can be effectively removed. The political parties, social and voluntary organisations will have special role to play in creating social consciousness amongst all sections of population about this problem. They should share the responsibility with the administration and other establishments to accomplish this task as a common endeavour.

7.12 The responsibility of executing the programme for economic development should rest with the concerned departments

in the State and at the Centre. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Scheduled Castes Development Departments in the States should be the model points for coordinating and for providing general directions. The concerned departments should earmark outlays for this programme and make adequate provision for the package of schemes in their respective sectors. A nucleus amount should be placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs and S.C. Development Departments so that important schemes may be started without any delay. However, these schemes must be taken over by the concerned Ministries/Departments subsequently. Suitable Committees at the Centre and the States may be set up for clearing the developmental programmes expeditiously.

7.13 The implementation of this programme should be periodically reviewed at the State and Central level in broad-based Committees comprising representatives of the political parties, social service organisations and Government. They should provide suitable directions to all concerned.

7.14 Effective implementation of the protection of Civil Rights Act will provide the sound base on which the super-structure of social and economic action suggested above can be built up. Suitable machinery should be deployed for this purpose so that cases are registered, processed, charge-sheeted and decided speedily. Separate Cells may be created in the Ministry of Home Affairs and the State Governments for following-up and overseeing the implementation of this Act.

7.15 We, therefore, recommend that—

- (i) Free access to all public and religious places as also availability of professional services should be ensured forthwith to all sections of our Society. Virulent pockets in the districts and blocks may be identified for intensive work. Broad-based committees may be set up at these levels whose members should assume direct responsibility for intensive work in assigned villages. All these pockets should be covered within three years according to a clear time-schedule. Economic programmes should get highest priorities in the developmental projects covering that area;

- (ii) Professionalisation and municipalisation of scavenging of dry latrines should be taken up immediately with a view to effectively delink this occupation from the caste and social life of the workers. A package of programmes should be drawn up for them to be funded by the Municipal Committees, Central Government and the State Governments. This task should be completed within a period of three years.
- (iii) Intensive economic development programmes should be taken up which may broadly include the following—
 - (a) There should be earmarking of outlays in all economic programmes which should be in proportion to the number of Sch. Castes in the target groups with some weightage in their favour and relaxation of the norms;
 - (b) At least 50 per cent of the landless labourers and agricultural farmers should be covered under these programmes within the next four years;
 - (c) Comprehensive programmes should be prepared for identified professions in which bulk of the workers belong to Sch. Castes. These programmes should aim at ensuring accrual of benefit of higher technology, better marketing, credit, etc. to traditional scheduled Caste workers; and
 - (d) Scheduled Castes Development Corporations should be established with adequate financial support by the State and the Centre;
- (iv) Each Ministry/Department should draw up suitable schemes for implementing the action plan urgently. Committees may be set up in the Centre as also in the States which may clear these plans to be incorporated in the annual plans of concerned Ministries;
- (v) The Ministry of Home Affairs in the Centre and the Scheduled Caste Development Departments in the States should have a nucleus fund for supporting priority schemes under Eradication of Untouchability Programme to be taken over by the concerned Ministries/Depts. in the subsequent years;

- (vi) Arrangement should be made for effective implementation of Civil Rights Act for which Cells should be created in the Centre and the States;
- (vii) High level broad-based committees may be set up at the Centre and the State with representatives of the political parties, social workers, voluntary organisations which may give the entire programme the form of a National Movement; and
- (viii) There should also be a special cell to review the progress of steps along the above lines. It will help to impart the requisite urgency and priority if the highest authority of the State, namely the Chief Minister, makes it convenient to have the Cell functioning under his direct guidance.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

8.1 The programme of development of Scheduled Castes and eradication of untouchability has to be a national concern in which all organisations—political, voluntary, public sector and Government—have to partake accepting its implementation in true spirit as their responsibility. It has to be in the form of a movement informing all facets of our national life. Only then we can expect to achieve the socio-economic transformation, which is inherent in the concept of development of Scheduled Castes. There is already national consensus on the broad objectives. It will be necessary that a similar consensus should be developed about the action programme which in the wake of its implementation, is bound to give rise to situations confrontation between different interests in the society. The adverse forces, arising at different points in the course of our endeavour for achieving the objective of development with social justice, should be overcome amicably by a clearly expressed national will and positive support by all so that in each individual case, the forces of reaction find themselves isolated and are not allowed to consolidate their position. The resistance can arise in all forums—political, social, economic and administrative. It may be given different outer forms, supported by an ostensible logical case “quoting from the scriptures” where necessary; but their real nature will need to be unveiled by sticking to the simple logic inherent in the concept of Antodaya given by the Father of the Nation. All actions should be shorn of their outer cover and must be tested on the touchstone as whether they improve the condition of the weakest sections of the community or whether they stand in the way of their development and deny their legitimate share in the fruits of development.

8.2 We, therefore, recommend that—

A national consensus should be evolved about action programme for development of Scheduled Castes and eradication of untouchability so that (a) sporadic resistance to its implementation can be effectively overcome; (b) the programme does not run into controversies—political or otherwise; and (c) its implementation can be seen through to a successful finale by single minded administrative action.

8.3 The other side of the developmental effort for Scheduled Castes and removal of untouchability, viz., general acceptance of the programme by all sections of the community, is equally important. In this case, it is essential to have a healing human touch to assuage the feelings of those affected and also to show reason to those who feel offended. It is a complex area of social relations where the social workers and voluntary organisations only can be expected to work from within the social system. The problem of untouchability is essentially linked to the attitude of the other castes and, therefore, it is not only the work amongst the Scheduled Castes which is important but it is the consciousness which has to be created amongst the other sections of the community which is crucial. The voluntary effort by dedicated social workers, therefore, has to be the main vanguard of the new message for removal of untouchability and betterment of the economic conditions of the weakest sections of the community. They have already been doing yeoman service in this area. Financial constraint should not be allowed to come in their way if they can muster the services of right type of people for undertaking these tasks. Sometimes, attempts are made to assess their contribution in terms of financial inputs and quantifiable output which is impossible in such an area of operation. The impact of their work is largely imperceptible because it has to seep into the attitude of the people. Usual financial controls are, therefore, inapplicable in their case. The assessment of their performance has to be done on different considerations altogether.

8.4 We, therefore, recommend that—

Social service and voluntary organisations should have a very special position in the programme of removal

of untouchability and development of the Scheduled Castes particularly in creating the right social environment for the implementation of these programmes. Financial resources should not be a constraint in expanding their programmes provided the services of dedicated persons can be obtained for this work.

8.5 Education and mass media are the two most potent forces of social transformation which are already affecting our national life in innumerable and unpredictable ways. However, an effective use of these two media for fighting the evil of untouchability and bringing about a new consciousness remains to be made. We have already touched upon this aspect while considering adult education. Since every child must spend 8 years in the school, his value system can be effectively changed through a well designed and imperceptible undercurrent in the entire curriculum of his studies which hits at the social discrimination unequivocally and wins him over to an egalitarian social structure. This task will need the services of scholars who should go into the curriculum of elementary and secondary classes and introduce suitable changes at appropriate places. This task should not be left to the routine exercise of framing and curriculum or preparing the text-books. The National Council of Educational Research and Training should address themselves to this task and get the services of top sociologists and educationists for this purpose.

8.6 Since such a review may take some time, it is also necessary to take certain immediate measures. All text books dealing with subjects like social studies, history etc. should contain one lesson regarding untouchability, which should suitably bring out the anti-rational, anti-national, inhuman and unscientific nature of untouchability. Another measure should be the printing of four or five sentences on the front page of all text books like :—

- (i) untouchability is a sin.
- (ii) untouchability is a crime.
- (iii) untouchability is inhuman.
- (iv) untouchability is unconstitutional etc.

There is a great urgency for introducing these measures at the earliest stage and continue it till the individual's social consciousness is fully formed in order to effectively counteract the anti-egalitarian attitude to which individuals are exposed almost from the beginning of their lives, through the influence of the family, the peer groups, the neighbourhood and even the school.

8.7 We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) The entire curriculum of elementary and secondary schools should be reviewed by top sociologists and educationists under the aegis of the N.C.E.R.T. with a view to inculcate an attitude against social discrimination and at the same time, developing egalitarian outlook.
- (ii) As an immediate step, the N.C.E.R.T., Ministry of Education and State Education Departments should undertake the introduction of one lesson in all text books dealing with subjects like Social Studies, History etc. bringing out the anti-rational, anti-national, inhuman and unscientific nature of untouchability.
- (iii) On the front page of all other text books, four or five sentences should be prominently printed stating that (a) untouchability is a sin; (b) untouchability is a crime; (c) untouchability is inhuman; (d) untouchability is unconstitutional etc.

8.8 The mass media should also accept a sustained attack against social discrimination as their responsibility. This cannot be done in the fashion of a sponsored programme on the radio or commissioned films or invited articles in papers which many a time become jarring and counter productive. The fight against discrimination and untouchability has to be the undercurrent in the messages which are carried by the mass media. It has to be presented in a subtle fashion so that the constant effort gradually gets internalised in the individual thinking. It may be useful if the representatives of various media were to consider this problem and evolve a methodology to be adopted in each media for achieving this end-result.

8.9 We, therefore, recommend that :—

The representatives of various media particularly newspapers, films, radio, T.V., theatrical groups should come together and

evolve a strategy for internalising the message against social discrimination particularly untouchability, into their general programmes on continuing basis. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should take the lead in this and be the nodal point for this purpose.

8.10 Social reformers all through the ages have fought incessantly against discrimination and evils in the society throughout the length and breadth of the country. They have influenced the thinking of the people through their poetry and dissemination of their thoughts by their disciples. There are stalwarts amongst the social reformers who are still revered universally. In the hustle and din of economic development they have gone into the background particularly in the urban sections who are now assuming the leadership role in all walks of life. The growing economic disparity and its correlation with a reinforcement by the social situation of different castes is a new dimension in our national life which is pregnant with frightful consequences. In the new emerging situation, therefore, it is necessary that the message of those who relentlessly fought against all forms of social evils, to name a few, Kabir, Ramanujam, Dayanand and Guru Nanak, is again carried to the masses as also the educated youngmen through various media. Some films could be commissioned on them and their message could be given a special place in school texts and reading material for the adults.

Their messages particularly their teachings against the caste system, untouchability and inequality should be propagated in all educational institutions, libraries and other such institutions. Another effective way of spreading their teachings on the subject could be through suitable quotations being affixed in buses and publicised through prominent hoardings and posters in places frequented by the public. In the matter of films, apart from commissioning special films, there are also highly artistic and socially realistic films taken in different languages. These could be widely exhibited with dubbings in other languages of the country. A programme of translation of classics in different Indian languages which have effectively dealt with the problem of the

caste system and untouchability will also be of value in this national endeavour.

8.11 We, therefore, recommend that :

- (i) The various media should be used for carrying the messages of social reformers of the past. Special films may be commissioned and their teaching should be given a place in the school and college texts and reading material for the adult.
- (ii) The teachings of social reformers against the caste system, untouchability and inequality should also be widely publicised by being affixed inside buses, trains and publicised on hoardings and posters in public places and in schools, libraries etc.
- (iii) Films already taken in different languages dealing with the subject may be exhibited widely and dubbed in other Indian languages.
- (iv) Classics dealing with the subject should be translated in other Indian languages.

8.12. The main responsibility for implemetation of the development programmes for S.Cs. will have to be carried by the administration. So far the programmes for the development of Scheduled Castes have been equated with the implementation of limited schemes funded under the welfare of backward classes sector. The outlays for these programmes have been quite limited and their scope very narrow. They are distributive schemes particularly relating to scholarships, stipend or subsidy for economic programmes and housing. The distributive schemes which by their very nature and also by virtue of their size are having no impact on the main problems faced by the people belonging to these communities, could be easily administered. The departments concerned with these schemes, therefore have been generally weak having a very low status in the departmental hierarchy both in the secretariat and in the field. The task of development of the weakest sections of the community, which has the seed for transforming the entire socio-economic structure of the nation cannot be handled by weak organisations manned

by indifferent personnel. We find that in many States the district level officers in charge of Harijan welfare departments are not even of the rank of a Block Development Officer. Since no department feels responsible for development of Scheduled Castes and takes this task seriously, post in a Harijan welfare department is generally regarded as a matter to be sympathised with and in case a permanent assignment a permanent disability. It is in this context that the Harijan Welfare Departments have almost no voice and they tend to be satisfied with producing reports and returns from whatever matter is given to them and depict the progress in respectable terms at least in charts and graphs with reference to even small schemes which are known to have no impact outside whatsoever.

8.13 The logic in the new programmes which we have suggested is that the development of Scheduled Castes is not the responsibility of Harijan Welfare Department. It is the responsibility of the government as a whole both at the Centre and in the States and each organ of these Governments must assume full responsibility therefor in their respective spheres. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Harijan Welfare Departments in the Centre and the States respectively can be expected only to do the co-ordinating role and in the intervening period provide the missing inputs wherever necessary. Thus, their role in terms of the size of the programme financial or otherwise, has to be very small (in principle zero) but in terms of the responsibility as a co-ordinator and as one who may bring to the notice of all concerned in clear terms the condition of the sections of these communities and ensure that they do what is expected out of them, they must be a strong organisation. We cannot envisage a situation where a Scheduled Castes Welfare Officer may be required to wait for weeks even to get an appointment with the District Magistrate simply because he has a low position in the hierarchy. We cannot change the psychology inherent in the bureaucratic structure. Therefore, the only alternative is that the task of development of 15 per cent of the population, occupying the lowest strata in the society has to be assigned a special position in the com-

munity or departments in the Centre, in the States and in the field. The posting in these departments must be considered as the most important posting and persons selected therefor should consider it as a privilege. This transformation, however, can be brought about only by a clear political and administrative will to implement these programmes about which we have discussed in sufficient details in the earlier sections.

8.14 In this context, it is necessary to lay down a personnel policy geared towards the objective of the development of the weaker sections, particularly Scheduled Castes, in accordance with the basic objective and strategies laid down by the Government. The Planning Commission has noted the need for the restructuring of Rural Development Administration.

“The most radical structuring may be needed in the field of agriculture and rural development administration covering not only State service but all wings of public service including the servants of Banking Institutions and other Financial Institutions etc. The personnel of all categories dealing with development projects in the State have to be persuaded to a system of values where service in rural areas and work with rural agencies is regarded as more important than other fields of work which, in the past, have carried greater prestige. A revised structure of rewards by way of recognition and preferment would be helpful in achieving this.”

8.15 The observations of the Planning Commission are relevant to the Scheduled Castes programmes for most of the Scheduled Castes are in the rural areas and in the field of agriculture. Considering the present situation and the goal expressed in the previous paragraphs, the political and administrative will will have to be expressed, inter-alia, in the shape of a new personnel policy in order that the postings in departments connected with the development of weaker sections acquire the importance they should. These steps should make it advantageous economically and career wise for personnel in all wings of public service to work in the weaker sections sector, in backward rural areas. From this point of view, an additional allowance

should be provided for posts pertaining to weaker sections especially in backward rural areas, which should not only compensate for the financial advantages of city compensatory allowance, house rent allowance and deputation allowance available for posts in Central and State Capitals, but should also provide for a higher amount, as an incentive, in order to meet the additional costs on education etc. which are to be borne by those who are not posted in these capitals.

8.16 Apart from the financial advantage, weightage should be given in the matter of promotion for those who work in the weaker sections sector, particularly in the backward rural areas, equating one year's service in this sector or area to 1.25 years to two years of normal service. In making the assessment of the work of officer, the basic criterion should be the extent to which their work has primarily served the weaker and poorer sections of society, particularly Scheduled Castes. Advantages like foreign deputations, deputation to United Nations and International service should be allowed on priority for those who have put in a substantial period of service in the weaker sections sector and in respect of those who work in departments dealing with and those whose contribution for the weaker and poor sections, especially Scheduled Castes, is found to be high.

8.17 Unless the realities of financial and career motivation and the factual value system are taken note of and utilised as incentives, it may not be easy to secure the services of the most competent for the weaker sections programmes.

8.18 This brings us to the question of creating the necessary awareness within the administration itself about the importance of those programmes in the national scheme. Development of the weaker sections of the community is the most potent force for bringing about the structural change in the Indian society. Nevertheless, it does not find a place in the curriculum of training or even the university education in appropriate projects where emphasis is more on theory rather than on the practical implications of the decisions to take development of the weaker sections seriously. It is, therefore, necessary that there should be re-orientation of the personnel, particularly those in key

positions about the place of development of the weakest sections in the national scheme. It should also become a part of the entry point training programmes and in service training programmes in all services whether technical, professional and administrative. In the new situation it is not adequate that a technician may be an engineer or a doctor merely knowing the secrets of his trade. He must be fully aware of the social responsibility which he carries when he is assigned a task in the overall matrix of national development.

8.19 The district continues to be the basic unit for implementation of developmental programmes and protective measures: The District Magistrate occupies the key position in the administration there. The appreciation of the responsibility in the State level organisations and Central Ministries is, by the very nature of things in a diffused form. But a focus emerge at the district level if the programmes have to become meaningful to the individual in the field. The District Magistrate, therefore, should be assigned a special responsibility for implementing in spirit both these programmes so far have been in the nature of aid giving and philanthropy. In the new action we are now envisaging for Scheduled Castes development there should be nothing common between the social welfare approach and the Scheduled Castes development approach. Social Welfare has to be responsible for those who are on the margins on account of different reasons for whom personalised approach has to be adopted. In the case of the Scheduled Castes, the development has to be seen through an incessant struggle against all obstacles inherent in the situation of a social and structural changes in the nation. The dimension of the work and the quality involved in the two spheres, therefore, is entirely different. Except in a few States where the Scheduled Castes population is small. The development of Scheduled Castes by itself is a herculean task requiring exclusive attention of a senior officer heading a strong department. The stature of this department is crucial to this task because it is not to implement the programme itself but must perform the co-ordinating role, which can be done only if sufficient stature is attached to these posts to compensate for direct

financial power. The development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in some cases should be combined where the population of either of the group is very small as for example, is the case in U.P. with Scheduled Tribes and in all programmes of development of Scheduled Castes and their protection. We have already discussed in the beginning about the need for a national consensus on these issues so that administration can proceed unhesitatingly to implement them. Once these directions are clear and the responsibility specific nothing should be allowed to come in the way of their speedy implementation. The District Magistrate should be assisted by a senior officer of the rank of Additional District Magistrate who should have a special position next to the District Magistrate for co-ordinating the programme relating to the development of Scheduled Castes and their protection. This officer should be directly responsible to the Commissioner in charge of Scheduled Castes development in the State. There should be a committee at the district level with the District Magistrate as the Chairman and the Harijan Development Officer as the Secretary which should review the implementation of these programmes by various departments. There should be a convention that the directions of this committee should be binding on the concerned departments so that no technical or other grounds can be adduced for tardy implementation or inaction.

8.20 The position of departments dealing with Scheduled Castes welfare at the State level also varies considerably from one State to another. The social welfare and Harijan welfare generally go together since the north-eastern States with the Scheduled Castes. In those States where the tribal areas are extensive and the Scheduled Castes population is also substantial the approach and strategy for development of the two groups has to be entirely different, each claiming undivided attention of a senior person. In practice, it may be advisable to have separate officers to attend to both these items. This has already been done in certain States like Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar.

8.21 We, therefore, recommend that—

- (i) Each organisation should be fully responsible for implementing the developmental programmes relating

to Scheduled Castes in their respective sectors. They should have a senior officer exclusively for attending to this task in their departments ;

- (ii) Development of weaker sections should be an essential part of all re-orientation, entry point and in-service training programmes. Special re-orientation programmes may also be taken up wherever necessary under the overall guidance of the Department of Personnel ;
- (iii) The Harijan Welfare Departments in the States should be re-organised and they should be placed under a senior officer of standing. He should exclusively attend to the development of Scheduled Castes except where he may also be in charge of Scheduled Tribes in those States where their population is very small ;
- (iv) A senior officer should be appointed in each District as Scheduled Caste Development Officer who should be of the rank of Additional District Magistrate and should be given a place next only to the Deputy Commissioner ;
- (v) There should be a committee for Scheduled Castes Development which may be constituted at the district level under the Chairmanship of the Collector with heads of departments as members and the Scheduled Castes Development Officer as the convenor, for reviewing the implementation of programmes by the respective departments whose directions in this regard should be binding on all departments ;
- (vi) The officers working in the Scheduled Castes Development Departments should be handpicked and their services should be specially recognised.
- (vii) A new personnel policy will have to be formulated and implemented immediately covering all public services including State Service and the service of our public agencies like Banks etc. It should consider aspects such as additional allowances which should be fully compensatory as also an incentive, weightage in the calculation of level of service for the purpose of promotion, accepting the extent of benefits to weaker sections as the basic criterion for the assessment of the officers and making service in this

priority sector the route to the international assignments and other such advantages which are in practice generally held in value and esteem.

8.22 A number of important recommendations have been made by this Working Group. If these are implemented by the various Central Ministries, State Governments and other public institutions in the spirit of the objectives laid down by the State and recently expressed by the Planning Commission in the draft Five Year Plan 1978-83, a perceptible change can be brought about in the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes. In order to ensure that such steps are fully, promptly and competently taken by the various Central Ministries and Central agencies, the establishment of an effective high level committee in the Govt. of India with the powers and competence to issue mandatory directions will be a help.

8.23 Many of the recommendations will have to be implemented jointly by the Central and State Governments. In fact best results in the Scheduled Castes programmes can be achieved by a close collaboration in programmatic as well as financial terms between the Central and State Governments and between the Central and State agencies. Therefore, Central funds should be available in adequate measure along with State funds for the various programmes and measures recommended in this Working Group and which may be hereafter evolved. For this purpose, it is necessary to provide a Special Central Assistance for the Scheduled Castes. The provision of such a Central assistance of Rs. 190 crores in the Fifth Five Year Plan gave a fillip to the Scheduled Tribes programmes and in the Plan for 1978-83 a provision of Rs. 350 crores has been indicated for the Scheduled Tribe programmes. Considering the nature and dimensions of the problems of the Scheduled Castes and appropriate solutions therefor, within the available time schedule, it is necessary to provide Rs. 500 crores in the Plan for special programmes for Scheduled Castes.

8.24 This Central Assistance is required in order to ensure that a programme, which is family-oriented and which is large enough to cover a substantial number of the Scheduled Caste families especially in low-income sectors of activity, is mounted

with such a momentum comprehensiveness to make a significant, if not remarkable, difference to their income and purchasing power.

8.25 Apart from funds it is also necessary to create a human infrastructure which has the capacity to employ these funds satisfactorily. For, as observed by the Planning Commission in respect of village and small scale industries, the limiting factor is the magnitude of the organisational, managerial and training effort needed. The human infra-structure will have to be built up partly straightaway and partly as the programme develops, and this should be done without loss of time and without procedural delays as soon as required. The procedure for creating the requisite infra-structure, adequate in numbers and quality and motivation, and the procedure for releasing the Special Central Assistance should be free from bottlenecks, if we are to achieve worthwhile results in the Scheduled Castes sector which are within the realm of possibility and which are socio-ethically inescapable and unpostponable.

We, therefore, recommend that :—

- (i) An effective high level committee in the Government of India with the powers and competence to give mandatory directions should be set up in order to ensure that the requisite steps are fully, promptly and competently taken by the various Central Ministries and other Central Agencies.
- (ii) A provision of Rs. 500 crores be provided in the Plan for special programmes for Scheduled Castes.
- (iii) The requisite human infrastructure be built up.
- (iv) The procedure for creating the human infrastructure and releasing the Special Central Assistance be efficient and free from bottlenecks.

APPENDIX

Copy of Ministry of Home Affairs' O.M. No. BC.11013/3/77-SCT.II.
dated the 8th December, 1977.

SUB : —Creation of Working Group for the Welfare of Backward Classes.

In the context of preparation of the next Five Year Plan, it has been decided to set up a Working Group for the formulation of strategy and programme priorities for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. The composition of the group will be as follows :—

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Minister of State (M), Ministry of Home Affairs | Chairman |
| 2. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs | Member |
| 3. Secretary, Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation | Member |
| 4. Secretary, Education, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare | Member |
| 5. Secretary, Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare | Member |
| 6. Secretary, Industrial Development, Ministry of Industry | Member |
| 7. Secretary, Commerce, Ministry of Commerce, Civil Supplies and Cooperation. | Member |
| 8. Secretary, Energy, Ministry of Energy, Govt. of India, New Delhi. | Member |
| 9. Secretary, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Govt. of India, New Delhi. | Member |
| 10. Commissioner, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110022 | Special
Invitee |
| 11. Joint Secretary, (CS), Ministry of Home Affairs | Member |
| 12. Additional Secretary (C), Ministry of Home Affairs | Member |
| 13. Joint Secretary (E), Deptt. of Personnel & Administrative Reforms, Ministry of Home Affairs | Member |
| 14. Director General (BCW), Ministry of Home Affairs | Member
Secretary |
| 15. Adviser/Joint Secretary, Incharge of Social Welfare, Planning Commission, Yojana Bhavan, New Delhi. | Member |
| 16. Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. | Member |

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| 17. Secretary, Social Welfare, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow | Member |
| 18. Secretary, Social Welfare, Govt. of Bihar, Patna. | Member |
| 19. Director General, Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour, Shram Shakti Bhavan, New Delhi. | Member |
| 20. Director, Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences, 4-E, Jhandewalan Extension, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi-110055 | Member |
| 21. Shri R.K. Yady, Vice President, All India Harijan Sewak Sangh, 18/1, New Palasia, Indore | Member |
| 22. Shri L.M. Shrikant, Former Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, C/o Shil Seva Mandal, Dohad, Distt. Panch Mahal, Gujarat | Member |
| 23. Shri O.P. Bhatnagar, General Secretary, Ishwar Sharan Ashram, Allahabad | Member |
| 24. Prof. L.P. Vidyarthi, Prof. of Antropology, Ranchi University, Bihar | Member |
| 25. Prof. M.N. Srinivas, Senior Fallow & Head, Sociology Unit, Institute for Social & Economic Change, Bangalore-40 | Member |
| 26. Prof. S.N. Dubey, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. | Member |
| 27. Shri S.C. Misra, I.P., retired Director, National Police Academy, Jaipur (Rajasthan) | Member |

2. The terms of reference of the Working Group will be as follows in the context of the Government's resolve to eradicate untouchability within five years :—

- (a) To review the programmes in respect of Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes.
- (b) To advise on the approach, strategies and programmes priorities in the next five years.
- (c) To formulate concrete proposals and suggest phasing of the programmes in licating financial and other requirements.

3. The Working Group may constitute sub-groups at its convenience and discretion.

4. Non-official members of the Group or any of its sub-groups shall be entitled to TA/DA as peamissible to Grade-I Officers of the Government of India.