

SECTION – VIII

QUALITY OF LIFE: THE LONG ROAD

The level of development in a society determines the quality of life enjoyed by its people. Development measures affect day-to-day life intimately and the degree of access of an individual/group to basic amenities and services reflects its relative status in society. Therefore, the constitutional commitment to usher in equality in social relations can at once be tested through the distributional aspects of development. This is more true in case of SCs than any other group for the simple reason that SCs under the oppressive stranglehold of caste based social order lead a sub-human existence. They are assigned most degrading tasks which involve physical contact with filth, organic wastes and anything polluting conceivable. In many places they lack access to safe drinking water sources, clean living environment, education and health facilities. The economic conditions in a large majority of them make it impossible to avail of avenues of decent living. It is combination of all these features which defines their highly unequal position and demoralized and submissive existence. Violence is therefore embedded in their daily life. This is the reason why accelerated development of SCs, with the objective of bridging the wide gap between them and the rest of the society constitutes the third and potentially more enduring instrument of the strategy to eliminate caste based inequalities and to check atrocities resulting from them. This section will examine what has been achieved in this direction so far and how far the impact of development provides a protective armour against violence. In this context, only the overall mechanism for accelerated development for SCs, specifically fashioned in their case, i.e. Special Component Plan, and a few focused programmes having relevance for them would be referred to. The limitation of space does not permit discussion here on the entire gamut of development programmes for SCs.

Demographic Profile

As per 1991 census, population of SC was 13.82 crore, which constituted 16.37% of the total population of the country. The decennial growth rate of Scheduled Castes (30.04%) in 1981-91 has been higher than the corresponding rate of total population (23.79%). According to 1991 census, the Scheduled Castes have a sex ratio of 922 females per 1000 males¹, which was almost at par with the average that of total population (923)^{1(a)}.

¹Sixth Report of National Commission, op. cit., p. 18

^{1(a)}National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights in their black paper have quoted UNDP Report 1997 to indicate that sex ratio for general population was 944 females for 1000 males. The Sixth Report of National Commission for SCs/STs does not indicate the reference point. Possibly the ratio may have deteriorated in the latest census.

Largest concentration of scheduled castes was in U.P. (2.92 crore). followed by West Bengal (1.60 crore), Bihar (1.26 crore), Tamil Nadu (1.07 crore), A.P. (1.05 crore), M.P. (0.96 crore) and Maharashtra (0.87 crore). In proportionate terms, Punjab has the largest concentration of Scheduled Castes (28.31%) of the total population, followed by Himachal Pradesh (25.34%), West Bengal (23.62%) and UP (21.05%)². 81% of the Scheduled Caste population was living in rural areas. Only 19% lived in urban areas, as compared to 25.7% in case of the total population (1991 census).

Educational Profile

The rate of literacy among Scheduled Castes, as per 1991 census, was 37.41% as compared to 57.69% for non-SC and ST communities. For Scheduled Tribes, it was even lower (29.6%). Female literacy among Scheduled Castes was 23.76% as compared to 44.82% in respect of non-Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, while for Scheduled Castes male it was 49.91% as against 69.53% for non-Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes male. The position in respect of literacy levels among Scheduled Castes was particularly bad in the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and U.P. Recent estimates of literacy have shown a significant increase for all categories of population. As per indications available from the 2001 census, the gaps between literacy rate of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and non-SCs/STs are narrowing and the enrolment of SC and ST boys and girls as a percentage of total enrolment has also increased in almost all States³. There is also a significant improvement in the gross enrolment ratio of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. However, these statistics are a poor comfort because there are very high dropout rates in children from SC and ST categories. The drop out rates of children among Scheduled Castes in 1990-91 were 49.35% at primary stage, 67.77% at middle stage and 77.65% at secondary stage. In the case of girls, the dropout rates are higher than the average at the primary level and very very high at middle and secondary stages⁴.

As regards higher education, Scheduled Castes constitute 8.37% of total number of students pursuing graduate courses, 8% of those pursuing post-graduate courses and 2.77% of those carrying out research⁵.

Economic Status

Scheduled Castes are concentrated in States which have largest number of people living below poverty line. Out of 32 crores of persons below poverty line as estimated by the Planning Commission, U.P. accounts for more than 6 crores, followed by Bihar (4.93 crores), Maharashtra (3 crores), Madhya Pradesh (2.9 crores) and West Bengal (2.5 crores). Bihar has the largest percentage of Scheduled Castes (70.66%) living below poverty line, followed by U.P. (58.99%) and Maharashtra (51.64%)⁶.

²Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 18

³Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 152

⁴Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 177

⁵Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 153

⁶Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 18

Information contained in the following table shows that the percentage of Scheduled Castes below poverty line in rural areas was 49.04 as compared to 32.96% for other categories, while, for urban area, it was 42.35% for Scheduled Castes as compared to 23.91% in respect of other categories.

Details of People Below Poverty Line

Years Social Group	Proportion of poor households in the Social group to the total households		Proportion of a household category in all poor households		Proportion of a household category in all non-poor households	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1987-88						
SC	55.22	47.07	24.72	17.63	16.30	9.17
Others	39.45	28.82	60.65	76.70	75.74	87.59
All India	44.86	31.62	100	100	100	100
1993-94						
SC	49.04	42.35	28.24	21.65	18.34	19.84
Others	32.96	23.91	56.74	73.87	72.14	86.10
All India	38.46	26.89	100	100	100	100

Source: "Counting the poor", Sarvekshana analytical report No. 1, Dept. of Statistics, Government of India, quoted in Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 19.

Occupational Categories

The incidence of poverty is directly relatable to their economic status reflected in occupations they pursue as would be evident from the information given below. As per 1991 census 49.06% of Scheduled Castes are agricultural labourers, compared to 19.66% belonging to other categories, which by itself is sufficient to establish the wide gap in economic status between the two as also of how the development process has affected them differentially.

Occupational Classification of Scheduled Castes

	1961			1991		
	Genl.	SC	ST	Genl.	SC	ST
Cultivators	52.78	37.76	68.18	39.74	25.44	54.50
Agri. Labourers	16.71	34.48	19.71	19.66	49.06	32.69
Household Industry	6.38	6.56	2.47	2.56	2.41	1.04
Other workers	24.13	21.20	9.64	38.04	23.08	11.76

Source: Quoted in National Commission for SCs & STs, Sixth Report, 1999-2000 & 2000-2001.

Not only this, the number of SCs as agricultural labourers was higher than that of Scheduled Tribes. This is largely because the Scheduled Castes have very poor access to land and even when they are recorded as cultivators, many of them cultivate land as tenants or share croppers and have very small area of land to operate. Their overwhelming status as agricultural labourers directly accounts for the higher level of poverty.

The more striking part of the information in the above table is the sizable decline in the percentage of cultivators among SCs between 1961 and 1991 census. This goes to show that access of SCs to land for cultivation, whether as owned land or operated land, has come down substantially. The increase in the percentage of SC agricultural labourers shows that many SCs who owned land earlier (and some many have cultivated land as tenants) have lost them - a single most depressing indicator of their worsening economic situation which directly mirrors their vulnerability.

Occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes

Considering the fact that 25.44% Scheduled Castes have been classified as cultivators, and 49.06% Scheduled Castes as agricultural labourers in the statement above, nearly 75% of Scheduled Castes primarily depend on agriculture for employment. In view of the seasonal nature of agricultural operations they remain under-employed for most of the year [and in fact unemployed for varying periods], and wages paid to them are lower than the prescribed minimum wage rate. Their poor economic condition makes them vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, such as their compulsion to work as bonded labourers and send their children to work for just getting small food. A large number of them also migrate to distant places in search of work where they are subjected to even greater exploitation, particularly brutal in certain occupations like stone quarries and brick kilns.

As cultivators, Scheduled Castes own very small percentage of agricultural land as the following table would indicate:

Social Group	No. of Holdings (in lakh)			Area Operated (in lakh Hect)			Average land holding (In Hect)		
	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Scheduled Castes	100.52 (11.3)	120.41 (12.4)	134.22 (12.6)	115.22 (7.0)	126.39 (7.7)	131.73 (8.0)	1.15	1.05	0.98
Scheduled Tribes	68.54 (7.7)	76.48 (7.9)	86.70 (8.1)	167.04 (10.2)	172.34 (10.5)	179.09 (10.8)	2.44	2.25	2.07
Others	719.77 (81.00)	774.66 (79.7)	845.45 (79.3)	1355.71 (82.8)	1346.89 (81.8)	1344.25 (81.2)	1.88	1.74	1.59
All Social Groups	888.83 (100.00)	971.55 (100.00)	971.55 (100.00)	1637.97 (100.00)	1645.62 (100.00)	1655.07 (100.00)	1.84	1.69	1.55

Source: National Commission for SCs and STs, Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 23.

As per data available, in 1990-91 the share of Scheduled Castes in respect of total number of holdings in the country was 12.6% but they operated 8% of the area. The average size of their land holdings is 0.98 hectares. This is in contrast to 79.3% of the total number of holdings belonging to others, who operate 81.2% of the area with average size of 1.59 hectares.

Impact of Land Reforms Programme on SCs

A) Access to Agricultural Land

The following table indicates that of the 53.13 lakh acres of land distributed at the all-India level, 18.08 lakh acres were distributed to SCs covering around 18.49 lakh beneficiaries, which comes to 0.977 acre per beneficiary. But West Bengal alone accounted for about 20% of the total land distributed to SCs, followed by Uttar Pradesh.

Distribution of Surplus Land to SCs as on September, 1996

States	Total area and beneficiaries		Area distributed and no. of SC beneficiaries						
	Area distributed	Total No. of benef.	Area distributed	No. of benef.	% share in area	% share in no. of benef.	% share in all India area	%share in all India no.of benef.	Av. Area distributed
Andhra Pr.	594352	521563	226890	216537	38.17	41.51	12.55	121.71	10.4
Assam	479878	441804	45746	43406	9.53	9.82	2.53	2.34	1.05
Bihar	303217	372529	179161	229832	59.08	61.69	9.91	12.43	0.779
Gujarat	133999	31376	83247	14584	62.12	46.48	4.60	0.78	5.20
Haryana	87259	27392	37623	11753	43.11	42.90	2.08	0.63	3.20
Him. Pr.	3340	4400	2305	2934	69.01	66.68	0.12	0.15	0.785
J & K	45000	450000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Karnataka	117147	31415	71133	18953	60.72	60.33	3.93	1.02	3.75
Kerala	64283	145106	25197	62174	39.01	42.84	1.39	3.36	0.40
MP	185313	72131	49433	21528	26.67	29.84	2.73	1.16	2.29
Maharashtra	554870	14580	161715	41945	29.14	29.83	8.94	2.26	3.85
Orissa	154298	135219	49075	45561	31.80	33.69	2.71	2.46	1.077
Punjab	103487	28287	44015	11301	42.53	39.95	2.43	0.61	3.89
Rajasthan	452176	77899	145317	28453	32.13	36.52	8.03	1.53	5.10
Tamilnadu	162369	135269	62096	59729	38.24	44.15	3.43	3.23	1.03
UP	390501	346209	263815	236599	67.55	68.33	14.59	12.79	1.11
W. Bengal	965293	2151632	359519	800870	37.24	37.22	19.88	43.31	0.44
Total	5213328	5120859	1807575	1848833	34.67	36.10	100.00	100.00	0.97

Source: Report of the National Commission for SCs/STs, 1995-1996, extracted in Thorat, Social Security for SCs in unorganized sector in S.M. Dev & others, Social and Economic Security in India, 2001, p. 371 Delhi.

Despite distribution of the ceiling surplus and other land, the percentage of landless households among SCs has increased from 12.62% in 1982 to 13.34% in 1992, while the corresponding rate has remained constant at around 10% for non-SC and ST category⁷. Though the above figures may create the impression that at all India level around 87% of SC households owned some land in 1992, this may be misleading as nearly 60% are landless or near landless because less than 1/2 an acre of land owned by 47.50% (as per table below) may consist of patch of land to include residential backyard.

⁷Thorat, op. cit., p. 372

The following table would indicate the landless and the near landless together constitute 60% of SC households. This position was extremely high in Punjab, Kerala, Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

Percentage of Landless and Near Landless Households among SCs (Percentage total rural households)

State	1982					1992				
	Landless	Less than 1/2 acre	Bet 1/2 & 1 acre	Up to 1 acre	Landless & upto 1 acre	Landless	Less than 1/2 acre	Bet. 1/2 & 1 acre	Upto 1 acre	Land less & upto 1 acre
Andhra Pr.	13.58	44.34	7.95	52.29	65.87	12.49	49.95	9.91	59.86	72.35
Assam	5.02	36.98	17.27	54.25	59.27	5.52	37.10	7.94	45.04	50.56
Bihar	35.58	69.78	9.76	79.54	89.24	19.73	62.62	6.15	68.77	88.50
Gujarat	23.86	44.69	6.38	51.22	75.06	18.09	34.11	4.22	38.88	56.42
Haryana	10.09	87.52	0.97	88.49	98.58	7.95	73.10	3.63	76.73	84.68
Him. Pr.	6.01	34.71	9.96	44.67	50.73	7.09	22.67	5.37	28.04	35.13
J & K	0.66	41.56	3.58	45.14	45.80	4.00	34.37	7.91	42.28	46.28
Karnataka	14.52	38.41	8.51	46.92	61.44	10.69	32.60	2.67	35.27	45.96
Kerala	16.56	77.33	5.35	82.68	99.24	14.33	79.32	-	79.32	93.65
Madh. Prad.	18.11	24.21	2.55	26.76	44.87	20.53	19.04	3.17	22.21	42.74
Maharashtra	26.39	33.42	3.38	36.80	63.19	24.31	32.13	2.99	35.12	59.43
Orissa	7.2	47.78	6.70	54.18	61.38	11.19	49.82	9.78	59.60	70.79
Punjab	6.01	56.84	2.96	89.50	95.81	6.7	85.57	1.43	87.00	93.78
Rajasthan	12.91	18.10	2.40	20.50	33.41	76.11	29.10	6.18	35.28	43.04
Tamil Nadu	14.5	61.66	7.48	69.14	83.64	19.21	57.4	9.82	67.03	86.24
UP	7.18	40.88	18.33	59.21	66.39	6.15	45.98	16.08	62.06	68.21
W. Bengal	19.13	42.74	11.05	53.79	72.92	12.02	47.66	11.64	59.30	71.32
India	12.62	47.97	9.53	57.50	70.12	13.34	47.50	8.89	56.39	69.73

Source: NSS⁸ Land Holding Survey, 1986 and 1992.

⁸Quoted in Thorat S., op. cit., p. 372

Thus SC's potential to pursue viable agriculture is constrained by lack of access to sufficient land and even to the extent of small land they possess, they lack access to capital and various inputs. Several Rural Development Programmes have been in operation to provide financial assistance for various inputs, such as IRDP, JRY, Million Wells Scheme to improve the productive capacity of small and marginal farmers and some SCs did get the benefit of these Schemes. However, at all India level, only 19.12% were self employed cultivator households out of SC households who owned some land, as per information available in 1991. This ratio did not change in the statistics available for 1997-98. As against this, the percentage of self-employed cultivators among non-SCs and STs was more than double in both periods. The position in respect of self employed non-farm households was also lower for SCs in 1992, as compared to other categories⁹. This clearly shows that the various schemes of poverty alleviation did not create substantial impact in improving the economic position of SCs. The gap in respect of self-employed households in urban areas is even wider between SCs and non-SCs. In 1993-94 while the SCs self-employed were 24%, the corresponding figure was 35.05% in respect of others in urban areas¹⁰.

As per 1991 census, percentage of agriculture labour among SCs was more than double that of non-SC households and this disparity has continued over the years since 1974-75. This further shows that the rural development programmes did not upgrade the status of those among SCs who had some land.

The studies on Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka clearly bring out the incidence of discrimination in occupation, employment wages, and land and in other economic spheres. Similar evidence from Orissa also corroborates discrimination in land and labour market¹¹.

Since nearly 60% of agricultural labour households and 40% of wage labour households in the rural non-farm sector are below poverty line, the impact of wage employment programmes in improving the income level of SC families has been inadequate in magnitude and coverage. The position in urban areas is even worse. With the growing trend towards privatization and dependence on the market for jobs, capital and social services, the position of SCs is going to worsen. Therefore, it needs to be critically evaluated why Government sponsored poverty alleviation programmes have contributed so little to uplift SC families.

The land related matters have been the largest single factor responsible for atrocities against Scheduled Castes in rural areas. Members of the Scheduled Caste have been fighting for ownership rights over the land cultivated by them or seeking possession over the land already distributed to them by the Government. They have also been demanding allotment of land under the relevant Land Reforms programmes under which they have been assigned priority by the Government in distribution of land. However, the poor implementation of land reforms particularly in States where Scheduled Castes constitute a large percentage of population has deprived them of access to this asset to improve their economic position and reduce their vulnerability.

⁹Thorat., op. cit., p. 374

¹⁰Thorat, op. cit., p. 375

¹¹Thorat, page 383

Status of Self-employed SCs

The disparity between SCs and non-SCs in various categories of self-employment is evident in the following table.

Occupational Pattern-Scheduled Caste and Other (in percentage)

Occupational Category	1987-88		1993-94	
	SC	Other	SC	Other
Rural				
Self-employed in agriculture	18.90	43.3	19.12	42.42
Self-employed in non-agriculture	11.0	13.8	10.32	13.89
Self-employed (total)	29.8	57.1	29.49	56.31
Agricultural wage labour	51.7	23.2	50.6	22.37
Non-agricultural wage labour	11.4	09.7	10.22	6.67
Rural wage labour total	63.1	31.1	60.28	29.14
Others	06.9	11.5	9.67	14.62
Urban				
Self-employed	28.0	35.2	24.08	35.05
Regular wage/salaries	39.4	45.0	39.27	43.11
Casual labour	26.0	10.3	26.96	10.57
Other wage	08.5	09.2	9.67	11.25
All	100	100	100	100

SC = Scheduled Castes; Others = Non-SC/ST

Source: NSS Employment/Unemployment Survey, 1987-88 and 1993-94 CSO, Delhi, quoted in Thorat, S. Oppression and Denial, EPW Feb. 9, 2002, p. 576.

Only 1/5 of all SC households were self-employed cultivators, while the percentage was more than double in case of others. The percentage of those SCs engaged in non-farm self-employment activities was even lower presumably because of their low-access to capital. In urban areas, the gap in self-employed category between SCs and non-SCs was lower. The lesser number of self-employed SCs in agriculture can be attributed primarily to their lack of access to land, while in the non-farm sector it would be relatable to lack of access to capital and skills. The explanation for this lack of access would lie in caste based restrictions on owning land by SCs as well as the discrimination practised against SCs in respect of access to credit, technology and avenues of skill development and even attempts to change occupation. In both these areas the weakness of self-employment programmes like IRDP is evident. The high level of manual wage labour among SCs is the direct consequence of these disparities¹².

The Incidence of Unemployment

The unemployment rate among SCs is much higher as compared to other workers and this position is true of the rate of underemployment as well as shown in the following table. This could easily be related to caste discrimination against hiring them¹³.

¹²Thorat, op. cit, p. 375

¹³Thorat, S. EPW., op. cit., p. 577

Unemployment Rate (Percentage of Unemployed, Age 5 years and above)

Category/ Year	Male				Female			
	Usual Principal Status	Usual Principal & subsidiary status	Current Weekly status	Current Daily status	Usual Principal Status	Usual Principal & subsidiary status	Current Weekly status	Current Weekly status
Rural								
SC								
1993-94	0.90	0.60	1.909	4.30	0.30	0.10	1.10	2.00
1977-78	1.23	0.00	2.93	6.73	2.56	0.00	1.90	4.09
Others (Non-SC/ST)								
1993-94	1.20	0.90	1.60	2.70	0.40	0.30	0.50	1.10
1977-78	1.57	0.00	2.15	3.90	1.53	0.00	0.97	0.97
Urban								
SC								
1993-94	2.60	2.40	3.30	4.90	1.00	0.90	1.20	1.70
1977-78	3.40	NA	NA	NA	3.40	NA	NA	NA
Others (Non-SC/ST)								
1993-94	2.40	2.10	2.70	3.30	1.11	1.10	1.30	1.40
1977-78	3.30	NA	NA	NA	2.60	NA	NA	NA

SC = Scheduled Castes; Others = Non-SC/ST

Source: NSS, Employment Survey, 1987-88 and 1993-94 CSO, Delhi, extracted in Thorat, S. EPW, p. 577

The consequence of higher incidence of wage labour and underemployment among SCs is increased levels of poverty evidenced in their low level of income and consumption. The following two tables eloquently bring out this position.

Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Line
(Household type for scheduled caste and others)

Category	Rural											
	Self-employed Agri.		Self-employed in Non-agri.		Agri. labour		Non-Agri labour		Others		All	
Year	1987- 88	1993- 94	1987- 88	1993- 94	1987- 88	1993- 94	1987- 88	1993- 94	1987- 88	1993- 94	1987- 88	1993- 94
SC	41.21	27.71	41.6	38.19	59.77	60.00	46.49	41.44	29.98	29.00	50.07	48.14
Others	27.68	25.57	31.42	29.49	53.30	52.34	34.45	35.59	19.26	20.51	34.37	31.29

SC = Scheduled Castes; Others = Non-SC

Source: Based on Consumption Expenditure Survey, NSSO, 1987-88 and 1993-94. Extracted in Thorat, S. EPW op. cit., p. 577.

Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Line
(Household type for scheduled caste and others)

Category	Urban									
	Self-employed Agri.		Self-employed in Non-agri.		Casual labour		Others		All	
Year	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94	1987-88	1993-94
SC	61.48	54.60	43.69	35.28	73.45	69.48	56.84	45.00	56.84	49.90
Others	43.14	33.64	25.26	19.04	70.11	60.60	32.21	26.00	37.21	29.66

SC = Scheduled Castes; Others = Non-SC.

Source: Based on Consumption Expenditure Survey, NSSO, 1987-88 and 1993-94. Extracted in Thorat, S. EPW op. cit., p. 577.

In 1993-94, as against 48.14% of scheduled caste households below the poverty line live in rural areas, the percentage was 31.29% in the general population. In urban areas, corresponding percentage of 49.90% of SC households as compared to 29.66% in the other category indicates a wider gap. The incidence of poverty was evidently higher in the case of agricultural labourers and lower than those who were self employed in agriculture. Casual labour constitute the largest segment of urban poor among SCs, though the disparities with others is not as wide as it is in case of self employed, regular salaried and wage workers¹⁴. Overall, nearly half the SC population was below poverty line both in rural and urban areas. These figures reveal “that the SCs were at least 25 years behind other groups in terms of level of poverty”¹⁵.

Based on this macro analysis, the study has come to the conclusion that “it is thus beyond doubt that the historical impact of traditional caste based restrictions on the ownership of property, employment and occupation are still visible in significant measure, the access of formerly untouchables to income earning capital assets and employment is limited and their segregation into manual labour is overwhelmingly high. The two prime economic attributes of the caste system thus seem to be present in sizeable measure even today”¹⁶.

Not only has there been decline in their status as cultivators, the share in household industry as a source of occupation among Scheduled Castes reduced from 6.56% in 1961 to 2.41% in 1991. This significantly highlights the alienation of scheduled castes from production related activities, which may have constituted a source of economic security and enhanced their bargaining power. This deterioration in the nature of employment activity has not affected traditional occupations and Scheduled Castes continue to be engaged in works which are polluting such as scavenging, drum beating, skin and hide work, carrying carcasses. Precisely these occupations make them untouchables. No other community threatens to take over these occupations from them or compete with them.

¹⁴Thorat, S. EPW, op. cit., p. 577

¹⁵Thorat, S. EPW, op. cit., p. 577

¹⁶Thorat, EPW, op. cit., p. 577

This shows that while the share of traditionally degrading assignment of work to SCs continues, the share of status enhancing work has declined. Not surprisingly, therefore, even as a sequel to fulfillment of reservation quota, SCs occupy bulk of Group 'D' posts of Sweepers (Safai Karmacharis), which only proves that the baggage of traditional caste based occupations gets reinforced even in the changed milieu¹⁷.

Human Development

Apart from adverse economic mobility, lack of access to social services and amenities of modern living also profoundly influence the vulnerable status of the SCs as a community and is a factor in their confrontation with the larger caste based Hindu society. It may, therefore, be relevant to see how Scheduled Castes fare in the overall Human Development index which would inevitably reflect the impact of various development programmes on them, particularly in the social sector.

The following is the data regarding human development profile of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in respect of selective indicators, which not merely depicts their poor income level, but also their access to various social services like education, health, water supply, public distribution, etc. Access to many of these services is directly relatable to disabilities arising out of their status which continues to operate despite legal provisions and administrative safeguards aimed at eliminating them.

Human Development Profile of Rural India, 1994 - Selected Indicators for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes

Social Groups	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	
Per Capita Income (Rs. p.a)	3,505	3,237	
Wage Earning Households*	31	47	
Adult Wage Earners as a % of total Adult Earners	55	58	
Population Below Poverty Line (%)	51	50	
Capability Poverty Measures (CPM)**	60	68	
Literacy Rate (7+yrs)	39	42	
Ever Enrolment Rate (6-14 yrs)	60	63	
Proportion of Total	Education	2.6	2.9
Household Income Spent on	Health	4.9	7.0
Household using facilities (%)	Electricity	30	31
	Piped water	17	23
	Public distribution system	38	32

* Refers to households, which have reported more than 50% of their income as wages.

** CPM is a simple average of percentage of birth unattended by trained health personnel, percentage of stunted children and female illiteracy rate.

Source: Abusaleh Shariff, India: Human Development Report, A Profile of Indian States in the 1990s, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1999.

¹⁷Sixth Report, op. cit., Tables 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.4, 8.2.5 at pp 182, 193, 185 and 186

The poverty profile is further reinforced by the level of their ownership of other productive assets, which is indicated in the following table.

Distribution of Households Owning Productive Assets (in %)

Social Groups	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
Tubewells	5.4	2.8
Generators	0.3	0.2
Thresher	0.8	0.6
Winnower	0.4	0.4
Bullock Cart	5.9	10.7
Tractor	1.0	1.3
Bio-gas Plant	0.6	1.0

Source: Abusaleh Shariff, India: Human Development Report, A Profile of Indian States in the 1990s, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1999.

It is evident that lack of ownership of land and also lack of access to capital are responsible for the poor percentage of Scheduled Castes owning these productive assets.

The following table depicts ownership of a residential house and selected consumer durables among scheduled castes and amenities available in their households.

Ownership of House and Selected Consumer Durables (in %)

Consumer Durables	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
House	96.5	95.00
Bicycles	48.1	3.2
Television	5.6	6.5
Radio/Transistor	29.4	27.1
Electric Fan	10.7	10.5
Motor Cycle/Scooter	1.2	3.3
Sewing Machines	5.9	2.9

Amenities Available in Households

Amenities	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
Kutcha House	66.6	74.0
Separate Kitchen	30.1	34.4
Electric Connection	30.7	29.7
Protected Water Supply	72.8	61.6
Piped Water Supply	22.6	17.2
Toilet	8.3	12.2

Source: Abusaleh Shariff, India : Human Development Report, A Profile of Indian States in the 1990s, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1999.

The data on ownership of a house in the first table when read with the status of the house in the second table would clarify that a thatch mud hut is what defines a residential house for overwhelming majority of them. The other indicators in the two tables would be sufficient to show that the SCs have a very low level of social existence. Though the source of this study does not provide comparable figures for these indicators in respect of the rest of the population, it is not difficult to visualize that there would be a very wide gap in respect of Scheduled Castes and other communities, as the following information furnished by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights would corroborate¹⁸:

- 30.91% of Scheduled Castes households had electricity, as compared to 61.31% for non-Scheduled Castes households.
- 9.84% Scheduled Castes households had access to sanitation, as compared to 26.76% for non-Scheduled Castes households.
- More than 20% Scheduled Castes population does not have access to safe drinking water. Comparable percentage of others is much less.
- Monthly per capita expenditure (1987-88) was Rs. 133 for Scheduled Castes as compared to Rs. 169 for others in rural area and it was Rs. 185 for SCs as compared to Rs. 256 for others in urban area. This gap increased from the level existing in the year 1983-84.
- 57.5% of Scheduled Castes children under 4-years of age were reported undernourished in 1992.
- Infant mortality among the Scheduled Castes was 91 per 1000 live births in 1992-93, as compared to 79 for all categories in 1992 and 73 in 1993.
- The death rate among Scheduled Castes was 15.50% in rural area, as compared to 11.20% for others. It was 12.90% in urban areas as compared to 8.40% for non-Scheduled Castes.

Both the infant mortality and death, etc. related statistics indicate greater exposure to life threatening diseases, lack of access to health care, under-nourishment and low level of health consciousness.

Although the information collected above is neither up to date nor entirely comparable in respect of various parameters for the same period, still it is evident that the gaps between Scheduled Castes and rest of the population are quite large despite special earmarking of funds for Scheduled Castes in various development programmes. These gaps are not entirely due to lack of sufficient resources though entitlement in this regard has not been forthcoming but are also due to social constraints in delivery of benefits including resistance from and manipulation by them to corner facilities/benefits meant for SCs. Considering the shrinking budgetary support for social sector such as health, social security, nutrition, etc. and the attempts by the Government to withdraw State support from certain activities besides privatization of some others, the gap is likely

¹⁸National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, Black Paper, Also Letters from Divakar, N. National Convenor and others both dated May 9, 2002 addressed to Prime Minister and to Chairman, NHRC

to widen rather than reduce. Yet, there is no road map available to indicate the stage when this gap would disappear or become negligible. In fact, neither the Planning Commission nor the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment have given serious thought to this aspect. It is extremely important in this connection that Planning Commission prepares a Perspective Plan for bridging this gap with fixed yearly targets and adequate resources allocated for this purpose so that the progress achieved in that direction can be monitored. In fact, a Human Development Index for SCs (also STs) separately should be prepared expeditiously for this purpose as also recommended by National Commission for SCs and STs and State be also urged to do the same¹⁹.

Gender Equity

Scheduled Castes Women constitute 16.3% of India's total female population and 47.96% of the total SC population. 81.45% of them live in rural areas while they constitute about 12% of the urban population²⁰. The plight of Scheduled Castes women is evident from the fact that even the sex ratio of Scheduled Castes women per 1000 male is only 922 as compared to 944 for the general population²¹. This only shows that gender inequity operates even among those Scheduled Castes, where women are earning members at par with men. Further, the SC women are doubly vulnerable. Firstly, they have to share the economic burden of the family on equal terms with those of men and, in addition, the entire household burden as well. They get married early and have to experience frequent pregnancies. Economic independence of SC women has also not improved their social position, because women bear the brunt of lack of access of their entire community to basic services. They have to shoulder the responsibility of collecting fuel wood and water, and, at times, even edible articles from long distances which drains their energy. Their hardship is even more pronounced because a large number of SC households are women-headed due to either husband's desertion or his drunkenness. This places the entire burden of household running on their shoulders. The manifestations of inequity against women of all categories also apply in case of scheduled caste women. They are typically the last in the family to take food where men of the family and thereafter the children receive higher priority. Most of them have nutrient deficient food. They experience larger number of child births than upper caste women do. Their access to education and health facilities is poorer than the male members of their communities.

SC women also constitute a major workforce of the national economy. As per one study, nearly 89.5% of all adult SC women participate in some productive labour²². In urban areas, they also function as hawkers, scrap collectors, petty traders, etc. besides earning livelihood as wage labourers in domestic work, construction industry, earthwork, beedi/agarbathi manufacture, candle making, garment and embroidery work. All these

¹⁹Sixth Report, para 34.97, op. cit., p. 30

²⁰Black Paper, op. cit.

²¹Black Paper, op. cit., This is as per UNDP Report 1997 (The latest report of National Commission for SCs/STs shows a deterioration in average sex ratio to 923 for the general population and therefore the ratio has virtually come at par between the two categories).

²²Black Paper, op. cit.

employments are characterized by low wage, irregular work, absence of social security, vulnerability to sexual exploitation and dependency on middlemen and employer. Women labour, in general, irrespective of caste, is relatively underpaid and unrecognized and labelled as unskilled. These disabilities may be operating even more adversely against SC women. As per one study, nearly 31.6% of all children from Scheduled Castes communities are child workers²³, SC girls constitute perhaps the largest segment of that child labour. While there is a general literacy gap between Scheduled Castes and members of general category, the gap is even wider between SC women and SC men. The position is much worse in BIMARU States [Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP]. Inequity also operates in drop outs, where the percentage of SC girls is higher than that of SC boys at all levels²⁴. The share of SC women in decision making positions is abysmally low, virtually non-existent. In some central services, there is no representation whatsoever, while in most others, the number is in single digit²⁵.

SC women bear the brunt of atrocities against their community. The number of rapes committed against SC women has shown an increasing trend²⁶. The mass rape is used by upper caste militias as a weapon to break the morale of the entire community. Rape is used as a political instrument and these women become the target of anger and wrath of the dominant castes. The women are singled out for other indignities like being paraded naked by upper caste people even for petty disputes²⁷. Women are also subjected to most obnoxious practice of prostitution in the name of religion such as the Devdasi system where children between 6 to 8 years belonging mostly to families of untouchables are dedicated to God, cannot marry and are raped by temple priests and upper caste men and eventually auctioned off into urban brothels. In times of extreme hardship, such as natural calamities women are forced to sell their bodies for the family to survive. In certain communities under customary practices, women are sent for prostitution as integral part of social survival or auctioned like a commodity as a punishment for violating customary injunctions²⁸. Under superstitious beliefs, certain mishaps in the family are attributed to witchcraft and women (usually SC/ST) are branded as witches engaged in this practice and publicly humiliated, grievously assaulted and at times brutally murdered. Traditional healers/customary religious chiefs also lend support to such a belief.

Women constitute a larger number of persons engaged in manual scavenging. In fact, when the entire family is engaged as scavengers, it is its women members who share the larger load of work. It has also been experienced that where benefits have been extended for elimination of manual scavenging to certain families of manual scavengers through development programmes specifically targeted at them, it is usually

²³Black Paper, op. cit.

²⁴Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 177

²⁵Black Paper, op. cit., 26 Sixth Report, op. cit.

²⁷Black Paper, op. cit.

²⁸Musahar, A Socio-economic Study carried out by A.N. Sinha, Institute of Social Studies (2002), p. 38. Compulsion of women to sell their bodies. For customary practices, see Arti Dhar 'Auctioned Girl commits suicide'; The Hindu, Aug. 20, 2002

the men of the family who take advantage of it, give up manual scavenging work and take to alternative occupations. But they continue to permit their women to do manual scavenging for enhancing income of the entire household. This is the worst example of gender inequity at the family level within the community²⁹.

Though separate data is not available, there is no dearth of impressions that the benefits of various development programmes, such as distribution of land and other productive assets have, by and large, gone to SC males and, therefore, have not helped in improving the status of the scheduled caste women within the family as well as outside it. Where women have been targeted for poverty alleviation in the family, the level of investment in projects selected for them is far lower as compared to those for men. Of late, Government instructions have promoted coverage of women in land allotment both as exclusive and joint ownership with their spouses. But separate data on land and assets allotted to SC women is not readily available. In this background, SC women should emerge as a distinct focus of attention and targeting in any future strategy of development for this group. National Commission for SCs and STs should devote a separate chapter on SC (and ST) women in their report as recommended by the National Commission for Women³⁰. Also the section of Planning and Development relating to SCs should have a distinct and comprehensive treatment on SC women. The Dept. of Woman and Child Development should prepare separate database in respect of SC (as also ST) women to enable measurement of progress achieved in improving their status.

Development Strategy - Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes

Special Component Plan has been devised as a mechanism for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for development of Scheduled Castes. This Plan was initiated since 6th Five Year Plan. Under this arrangement, all States which have sizeable SC population and Central Ministries are required to prepare a Special Component Plan for development of scheduled castes as a part of their Five Year and Annual Plans. They have to identify Schemes and Programmes already under implementation or which can be implemented to benefit Scheduled Castes on which funds allocated under SCP can be spent. The outlay for implementation of the programme for Scheduled Castes should be in proportion to the population of scheduled castes in the respective States. Most of the States have formulated their SCP but a large number of States have not made provision for SCP in proportion to their States' SC population. In some States, the outlay provided for SCP is only half in proportion to their SC population or considerably short of that percentage. Even the inadequate amount so allocated has not been utilized and large outlay for SCP remains unutilized in many States. The National Commission for SCs and STs in its Sixth report for years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 have made the following comments with regard to this aspect:

“In the case of Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, there was drastic cut at the stage of utilization of outlay. Andhra Pradesh has an SC population of 14.87% and provided

²⁹Personal experience of interaction with Scavengers at Mathura (U.P.)

³⁰National Commission for Women, Annual Report (1996-97)

Rs. 544.27 crores for SCP during 1999-2000, which formed 9.93% of the outlay. The expenditure under SCP is only Rs. 189.42 crore against the provision of Rs. 544.27 crore. Thus a large outlay provided for SCP remained unutilized. In the next year SCP outlay has been reduced to Rs. 217.18 crore, which was 2.64% of State's total plan outlay of Rs. 8228.12 crore. In the case of Punjab, outlay provided for SCP for the year 1999-2000 was Rs. 304 crores which represented 11.34% in the State Plan Outlay of Rs. 2680 crores, which was less than half of the ratio of State's SC population. The State's SC population constitutes 28.37% of its total population. At the time of implementation of SCP this outlay has been further drastically reduced. As a result the expenditure during 1999-2000 was Rs. 173.11 crores only. This lack-lustre performance of Punjab in implementation of SCP, which has the highest proportion of SC population in the country and Andhra Pradesh which has a sizeable SC population (more than 1 crore as per 1991 census) shows that many States do not take development of Scheduled Castes with the seriousness it deserves. Similarly, large under-utilization of SCP outlay can be observed in the case of Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Delhi. In many States these cuts of SCP outlay are regular features: as a result the expenditure is substantially short of the outlays announced in the budget estimates. Figures in respect of some States can be seen from the following table:

(Rs. in Crores)

Year	Bihar		Punjab		Tamil Nadu		UP		West Bengal	
	Outlay	Exp.	Outlay	Exp.	Outlay	Exp.	Outlay	Exp.	Outlay	Exp.
1992-93	180.09	95.05	164.06	113.11	293.00	300.44	404.99	367.56	185.73	100.05
1993-94	104.00	94.74	195.00	105.88	563.61	335.28	456.91	388.92	237.13	229.54
1994-95	166.69	152.23	200.07	87.42	523.06	443.19	492.24	482.49	174.35	232.49
1995-96	470.91	110.34	227.68	90.50	618.25	483.30	809.28	538.66	278.14	124.44
1996-97	260.30	144.17	205.00	75.59	652.39	416.90	1420.00	930.00	146.85	115.17
1997-98	354.79	0.00	210.00	134.59	752.23	224.35	1484.00	1082.55	300.38	204.91
1998-99	627.97	0.00	220.00	57.80	825.53	713.27	2159.81	1349.23	235.30	174.69
1999-00	549.36	389.00	304.00	173.11	997.41	825.53	1261.35	1261.34	1414.14	1106.76
2000-01	386.13		312.00		985.54	897.41	1889.53		1564.04	

It may be seen that Punjab has regularly failed to implement the Special Component Plan decided at the beginning of the Plan. Bihar is also regular in its failure to fully implement the SCP. The reductions in the case of U.P., Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are also regular and quite substantial. It appears that high outlay for the SCP is announced at the time of presentation of budget to appease the SC population without any serious intention to implement the programmes. Thereafter, the implementation of the SCP is completely neglected resulting into picture as presented in the table above. Obviously there is no monitoring of SCP after announcement of SCP in the budget speech, Punjab has the dubious distinction of first providing outlay for SCP upto the

extent of only half of the amount required as per population percentage of the State (it provides outlay of around 10-11% of the State Plan Outlay as against the required level of about 28% as per population proportion) and then reducing this inadequate outlay by another more than 50% at the implementation stage³¹.

The Special Component Plans formulated by the States also suffer from serious constraints, such as the disinterestedness to work out a time-bound strategy for development of Scheduled Castes. This is reflected in lack of efforts to identify specific problems of Scheduled Castes related to each category of occupations they are employed in, potential for improvement within and outside those occupations, constraints in their development measures needed to meet them. This is compounded by inability to work out integrated programmes to alleviate poverty and time-bound programme coverage to provide them with civic amenities. That is why the huge gap persists between them and the rest of the population in essential parameters of development.

Special Central Assistance to Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes

The main objective of Special Central Assistance to SCP is to supplement States' effort for speedy development of Scheduled Caste population by providing additional support to SC families to enhance their productivity and income. SCA can also be utilized for infrastructure development in blocks with 50% or more of Scheduled Caste population in a manner that contributes to the development of Scheduled Castes therein. SCA is a 100% grant-in-aid scheme. An amount of Rs. 1344 crores was released as SCA to States during the 8th Plan. Releases made under SCA during the 9th Plan represent an increase of around 21%³² over the previous years. The information contained in the report of the Commission indicates that some States have not utilized the amount allocated to them and some had delayed in reporting the utilization which hampered further release of funds to them. This obviously slowed the pace of implementation of the programmes for development of Scheduled Castes. The under-utilization of SCA released by Government of India in a large number of States with substantial SC population represents a sad aspect of Government's commitment towards development of Scheduled Castes³³.

Special Component Plan by the Central Ministries

Central Ministries are also expected to prepare Special Component Plan for development of Scheduled Castes at the time of formulation of their Five Year and Annual Plans and to ensure flow of at least 15% of total plan outlay for this purpose. But only fourteen Central Ministries/Departments are formulating SCP. Twenty seven Ministries/Departments have expressed their inability to do so because their activities cannot be divided community-wise and their schemes are not individual beneficiary oriented. The National Commission for SCs and STs in the preface to its Sixth report has commented on the ineffectiveness of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in coordinating these programmes for development of Scheduled Castes at the Government of India

³¹Sixth Report, op. cit., pp 29-30

³²Sixth Report, op. cit., pp 31

³³Sixth Report, op. cit., pp 31-32

level. The Social Welfare Departments at the level of State Governments also suffer from the same disability. Even the Tripartite Committees constituted by the Planning Commission at the Centre and State level to strengthen the mechanism of SCP have not yielded any visible improvement so far. The Commission has therefore suggested a fresh look at the entire institutional mechanism for formulation and implementation of development programmes for Scheduled Castes³⁴.

Institutional Finance for SC Development

Finance is one of the critical constraints in the development of income generating programmes for scheduled castes. Public Sector Banks, National Scheduled Castes/ Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) at the Central level, Scheduled Castes Development Corporations at the State level and the Cooperative Societies are main agencies catering to the financial needs of the scheduled castes. NSFDC is a major instrument for focused lending to Scheduled Castes. It is extending concessional finance to Scheduled Castes below double the poverty line limits through the State channeling agencies to enable them to set up income generating self-employment ventures. As per information available, against a target of 200 crores for disbursement during 1999-2000, the achievement of the Corporation was only 100 crores. The target was reduced to 110 crores during 2000-2001. There was substantial shortfall in the utilization of the assistance from NSFDC in respect of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Punjab, Tamilnadu, UP and West Bengal. Further, out of the Rs. 117.48 crores disbursed by NSFDC during 2000-2001, Rs. 99.04 crores (84%) remained unutilized³⁵. This clearly shows that even the meagre amount allocated for development of Scheduled Castes through the National Corporation does not get utilized, which in turn highlights as much the poor absorptive capacity of the delivery systems as it does the lack of concern and interest on the part of the State Governments.

In 1997, the Government of India set up a separate National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation with the objective of promoting self-employment for economic rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis. Besides providing training and extending loan to students from Safai Karamcharis for pursuing higher education, the Corporation distributed 21.83 crores to 17 States to benefit 3293 persons by March 2000. The programme suffers from a number of shortcomings including reluctance of banks to finance projects as pointed out by the National Safai Karamchari Commission in its reports³⁶. This aspect has also been commented upon while evaluating the implementation of the central programme for liberation and rehabilitation of manual scavengers in Section V.

Scheduled Caste Development Corporations

These Corporations with equity participation of the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 49:51 were set up for identifying eligible scheduled caste families and to

³⁴Sixth Report, op. cit., preface p. ii

³⁵Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 32

³⁶Second Report (1995-96) Four Reports have been submitted by the Commission from 1994 to 2000. The Fourth Report was submitted on 07.04.2002. However, only two reports have been placed before the Parliament.

provide them financial assistance and subsidy for income generating activities. The analysis made by the National Commission for SCs and STs in respect of the Scheduled Caste Development Corporations of Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, Karnataka, West Bengal and Assam showed large gaps between targets set and the loans sanctioned and disbursed. In some cases, there was diversion of funds towards administrative expenditure. Some States did not even release funds to the Corporation for carrying on activities³⁷. Political apathy is clearly the explanation for the neglected state of implementation of such an important programme which constitute the mainstay of efforts for achieving improvement in economic conditions of poor SC households.

Public Sector Banks

Under priority sector guidelines, nationalized banks are required to provide at least 10% of their total finances to weaker sections, which include Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As per information furnished by RBI as on the last Friday of March 2000, advances to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constituted 7.54% of the total advances in the priority sector, 9.65% in the agricultural sector and 3.20% in the SSI Sector. It is evident that the amount loaned to SC and ST borrowers was less than 10% of the target. It also shows that the amount of loan advanced to SC and ST borrowers in the priority sector, agricultural advances and advances to SSI is on an average much smaller when compared to other sections of the borrowers³⁸ [There are no separate figures for SC borrowers). Reserve Bank of India have issued detailed guidelines to the banks to ensure adequate flow of credit to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe borrowers. However, following the recommendations of the Narasimham Committee (1991) reforms have been initiated in the banking sector with the main objective of improving the recovery of advances and profitability of the Banks. These reforms also include reduction of emphasis on the priority sector advances. Narasimham Committee had in fact recommended reduction from its present level of 40% to about 10% which was opposed by the Planning Commission in the 9th Plan. However, the lending pattern of Banks has changed in a manner that the picture of its lending to members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would present a pessimistic future³⁹. At the end of March 1995, there were 57.74 lakhs SC and ST borrowers in agricultural sector, which came down to 43.88 lakhs by March 2000. In case of small-scale industry, the number of SC and ST borrowers came down from 9.15 lakhs in March 1995 to 5.54 lakhs in March 2000. In case of other priority sectors, the number of borrowers got reduced from 32.24 lakhs at the end March 1995 to 21.94 lakh borrowers by March 2000⁴⁰. Further, a distinction was made earlier between direct and indirect advances to agricultural sector. This distinction has since been done away with as a result of which advances made to traders dealing in agricultural commodities and even the State Governments for infrastructure development in rural areas are also considered agricultural advance. Therefore, it is

³⁷Sixth Report, op. cit., pp 33-34

³⁸Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 35

³⁹Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 37

⁴⁰Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 37

difficult to identify the extent of actual resource flow to the beneficiaries of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In all likelihood, it would have come down substantially.

Public sector banks are also advancing loan for Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana [PMRY] which has been in operation since October 1993 for providing self-employment to educated unemployed youth. The Scheme envisages reservation for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes upto 22.5% of the total number of beneficiaries. As per information available, 13.26% of total loan sanctioned both by public and private sector banks under the Scheme had gone to beneficiaries of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, which accounted for 15.63% of the total amount sanctioned during 2000-2001. This had come down from the level of 17.17% of the total loans sanctioned and 16.10% of the total amount in 1999-2000. As against this, the disbursed amount accounted for 12.58% of the total amount⁴¹ in 2000-2001, which had also got reduced from the level disbursed in 1999-2000. It is not clear what has been the share of Scheduled Castes in this combined figure. But it is evident that the share which has gone to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is far below the specified percentage envisaged for them in the Scheme.

Employment Generation Programmes

Besides the overarching development mechanism for SCs known as the Special Component Plan and the self-employment programmes financed by Development Corporations, both Central and State, Central Government has also been administering a number of specific programmes for generating employment both for wage labourers as well as self-employed. Since SCs constitute the largest segment of agricultural labourers, wage employment programmes have great relevance for them. Government of India in the Ministry of Rural Development have been operating two major programmes for providing wage employment in rural areas:

- (a) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, since 1.4.1989
- (b) Employment Assurance Scheme, since 1993

Both these programmes are targeted at landless agricultural labourers primarily. 22.5% of fund for JRY has been earmarked to be spent on SC and ST beneficiaries. However, as per concurrent evaluation of the programme (1993-94), only 11 days of wage employment per person was generated under JRY scheme⁴² during the reference period of 30 days preceding the date of the survey. In some States, it was less than 10 days per month. What percentage of SC beneficiaries have shared this employment opportunity is not known. Even otherwise, the scheme is plagued by several malpractices as brought out in Evaluation Reports, which may have actually resulted in lesser days of employment having been generated and even lesser benefit in terms of wages having gone to SCs, since the percentage of non-poor beneficiaries was quite high in many States and the programme suffered from conflict whether to promote employment generation or asset creation⁴³. The Scheme has been restructured as Jawahar Gram Samaridhi Yojana from

⁴¹Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 38

⁴²Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 22, also Sharma, AN & Mamgain, R.P. "Employment Generation and Question of Employment Security in Dev", SM, op. cit., p. 277

⁴³Sharma and Mamgain, op. cit., p. 277

1.4.1999 with the main objective of creating demand driven rural infrastructure and generation of employment has now become the secondary objective. Therefore, its impact on providing wage employment to poor in general and SCs in particular would reduce further.

In addition, Employment Assurance Scheme has also been in operation since 1993 to create wage employment in backward blocks during the period of acute shortage of employment for rural poor. As per CAG's Third Report of the year 1995, it provided 18 days and 16 days of employment during 1994-95 and 1995-96 respectively though the number of days of employment was higher in evaluation of the programme carried out by PEO of the Planning Commission. There is no disaggregated data on how many days of employment accrued to SCs. But the Scheme suffered from bogus reporting. It was also not restricted to backward areas characterized by chronic poverty and hunger during lean season⁴⁴. In any case, as the Sixth Report of National Commission for SCs and STs has pointed out, the Scheme was not able to provide assured employment on a regular basis as envisaged. Ever since the Scheme was universalized, it could not be continued as a demand driven scheme due to shortage of funds and huge demand. It would thus be evident that these programmes do not make any appreciable contribution in terms of provision of employment to SC landless agricultural labourers⁴⁵.

Besides wage employment, Central Govt. has also been operating a major programme for promotion of self employment known as IRDP for many years. There were three other sub-programmes which also catered to specific components of self-employment, such as DWCRA, TRYSEM and SITRA. While IRDP provided part subsidy and part loan for setting up self-employment ventures, DWCRA assisted women groups for taking up income generating activities. TRYSEM programme had the objective of providing training and skill development for promoting self-employment and SITRA was confined to providing tools and equipment to artisans for improving their productivity and income. Under IRDP 50% of the funds had been earmarked for SC and ST beneficiaries. Subsequently, in the remaining three programmes, DWCRA, TRYSEM and SITRA also this earmarking was enforced. While a substantial number of beneficiaries belonging to SCs have been covered under these programmes, in view of the enforcement of earmarked percentages, the Schemes suffered from number of inadequacies which have been highlighted in the various evaluation reports in respect of these programmes, both official and non-official. The most important of these was that a poor beneficiary without skill and experience stood no chance to improve his income. Also, indebtedness among beneficiaries increased which point to the non-viability of projects. Lack of integration with other development programmes and inability to forge backward and forward linkages characterised these projects. Sustainability of projects became a casualty in the rush to achieve targets⁴⁶. These limitations severely eroded its potential to raise the economic status of SC youth (from 1.4.1999 all these programmes have been clubbed together and amalgamated with

⁴⁴Sharma & Mamgain, op. cit., pp 277-278

⁴⁵Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 23

⁴⁶Sharma & Mamgain, op. cit., pp 277-278

Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarna Rozgar Yojna)⁴⁷. Reference has already been made to another self employment scheme called “**Prime Minister’s Rozgar Yojna (PMRY)**” and the schemes of financing self-employment activities by NSFDC, SC Development Corporations and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation. Women Development Corporations of State Governments and Manila Kosh also finance income generating activities of women but the share of SC women in them is not readily available.

The common thread which comes out of these self employment programmes, whether operated directly by the Government or through Corporate agencies/ autonomous societies, is the difficulty in accessing bank credit by SC and ST beneficiaries. This problem has become even more acute ever since public sector banks have adopted various ways to restrict flow of credit to this sector after the economic reforms have been ushered in. The potential therefore for generating self-employment in view of this problem is greatly constrained. The difficulties also arise in starting worthwhile self-employment ventures in view of the poor skill base, lack of entrepreneurship in SCs, including the educated unemployed among them and poor projectisation leading to lack of sufficient number of viable projects for unskilled beneficiaries among them. The changing nature of economy with its global integration also restricts the potential for running small business enterprises.

In view of the above, unemployment continues to remain the area of major concern for the Scheduled Castes. The number of SC’s unemployed has reached 52 lakhs in the live registers of Employment Exchanges with increasing proportion of SCs educated upto secondary or higher level among unemployed persons⁴⁸.

As regards cultivators, the second largest occupational category among SCs, reference has already been made to the poor implementation of land reforms in providing access to land to SCs for cultivation. The prospects of allotment of land in future are virtually negligible since land reforms implementation has disappeared from the political agenda of the Government and most major political parties. With a larger dose of foreign funding for development activities, increasing entry of multinationals in the globalized economy and determinants of economic policy being decided by the market forces, the traditional policy of land reforms is virtually being given up (without, of course, saying so). Relaxations are being made in provisions of Ceiling Laws, Tenancy Laws and in the matter of assignment of Government and Forest land to facilitate access of Corporate agencies for commercial use and management of land. In this background, there is little hope left for SCs to expect any major effort by Government for allocation of land to them. As for the small number of Scheduled Castes already owning land, they have been targeted for assistance under various programmes for a long time. These programmes range from assistance in terms of inputs such as seed and fertilizer, extension of technology for crop management under agricultural development programmes, creation of irrigation facilities under rural development programmes, land and water management

⁴⁷Sixth Report op. cit., p. 28

⁴⁸Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 26

under watershed management programmes of different Government agencies, Central as well as State. The need for capital formation to a limited extent is being catered to under self-employment programmes, referred to above, under which SC youth, educated and uneducated, cultivators, artisans, those in other occupations including household industry and unskilled labourers are being provided financial assistance within their eligibility parameters. For cultivators particularly assistance is available under these programmes for digging wells, tanks, water channels, land development, input assistance, purchase of pump sets, etc. along with a component of training. It is difficult to provide ready figures of total number of cultivators covered under these programmes since separate data for SC beneficiaries by the programmes is not readily available. However, one thing is certain that the assistance given to SC beneficiaries has been far short of their need and has not taken into account multiple requirements for improving the production and productivity of their land. Usually programmes have catered to segmented requirements confined to a single or few inputs rather than an integrated package covering the whole gamut which would make the project viable. Therefore, the impact of these programmes on improving the economic conditions of SC cultivators assisted under them has been limited. Even so, there are still a large number of SC beneficiaries who have not received any assistance. In a number of cases, the actual assistance received is much less than what has been shown on record due to various corrupt practices (it has been vividly brought out in the public hearing at Lucknow)⁴⁹ thereby severely restricting the potential for improvement in income generation. These cultivators still constitute a potential category. If adequate assistance is provided to them as an integrated package, the resultant impact in terms of income generation is likely to change their life and enhance their bargaining position in society.

As SCs have been traditionally associated with some occupations, which most of them still practise in the absence of any better and viable alternative, there is need for adequate efforts to improve their condition through appropriate inputs for development of these traditional occupations. SCs in these traditional occupations are leather workers, weavers, fishermen, etc. The efforts for their development would require input of technology, access to credit and linkages with market, particularly in the context of changing economy. Though separate programmes are in operation to improve the condition of workers engaged in at least these three occupations, irrespective of their caste affiliation, there has been no focused attention on providing an integrated package for SC beneficiaries with back up of financial, technological and market linkages suited to their requirements. Besides, accessing these benefits may also be a problem. This is the reason why it has been observed that the share of household industry among SCs as a source of occupation has drastically declined in the last 30 years. In addition to the above three major occupations, SCs may be engaged in a large number of small localized occupations/activities both specific to some States and those which are practised across States which also need development attention to improve their income generating potential. It is, therefore, necessary to concentrate attention on different occupations

⁴⁹From the Dalits of UP to citizens of India - A Report of the public hearing held in Lucknow on October 5-6, 2001, brought out by Dynamic Action Group, U.P. and others (2002), pp 22-29

in which Scheduled Castes are engaged and prepare integrated package of assistance on a cluster basis to improve their economic conditions. This integrated package in respect of each such occupation practised by a large number of SCs should have components of skill upgradation, access to raw materials, adequate working capital, modernized tools and equipment and developing strong linkages with the market⁵⁰. In respect of occupations absorbing a smaller number of SCs and also localized economic activities in which they are engaged project profile specific to occupation outlining the inputs and assistance required to increase viability would have to be prepared.

Programmes of SC Welfare

Other than providing self-employment activities, Central Government also caters to specifically focused educational promotion programmes for SC as its welfare component. These programmes are of a supportive nature and only touch upon specific target groups among SCs and do not cover general educational programmes which falls in the domain of concerned sectoral Ministry.

While the Ministry of Human Resource Development - the sector Ministry for spread of education is engaged in tackling the problem of low literacy levels through its programmes covering the whole country and this includes SCs, as they constitute a literacy deficient group. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment confines itself to special schemes which promote spread of education among Scheduled Castes largely through financial and supportive infrastructural assistance. The schemes of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment include provision of post-matric scholarship (pre-matric scholarships for children of those engaged in unclean occupations). Special schemes for low female literacy- pockets, book banks, girls & boys hostels, stipends for pursuing professional courses, overseas scholarships and coaching schemes for those competing for jobs, etc. Without going into individual schemes, it would suffice to say that these schemes are constrained in delivering requisite benefits to Scheduled Castes due to several factors. Important among them are:

- Not catering to state specific deficiencies due to their rigid structure and guidelines.
- Except for post-matric scholarship, overall allocations in other schemes are very small.
- Skewed distribution of funds across States.
- Non-provision of matching share by States constrains utilization of even limited central assistance by several States.
- Slow progress in some of them, such as hostel construction reducing demand placed for assistance.
- Indifferent implementation; lack of supervision and monitoring

National Commission for Schedules Castes and Scheduled Tribes has also found an urban bias in the planning and implementation of education programmes of weaker

⁵⁰Sixth Report, op. cit., pp 25-26

sections⁵¹. The uneven distribution of educational facilities for SCs in different States is responsible for pushing out large number of SC children of poorer families as labour from precisely those States and regions within them which are deficient in availability of such facilities. A comprehensive strategy would therefore have to be worked out for providing special school facilities suited to the requirements of children from poor SC families in order to check the flow of child labour from 'endemic areas'. This would also contribute to the implementation of Supreme Court directives on elimination of child labour. Ministry of Labour and National Human Rights Commission would have to shoulder major responsibility, both in administrative and financial terms, to undertake this effort. Going by the huge number of child labour in the country estimated by official agencies and even more alarming level estimated by unofficial agencies⁵², a strong thrust in this direction alone would help reduce atrocities on SCs.

Impact of Economic Reforms on Scheduled Castes

There are several facets of New Economic Policy which has impacted adversely on Scheduled Castes. One area of economic reforms is reduction in fiscal deficit by curtailing the budgetary support provided for subsidies on food grains and fertilizers, etc. This would of course affect scheduled caste cultivators as well as other farmers particularly those of small and marginal categories. But considering their already low economic status and negligible capacity for capital formation, it would impact them far more. They are also the chief beneficiaries of subsidized food grains through PDS. Though persons below poverty line have so far been protected from the impact of withdrawal of subsidy, SC's access to PDS is constrained by other factors such as lack of purchasing power, non-availability of ration card, inability of State agencies to lift food grains, etc.

At present, reservation policy for scheduled castes is applicable only to posts in the public sector undertakings besides those in Government. As part of economic reforms pursued by Government of India and State Governments steps are being taken for privatization of public sector enterprises through outright transfer, disinvestments of share and offloading of some jobs to contract agencies. Both Central and State Governments have also been downsizing their own establishments to reduce non-plan expenditure. In any case, the growth rate of employment in public sector has decreased from 12.7% in 1983 to 0.6% in 1997. These efforts would therefore have very significant impact on employment opportunities for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In fact, new economic policy would virtually wipe out the Government's Reservation policy from Commercial Undertakings because once the public sector enterprises are disinvested, the private sector owners would not be inclined to implement these provisions. Scheduled Castes would also be affected very adversely in private sector employment because of their poor education and skill base and their inability to stand in competition with other segments of population not to speak of encountering caste bias. There are also other changes taking place in the economy as a result of globalisation which adversely affect SCs. These include closure of industries, retrenchment of workers, displacement of

⁵¹Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 155

⁵²Sixth Report, op. cit., p. 39

persons from their traditional occupations, loss/reduction in income as a result of competition from imported goods and even transfer of land from poorer farmers to better off farmers or Corporations. There is no reliable data on the extent of impact from these trends yet. Further, economic reforms would also affect access to subsidised services like health, which would also have impact on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes more than any other social category in view of their inability to access private health care due to income constraints. The declining of subsidies and privatization of some services in areas like drinking water, electricity and even education would also hit them hard. It is not surprising, therefore, that incidence of child labour is increasing among them.

CONSTRAINTS IN DEVELOPMENT OF SCs

In the course of discussion on development of Scheduled Castes, a number of problem areas have emerged which constrain the pace of development and reach of programmes to them. These constraints, in brief, are as follows :

1. Inadequate Investment of Public Resources

This is reflected in

- a) substantial funds not being committed for development of Scheduled Castes as per the norms which Government itself had agreed to.
- b) Shrinking budgetary support to even existing and continuing schemes because of new economic policy and withdrawal of government from certain sectors.
- c) Financial stringency and other competitive commitments leading to inability of many States to meet their share in centrally sponsored schemes, thereby affecting drawl of their entitlement from Central Government.
- d) The resource crunch faced by most State Governments is affecting even maintenance of the existing institutions and programmes thereby affecting their quality and capacity to benefit SCs.

2. Non-Utilization, Wrong Utilization and Diversion of Earmarked, Allocated or Committed Funds for Development of Scheduled Castes

The Sixth Report of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has cited some instances in this regard briefly referred to in this section. But there would be many more instances if SCP in programmes of each sector is intensively looked into.

3. Deficiency in Planning

The existing framework of development planning for Scheduled Castes is deficient. The major problem is that there is no attempt at planning for Scheduled Caste development as such. What is happening is that a percentage of funds is earmarked for SCs in programmes and schemes in different sectors which cover the general population. Thus the perspective of development in respect of the rest of the population is superimposed on SCs without taking into account specificity of their problems. This has resulted in the following inadequacies:

- a) Many priority needs of Scheduled Castes, not covered in existing programmes or schemes remain untouched.
- b) The traditional occupations of scheduled castes, which do not have large participation of workers and have workers from other communities also, do not get targeted for intervention.
- c) No effort is made to identify extremely vulnerable sections within SCs and specifically cater to their requirements.
- d) The constraints in access to certain social sector programmes particularly in health are not removed through developmental intervention.
- e) The scheduled caste women do not emerge as major focus in development strategy for the community and women headed households among them get no attention.
- f) There are no programmes for skill development of migrant labour to increase their employability.
- g) Child labour among SCs and particularly the girl child worker engaged in home based industry have not been given the attention they deserve.
- h) No programmes have been thought of which take up innovative schooling for such SC child workers.
- i) The existing central development programmes for employment creation particularly have failed to take note of disabilities of SC beneficiaries.

Such instances can be multiplied only to show the inappropriateness of planning mechanism and process as far as SCs are concerned. The nodal Ministry for Scheduled Castes also makes no attempt to conceptualise and articulate a separate paradigm of development for SCs. Its major contribution is to take up a few centrally sponsored schemes and to endorse the extension of general run of other programmes for SCs.

4. Poor Project Preparation

Self-employment programmes have suffered from very poor project preparation. Their failure has contributed to demoralization of beneficiaries and their indebtedness. The objective of effecting improvement in their economic condition has not been achieved. This is equally true of training programmes which have suffered from lack of relevance and quality.

5. Absence of Monitoring

The problem of lack of monitoring in development programmes as a whole is endemic and the failure of many programmes to reach the target groups is usually attributed to this deficiency. But there is no area where lack of monitoring is so conspicuous by its almost total absence as in the case of SC development. This is precisely the explanation why instances of non-utilization, wrong utilization, diversion of funds, non-delivery of benefits and even cornering of benefits by non-eligible persons keep on occurring all over the country. The existing structures for monitoring of development programmes at the State and District levels and below hardly devote any attention to monitoring programmes for SCs.

6. Unresponsive Delivery System

The attitudinal problems of the personnel involved in implementation of programmes for SCs is an acute constraint in reaching benefits to them. The major problem lies in the fact that the implementing bureaucracy largely comes from upper caste background and has no empathy for the Scheduled Castes. It is worse, where it has caste bias and resentment against them. In general, it is unresponsive to their needs and situation. This is compounded by various corrupt practices. There also exists the problem of distance between the beneficiaries and the delivery agents due to which a large number of intermediaries emerge on the scene and try to bridge this distance. This obviously is done at the cost of scheduled castes.

7. Resistant Civil Society

Civil society in general, particularly in rural areas, has been extremely hostile to earmarking of programmes and funds for Scheduled Castes. This hostility is given vent to openly. In the implementation of programmes, this hostility is reflected in manipulation to ensure that even the earmarked benefits do not reach Scheduled Castes. This happens when a drinking water facility meant for SC bustee is diverted to upper caste segment. The school is located in a manner that children of Scheduled Castes have to pass through upper caste bustees and therefore feel intimidated in accessing it due to taunting remarks. In the matter of distribution of irrigation water, scheduled castes who have their land at the tail end get a raw deal. Several restrictions are imposed on the use of common property resources by caste Hindus of the village. It is widely known that a number of upper caste people have falsely obtained Certificate of belonging to Scheduled Caste through a corrupt bureaucracy in order to corner jobs meant for SCs. Such instances can be multiplied. This manipulation gets accentuated when the implementing bureaucracy also shares their social background and bias because in that case the Scheduled Castes have no one to seek relief from.

8. Absence of Participation

There is virtually no involvement of scheduled castes themselves in formulation of programmes or in their implementation, other than what their political representatives contribute to their role as legislators. The only structural consultation with representatives of Scheduled Caste is done at the time when a new Five Year Plan is to be prepared and some scheduled caste intellectuals/ leaders are associated in the working group for this purpose. SCs representatives are no doubt associated in some committees but they are marginal to the decision making process. By and large, however, the entire planning is done by others for them. Even the prioritization of schemes and programmes are decided by others, mostly non-SCs. There are also no institutional arrangements which give SCs a say in the management of welfare institutions entirely catering to their interests. The resultant mismanagement is rampant. But their minority position as also their subdued status prevents them from openly placing their grievances. Participatory structures have not been created where SCs themselves can freely deliberate on development issues concerning them. This is true at all levels. Madhya Pradesh has recently taken a major initiative to prepare a macro-level strategy for development of SCs and STs through its Bhopal declaration.

9. Lack of Awareness

Scheduled castes themselves are very weak and powerless by virtue of low status and position they occupy in society. This affects their capacity to articulate and assert. As a group also they are unable to exert any pressure on apparatus which deals with policies and programmes. But they also suffer from the handicap of lack of knowledge and awareness about programme themselves which affects the quality of their participation. This lack of knowledge is not merely confined to an ordinary SC villager, but also extends to SCs who are members of Panchayat or even educated youth. There are no major programmes which create this kind of awareness on a regular and continuing basis.

Given these constraints, a lot of ground would have to be covered to accelerate the pace of development for them and to improve its contents and delivery. This should include:

- a) To improve the flow of resources for SC development, a review of the entire strategy of Special Component Plan, its effectiveness and the outcome of efforts by tripartite committees in this regard,
- b) Earmarking of funds for Central schemes in the Annual Plan of the States to ensure State's share in those schemes. Enhancement of central share in the schemes to overcome financial difficulty of the States.
- c) Devising of stringent measures to ensure that earmarked funds for SCs are utilized and not diverted to any other purpose.
- d) Evolving a new paradigm of development for SCs on the pattern of Bhopal document by associating Dalit intellectuals, community leaders and all those intimately associated with them. 10th Plan document should reflect this paradigm.
- e) Norms for detailed monitoring may be developed to measure the impact of various programmes and structures of monitoring may be created at various levels to operationalise it.
- f) Capacity building, effective decentralization of powers to local bodies and orientation training of implementing agencies for enforcing greater accountability of Government personnel.
- g) Training of SC members of Panchayat for effectively discharging their role of Planning, Monitoring and Advocacy.
- h) Alternative mechanisms for obtaining quick feedback through NGOs and other non-official agencies, fixing responsibility for non/wrong delivery of programmes, encouraging village SC community to assert would prevent civil society from deflecting the programmes.
- i) Training social workers among the Scheduled Castes who could become focal points for village level mobilization and run information kiosks in the village for massive awareness creation for protection and development both.
- j) Creating institutional arrangements for involvement of SCs in the management of institutions which cater to their welfare.

- k) Creative way of involvement of SCs in conception, structuring and implementation of programmes meant for them.

Development and Atrocities

While crafting the multi-pronged strategy of the upliftment of Scheduled Castes, it would be assumed by policy makers that development measures would exercise a profound influence in eliminating disability/discrimination and other conditions of Scheduled Castes which are responsible for caste violence against them. While this may actually have happened in many situations, there are no studies on whether departmental activities to benefit Scheduled Castes have led to a reduction in the cases of atrocities against them. This can only be measured/evaluated with reference to specific areas and groups through longitudinal studies. There is need therefore to get adequate feedback on the impact of development measures on untouchability related practices as well as the level of physical violence inflicted on scheduled castes particularly from atrocities prone areas identified on the basis of incidence of crime on Scheduled Castes. These researches could be carried out by ICSSR institutions as a part of their ongoing research activities and specifically through Ambedkar chairs set up by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in some prestigious Universities/Research Centres to provide authentic feedback on such aspects. It is necessary in this context that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment develops a mechanism of getting adequately researched feedback on impact of various development programmes on

- (a) Breaking of age-old discriminatory practices
- (b) Incidence of violence on SCs
- (c) Shifting balance in social and power relations
- (d) Self assertion by Scheduled Castes against acts of exploitation
- (e) Access to social services
- (f) Conditions of the most marginalized groups among Scheduled Castes
- (g) Pattern of upward mobility among SCs
- (h) Changing pattern of labour absorption and unemployment
- (i) Impact of migration on Status of SCs in their residential village.

This is only a suggestive list and may include many more subjects. The feedback gathered should be used as inputs for making changes in policies, programmes and schemes for SCs.

The preceding analysis of the development strategy for SCs and outcome of efforts for narrowing the gap between them and the rest of the society do not sustain the hope that level of atrocities against SCs is likely to get reduced through existing level of development efforts. Given this situation: Can something be done to sustain hope of the community in the capability of State to deliver on its promises? This question is addressed in the concluding section.