



# MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

SEMESTER-II

## MSW-2.4: Social Work with Weaker Sections

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## **MSW 2.4- SOCIAL WORK WITH WEAKER SECTIONS**

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## **Basic Concepts of Weaker Sections**

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## **1.0. Unit Objectives**

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The main objective of this unit is to create an introductory interface for the students with the basic concepts and dimensions of weaker sections in our society. It is expected that after studying this unit, the concerns may be able to conceptualize on:

- **Different sections of weaker members of the Indian society**
- **Concept, Criteria and Classification of delineated weaker sections**
- **The obvious characteristics of those sections and**
- **Disabilities of the weaker sections**

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## **1.1. Introduction**

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The term „Weaker Section“ in ordinary sense refers to the section of the population who are socially, economically, politically and educationally backward than the other sections of the population and have been suffering from different kinds of disabilities due to their backwardness.

According to Government of India Act, 1935 “weaker section implies to those sections of society who are either because of traditional custom of practice of untouchability or because of tribal origin, tribal way of living or other backwardness have been suffering from educational and economic backwardness and some aspects of social life.”

On the basis of their over all status in a view to their socio-economic and cultural life, for the convenience of effective administration of development and welfare programmes with special focus to their socio-economic stands, the weaker sections have been grouped basically into three distinct categories by different resolutions of Government of India. Those groups can be serially stated here on the basis of magnitude of their problems or vulnerability to various disabilities suffered by them.

- 1. Scheduled Caste**
- 2. Scheduled Tribes and**
- 3. Other Backward Classes**

In addition to the above major groups, there are also some vulnerable groups like women, destitute children, and handicapped people etc who are generally considered as weaker members of the society. But here we are given with the three major groups i.e. Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes for detailed discussion.

This unit deals with the basic concepts of different aspects of the weaker sections. It carefully analyses the concept, criteria, classification, characteristics and disability aspects of the weaker section.

## **1.2. Scheduled Caste: Concept, Criteria, Classification, Characteristics and Disabilities**

### **Meaning and Definition**

The scheduled castes are the people who occupy the bottommost rung of the Indian social ladder. They constitute a major part of the weaker sections. They are generally regarded as „untouchables“ and popularly known as „harijans“. According to the census report of



2001 they constitute more than 17% of the Indian population. They are economically backward, socially depressed and educationally neglected section of the Indian population.

The people who are known by the name of scheduled caste at present were identified with different names during different points of time in the past. In the early Vedic days they were called “panchamas” or the fifth varnas because they were out of the “chaturvana” system. During the Vedic period they were known as “chandalas” and “asprushas” or untouchables because they were thought to be born from the illicit relation between the man of the lower caste and a Brahmin woman. Some other times they were called as “dalits” means broken men. The British called them as “outcastes”, “exterior caste” and depressed caste”. Finally, the government of India Act, 1935 designated them as “scheduled caste”. Since then they have been recognized in this name. Our constitution after independence also recognized them in this name. But Gandhiji addressed them as “harijans” which he meant people of God. Common people in India know them and call them as “harijans”

## **Definition**

Defining the term „scheduled caste“ has been a tough one for the scholars. Nevertheless several efforts have been made to define the same. Some of them can be stated as follows:

1. According to D.N. Majundar “scheduled caste refers to the untouchable caste people who suffer from various social and political disabilities many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by the higher caste.”
2. Indian constitution says “scheduled castes are the people who are at the bottom of Hindu social order and suffer from the problem of untouchability.”

Further scheduled caste can be defined as “those socially, educationally, economically and politically backward castes which are kept at distance by the other castes as untouchables.”

## **Criteria of Scheduled Castes**

No clear criterion so far has been made to consider a particular group as scheduled caste. But one

obvious criterion is clear in this regard i.e. to born to scheduled caste parents. Simon commission had prescribed a test comprising thirteen questions to decide whether caste belongs to scheduled castes. Those questions are:

- i) Whether the caste in question polluted the high castes through touch or physical contact?
- ii) Whether the caste was not allowed to enter into temples?
- iii) Whether the caste was prohibited from the use of public places?
- iv) Whether the caste received services from the priests and rest of the society?
- v) Whether a higher caste Hindu can take water from the caste in question?
- vi) Whether well-educated member of the said caste get equal treatment with the higher caste members in the matter of ordinary social interaction?
- vii) Whether the caste is depressed from social disability and not due to its own ignorance, illiteracy or poverty?

## **Classification of Scheduled**

### **Castes Social classification**

1. **Highly untouchable SCs:** Some of the scheduled caste people are found to be highly untouchables. Generally, the people who belong to this group engage in so called dirty works such as cleaning human excreta, animal carcass etc. The so called higher group of people considers the contact with very shadow of these people as inauspicious and unholy or impure. These people are not allowed to go around street in the day time because it is believed that they may be in contact with other people in the public places and their shadow formed by daylight may fall on others and impure others. They are strictly prohibited to collect water from the public wells and to attend the public meetings. They are not allowed to settle in the east and/or west of the village because their presence in these places may create long shadows in the morning and may impure the people in the opposite directions. Thus, the highly untouchables are strictly excommunicated from the mainstream society and are made to suffer from worst form of socio-economic disabilities.

2. **Moderately untouchable SCs:** The moderately untouchables are the people who are also the victims of untouchability but not as much as that of highly untouchables. Unlike the highly untouchables, these people are engaged in less impure occupations like sweeping, fishing, snake charming, petty trading etc, go around the street in the daytime, collect water from the public wells. But after their collection of water from the public wells, the wells are cleaned properly before other could collect water. They are allowed in the public meetings but given a separate place to sit. They are not allowed to eat and/or drink with the other people. They are restricted from entering certain parts of the temple but not all. They are allowed to serve the so called higher caste people in agricultural activities and other domestic works. Thus, these people enjoy at least some amount of social status and suffer less critical social disabilities as compared to the highly untouchables.

## **Geographical classification**

The scheduled caste people are group of people spread all over the human civilization. They are so sporadically spread over the population that no significant effort so far could be made to classify them geographically. But it can be stated that they are found to have larger concentration in certain area such as:

### **SCs in the Coastal belts**

Coastal belts can be divided into Urban coastal areas and Rural coastal areas. The urban coastal areas are characterized by industrialization, developed market system, and civilized living. The SCs in the urban coastal areas include the fishermen, scavengers, industrial workers and domestic workers. These people are culturally approximate to the people in the coastal belt and most of them make their living from fishing, scavenging and working in the industries as labours. Due to their meager income they live in the outskirts of coastal cities and slums in poor living conditions. They do not have to face the disability of untouchability due to absence of strict practice of caste system in the city environment, but due to their poor economic condition they are marginalized from the mainstream society socially, economically, politically and educationally. The SCs in the rural coastal areas mainly live by fishing and fisheries related activities. They are having the same features as the SCs in the urban coastal areas but they suffer from the practice of untouchability due to dominant presence of caste system in the rural areas. Hence, in the rural areas they are socially more ostracized than those in the urban areas.

### **City-dwellers**

Scheduled caste people in India have spread all over the civic population. They are seen by and by the modern population. They support the affluent people in their domestic work and constitute the largest labour force in the industrial cities. They have major role in industrial production, cleaning the city habitats, serving the rich people etc. They live in wretched condition and fall prey to exploitation and poverty leading to deplorable condition of living.

They are also economically, socially, culturally, educationally and politically marginalized people in the modern society of India.

### **SCs in the Hilly areas**

The SCs of hilly and mountain foot areas live very close to the tribal people. They have cultural, social, economic, political and educational proximities to tribal people in India. They are the worst victims of caste ridden practice of untouchability. Since time immemorial to till date they continue to suffer from various disabilities like social exclusion, political exclusion, and educational exclusion by their ST counterparts and other groups of people. They are mainly engaged as agricultural labours, iron smiths, petty traders, snake charmers etc. and make their poor living. Till today they are denied land ownership. Hence are forced to work as bonded labour, forced labour and suffer under the vicious cycle of abject poverty.

### **Economic Classification:**

**Petty-traders:** This group people live at foot areas of the hills and forest and semi-forest areas adjacent to the tribal people. They supply small consumer goods in exchange of forest products to the tribal people who generally are ignorant of the market system or due to many other reasons such as language problem, busy schedule in agriculture are not able to get the consumables from the market. They make their living from the small margins they receive from the exchange of forest and agricultural product for the consumers good from the market.

**Bamboo-makers and artisans:** There is another economic group which engages itself in bamboo-making. It makes baskets, grain-bowls, furnitures, and other containers and give them in exchange of other goods. Some people from this group also are famous for their artistic skills. They make statues, dolls, pen stands, photo frames, hand fans, etc out of bamboo, skin, fur and horns of animals, bones and other forest materials and make their living out of that.

**Iron smiths (Komaras):** Some of the people from scheduled caste categories are known for their iron works. They make and repair simple implements used in agriculture like axe, plough nails, sickle, knife, hammer, chisels which take important place in agricultural and other activities. They sell these implements to the tribal people and other Scheduled caste people and others and make their living.

**Pot makers and Brick miners:** Pot making an important occupation of some of the people from Scheduled Caste. These people make earthen pots and other implement which are used for domestic purposes like drinking water collection, cooking, grain storage etc. These people or people approximate to them engage themselves in bricks making which supports their economic life.

**Skin tanners-leather workers (mochi):** Skin tuning as an occupation has historical reference to Scheduled Caste people. From the concept of purity and pollution the scheduled caste people were destined to do the dirty works which included disposal of dead animals. This led them to think about some earning from skin tanning or leather works.

**Scavengers (safai karmacharis):** this is one of the largest of economic groups among scheduled caste people. The Scheduled caste people are also known all over the country for their traditional occupation of scavenging. The practice of purity and pollution considered them as polluted (impure) people. So they were traditionally forced to do dirty work like scavenging. This group of people lives all over the human population, in the cities, in rural areas and industrial belts to perform cleaning activities. Their work is considered dirty but in real sense they are the people who clean our environment. They earn meager amount from scavenging and live in abject poverty. In the present days, movements are initiated and government measures are taken to uplift their economic and social condition.

**Fishermen (Dhibaras/Keutas):** This economic group of scheduled caste category basically lives in the coastal plains areas. They make their living from fishing. They fish from the sea water, rivers, lakes and ponds and sell in the market and meet their economic needs.

**Tenants/ Agricultural labours:** In the past, people from scheduled caste were socially prohibited to own land of their own. They were forced to work as tenants in others' land. This practice since the past led to landlessness of the SCs. Still they continue to go without land. Large numbers of them work as landless workers for others such as farmers, land lords etc. and make their living from the small earnings in cash or kind. At times they suffer from bonded labour.

### **Characteristics of Scheduled Castes**

Most of the characteristics have a strong reference to the past, I mean prior to India's independence or beyond. At present as result of implementation of various welfare programmes, abolition of untouchability and practice of discrimination and development of cosmopolitan attitude, the scenario has change to a great extent. Still then most of the characteristics continue to persist in some rural and remote areas of the country.

### **Socio-demographic Characteristics**

1. They possess the lowest rung in the social ladder owing to their birth to the so called humiliated caste in India
2. They are the worst victims of various social disabilities like restriction on commensality, inter-caste marriage, sitting in the public meetings etc.
3. The scheduled caste people lowest income group and often deprived of the economic rights due to their social disabilities.
4. Low standard of living is another glaring feature of the SCs
5. Due to the historical educational disability and acute poverty low literacy rate is another feature of these people.
6. Acute poverty and high rate illiteracy among the people have direct bearing on high morbidity among them.
7. Due to the continuous humiliation by the so called higher caste they still have very

low level of self-confidence

8. Alcoholism is a common feature among people who very often justify it on the ground of their nature of occupation low standard of living.

9. Due to torture in Hindu caste ridden culture they have high preference for religious conversion

### **Economic Characteristics**

The SCs population of India is characterized by the following points:

- a) They economically are the poorest people in our society.
- b) They are landless owing to the socially prescribed restriction from property ownership in the past.
- c) They are restricted from taking the occupation of their own choice
- d) They are not allowed to possess business centres, shops or hotels for the other castes
- e) In the past, they were not allowed to hold any public or administrative post.
- f) They are the victims of physical, psychological, sexual and financial exploitation in the work places.
- g) They are the worst victims of forced and bonded labour and child labour in India.

### **Educational Characteristics**

- a) The SC children were not allowed to take education in the schools with the children of other people.
- b) They were restricted from taking education from a Brahmin teacher
- c) Even today, due to their poor economic condition they have very less representation in education
- d) Very high rate of drop outs is seen among the SCs due to lack of financial support, lack of study atmosphere in the family and humiliation in the public.
- e) Very low rate of interest for education is found among SCs



## **Disabilities suffered by the SCs**

Studies have revealed that SCs are most vulnerable groups of weaker sections of Indian society. Since the ancient days they have been considered as untouchables and debarred from living a normal life like their counterparts of other castes in India. They have been suffering from various social, religious, political, economic and educational and other disabilities for centuries. During the British rule, nothing was done to uplift them. In spite of numbers of welfare programmes and schemes, their lot has not change even today. Their problems can be discussed under the following points:

### **1. Social Disabilities**

The scheduled castes of harijans in India suffered from numbers of social disabilities since time immemorial in the following ways:

a) **Lowest status in the social hierarchy:** The scheduled castes are given the lowest status in the caste hierarchy. They are considered to be impure, inferior and untouchables. They have been treated as the servants of the rest of the population in our society.

b) **Prevention from public places:** For quite a long time the so called untouchables were not allowed to use the public wells, ponds, temples, hotels, schools and dharmasalas etc. they were strictly debarred from public meetings. Restriction on were enforced on them to wear good dress, put on ornaments, to build good houses. They were asked to settle outside the core villages. In some instances, they even were denied to cover their bodies. They were not allowed to use umbrellas, foot wears etc. All these restrictions speak volumes of disabilities and injustice they suffered for a long period.

## **2. Religious Disabilities**

It is a matter of great concern that even today we come across such incidents where SCs are not allowed to enter some temples for which recently there was a law order issue in Jagannath temple, in Puri district of Odisha. The Brahmins deny the SCs to offer sacrifice in the temple. In the similar way, in the past they were not allowed to read and learn scriptures, to enter the temples. They are allowed only to use Upanishad mantras which are considered less pure.

## **3. Educational Disabilities**

The harijans were forbidden from taking up education during the early days. Sanskrit education was denied to them. Public schools and other educational institutions were closed for them. It is for this reason that most of the SCs are illiterate and ignorant even today.

## **4. Economic Disabilities**

For centuries before independence, the SCs were not allowed to own a piece of land and business of their own though today they are allowed. They were also not allowed to perform the occupations of their choice. They were stick on to the some inferior occupations like removing human wastes, sweeping, scavenging, grinding, shoemaking etc. It for this reason that today one can see most of them as daily wagers.

## **5. Political disabilities**

The so called untouchables hardly participated in political matters. They were not given any place in politics, administration and general governance of India. They were not allowed to hold any public post. Political rights were denied to them. They were only used as vote banks. After independence though the SCs are given equal opportunities, they are yet to become organized for the same.

Thus, scheduled castes people in our society had to undergo untold suffering along with social, economic, political and educational injustice.

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## 2. Scheduled Tribes: Concept, Criteria, Classification, Characteristics and Disabilities

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### Meaning and definition

A tribe is a group of people, usually staying in jungle areas, in a small locality, absolutely illiterate poor, hardly clad in clothes, usually dark and frail, fully living within their own community whose marriage always takes place among themselves, engaged in hunting and searching for roots, shoots and fruits as their veg food and roasted animals as non-veg food, completely oblivious of the country's political and economic condition, resisting all efforts of development and have a strong dislike for strangers and educated modern community. The number of such tribal community is very large e.g. Santhals, Kora people, Kol, etc. Most of the projects and efforts for uplifting their health, education and economic condition have failed both for their own unwillingness for change and absolute non cooperation as well as lethargy, dishonesty and corruption of the intermediaries.

According to **Oxford Dictionary** "A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarious stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor.

**D.N Majumdar** defines tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes. According to Ralph Linton tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests.

**L.M Lewis** believes that tribal societies are small in scale are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations and possess a morality, a religion and world view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too tribal languages are unwritten and hence the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow. At the same time tribal societies exhibit a remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self-sufficiency lacking in modern society.

**Gillin and Gillin** has given a very simple definition saying, “A tribe is a group of local communities which lives in common area, speaks a common dialect and follows a common culture.”

According to the **Imperial Gazetteer of India**, “A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying a common territory and not is usually endogamous, though it might have been originally so.”

### **Criteria**

T.B Naik has given the following criteria of tribes in Indian context:-

- A tribe should have least functional interdependence within the community.
- It should be economically backward (i.e. primitive means of exploiting natural resources, tribal economy should be at an underdeveloped stage and it should have multifarious economic pursuits).
- There should be a comparative geographical isolation of its people.
- They should have a common dialect.
- Tribes should be traditionally organized and community panchayat should be influential.
- A tribe should have customary laws.

### **Classification of Tribes**

There are more than 570 tribes spread all over India. Tribes are well known as socially, economically and culturally homogeneous groups. So it is difficult to classify them on any of such grounds. Nevertheless, thin line of classification can be made on the basis of

different grounds. The tribes are classified on the basis of 1. Ethnicity and 2. Geographical location. 3. Economic practices etc.

### **Ethnic Classification:**

Based on Ethnicity the tribes in India are classified into the following categories:

#### **a) Negritos**

Negritos are believed to be the earliest inhabitants of the Indian peninsula who were unable to defend themselves and were gradually forced to recede before the invading hordes of Indo- Aryans, Mongoloids, etc. coming from the North-West and North-East. These tribes were not only superior to them in numerical strength but also in mechanical equipment. These tribals took shelter in the mountains and thick forests where a considerable number of them are still found and have been estimated to be about ten million. Those who were left behind in the plains gradually disappeared either by absorption or by acculturation. Some tracts of them are still found among the tribals of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands known as the Onne, the Great Andamanese, the Sentinelese and the Jarwas also in Kerala among the Kadars, the Irulars and the Paniyans. Physical Features of These group of tribes are dark skin, curly hair, broad nose and medium height.

#### **b) The Mongoloid**

Mongoloid represented by the tribal people of sub- Himalayan region. They may be divided into two mongoloid Sub-categories:

**Palaeo Mongoloids:** This category of tribes is generally seen in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur.

**Tibeto–Mongoloids:** They are generally found in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. They are believed to have migrated from Tibet. They have typical eyes and facial features. They speak Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burmese dialects.

**c) Mediterranean (Dravidians):** They form bulk of the tribal population and are generally known as the Dravidians. Dravidian is, however, the name of the language group spoken by

these people and has no ethnic significance. The tribes believed to be belonging to the Dravidian race are found in the Chhotanagpur Plateau, Rajmahal Hills region, Aravalli ranges, Central Vindhya, Deccan Plateau region and Nilgiri Hills.

Dravidian language still survives not only in Southern India where Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada are its leading representatives, but also in Central India where its traces are found in the dialects spoken by the Oraons, Gonds, Mundas, Malers, Khonds and other tribes.

The Dravidians are presumed to be of two stocks on the basis of their language:

i) **Kolarians:** these groups of tribes speak a dialect called Mundari examples: Mundas,

Santhals, Oraons and other tribes inhabiting Chhotanagpur Plateau region

ii) **Dravidian Proper:** This group of tribes speak dialects of Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. Gonds, Kondhs, and other tribes found in Central Vindhya and the Deccan Plateau regions.

### **Geographical Classification**

The tribes live all over the country from the foot-hills of Himalayas to the land tip, of Lakshadweep and from plains of Gujarat to the hills of North-East. There are the tribals in Chamba and Mahasu; and in Dehradun and Darjeeling.

Tribal population of India is spread all over the country. However, in Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa and Pondicherry there exists very little tribal population. The rest of the states and union territories possess fairly good number of tribal population. Madhya Pradesh registers the largest number of tribes (73) followed by Orissa (62), Arunachal Pradesh (56) Maharashtra (52), Andhra Pradesh (43).

In India there is almost a continuous belt of high tribal concentration starting from the Western coast – from Thane district in Maharashtra passing through Surat and Dang districts in Gujarat to Mayurbhanj in Orissa on the Eastern coast and Bihar. The chief concentration is in Dhulia in Maharashtra; West Nimar, Betul, Chhindwara, Seeni, Mandla,

Shandol and Sarguja in Madhya Pradesh; and Ranchi, Santhal Parganas\_ and Singhbhum district in Bihar.

Another long range of tribal belt is found in the North-East spreading over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizo Hills, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills of Assam and hilly regions of Manipur and Tripura. These belts are also linked up by a chain of pockets of tribal concentration at Taluk or sub-divisional levels. Tribal concentrations are also found in Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh, Korapur, Bauch- Khandenals, and Agency tracts of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh which are linked up with the Central belt by a chain of small pockets of tribal concentration. The scheduled tribes live in exclusive pockets of the territory, upon which they have traditional ownership rights.

### **1. Northern and North-Eastern Zone**

In the mountain valleys and other areas of North-East, Indian tribes largely belong to Mongolian social stock. The tribal people are distributed all over the sub-Himalayan region and the mountain valleys in the North-East from Simla in the West to the Lushai hills and the Mishmi tract in the East which merge imperceptibly with those of Burma in the South-East. It covers Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram, Eastern Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tarai areas of Uttar Pradesh and the mountainous West Bengal.

**Assam:** Paro-Barokachari is numerically the strongest tribe in Assam then comes Miri and Mizo. The hill districts, i.e., Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills are predominantly inhabited by scheduled tribes. In the plains Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Darrang and Kamrup districts possess fairly large number of scheduled tribes.

**Manipur:** In Manipur, the highest distribution of scheduled tribes is found in Manipur west districts followed by Manipur east districts. The third highest position goes to Manipur south districts. North Manipur contains the lowest number of scheduled tribe population. The major tribes inhabiting the region are Anal, Kabui, Gangte, Zarao, Moyan-Mansang, etc.

**Meghalaya:** In Meghalaya the most important tribes are the Khasis, Garos and Jaintias. Mizos, Pawis\_ and Lakheras are of importance in Mizoram.

**Nagaland:** Basically this tribal state is inhabited by Nagas.



**Himachal Pradesh:** Following tribes are important Himanchal Pradesh: Gaddi: reside exclusively on the snowy range which divides Chamba from Kangra; Kinner: settled in the frontier district of Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh; Pangwal: the Pangi region of the Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh; Lahuli: Lahul-Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh.

**Uttar Pradesh:** The declared scheduled areas Uttar Pradesh are hills, Tarai Bhabar, and Southern U.P. The hill zone is represented by the Jaunsari, Bhotia, and Raji tribes. Bhotias area late introduction in the scheduled tribes following the set back they suffered after Indo-China war. The eastern and northern parts of Tarai Bhabar tract are inhabited by Tharu and Buxa tribes.

## **2. Central Zone**

In the Chhotanagpur Plateau, along the dividing line between peninsular India and Indo-Gangetic basin, live many tribal communities like the Bhumij, Gond, Ho, Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Bhil, etc. They belong to Proto-Australoid group. This group occupies the mountain belt between Narbada and the Godavari – the central barrier that divides the north from the Peninsular India has provided a shelter for these tribes from very ancient times.

It includes West Bengal, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. This region further extends to the Santhal Pargana (Bihar) in the east, Hyderabad in the South and Rajasthan and Gujarat with a strong Bhil population in the West.

**Bihar:** Oraon, Munda, Chero, Parchaiya, Santhal\_and Asuras are very dominant in the state of Bihar.

**Rajasthan:** Banjaras, Moghias and Sathiyas are important tribes of Rajasthan. They mostly inhabit the Thar desert.

**Gujarat and Maharashtra:** Bhil is the most important tribe in Gujarat. Anal, Chiru\_and Konkanas\_are important tribes inhabiting in Maharashtra.

## **Madhya Pradesh**

Muria: The word Muria is used in Bastar for a tribesman. Murias reside in the Muria Hill and Abujhmar mountains. Dorla: a tribe of south Bastar in Madhya Pradesh. The word Dorla, appears to have been derived from the Telugu word Dora meaning Lord.

### **West Bengal**

Mala and Savara tribes are the majorities of tribal groups in West Bengal.

### **Orissa**

Out of the 62 Scheduled tribes, Bhuiya, Baiga, Dharua, Gaaro, Ho, Koli, Lodha, etc. are more populous. The Baiga appears to be a branch of the great Bhuiya tribe of Madhya Pradesh. Baiga means a sorcerer or medicine man. The name Baiga also applies to anyone who serves as a village priest in the Central Provinces.

### **3. South-Western Zone**

In the hills and converging line of the Western Ghats live the Chenchus, Irulas, Kadars, Ketas, Kurumbas, Jedas, etc. having Negrito, Caucasoid, and proto-Australoid features.

This group is chiefly concentrated in the southern-most parts of the Western Ghats stretching from Vindhyas to Cape Comorin. From the fact that they occupy the marginal areas and also from the records in the oldest Tamil literature of the Sangam period, they appear to be one of the most ancient and primitive inhabitants of present day India.

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamilnadu fall within this zone. Chenchus and Lambadi in Andhra Pradesh, Koragas, Kuruba in Karnataka and Koragas in Kerala are the most significant tribes found in this geographical zones of India.

### **4. Scattered Zone : (Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar)**

There are various scattered tribal groups like the Andamanese and such other tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and other Union territories. The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may be described as a race by themselves, and can be divided into two groups, i.e.:

**i) Negrito:** (Andamanese, the Onges and the Sentinelese): This group is found in the Andamangroup of Islands and has an affinity with the Semangos and Sakais of Malaya, the Vedas of Sri Lanka and other Negrito groups of South-East Asia

It is believed that these aborigines migrated from the lower regions of Burma. On their arrival at these islands, they moved to different part of the islands and very likely on account of the different types of physical environment they developed different traits.

**ii) Mongoloid:** inhabitants of Nicobar group of islands, i.e., the Shorn Pens and the Nicobarese. Besides, **Jarawa** group is confined to the western part of the south, middle and north Andamans. The Andamanese, who are extremely limited in number, live along the coastal areas; **Onges** inhabit the little Andaman and Rutland island; **Sentinelese**: are found in the Sentinel island; **Shorn Pens** are confined along the eastern and south-eastern coast of Great Nicobar island. They are also reported from the banks of Dagmar, Alexandra and Galathoa rivers respectively; **Nicobarese (Holchu)**: inhabiting these small islands are highly unevenly distributed and only in the two islands, the Car Nicobar and Chowra.

### **Economic Classification:**

#### **Agriculturists:**

Scheduled Tribes of India claim themselves to be the real owners of forest and land in India. Most around 80% of the ST people are involved in agriculture. They follow traditional and technology in agriculture which left them in poor production and consequently, poor economic condition.

#### **Hunters and gatherers:**

Tribes are known as the aborigines or the primitive people. Hunting and gathering is the most common feature of the primitive or tribal people. Most of the primitive tribal groups belong to this category. They gather forest products like honey, fruits, roots for their food; timber, bamboo, leaves, ropes for their thatched shelter and other forest produces for their commercial purposes. Their life is very simple and primitive far away from the modern way of living. Now days, most of the people from this group have started to engage themselves in agricultural activities.

## **Labours**

Most of the tribal people are educationally and economically backward. They have no or very low representation in education, service and business. For their survival, they mainly depended on agriculture or forest product. But in the current days, due to ongoing land alienation, displacement and deforestation activities, they are running out of those resources. Consequently, most of them migrate to the industrial areas and work as industrial labours. Some tribals also continue to work in agriculture sector as land labours. They are mostly influenced by the modern culture and slowly forget their traditional culture of dance and music and unique way of entertainment.

## **Shepherds-Cattle-bearers**

Some tribes are also known for their engagement in cattle-breeding and rearing. They move from place to place in search of pasture land with their family or without it. They meet their basic needs from the sale of animals they rear. Animals like cows, goats, sheep and buffalo are some of the important animals for animal husbandry they practice.

## **Black magicians**

There are a few people among the tribal groups who practice black magic and make their living from it. These groups of the tribal people are the proximate to the bahunis in non-tribals in India. They basically are the priestly groups who conduct traditional yajnas for good harvest of the community, for good health, healing and killing. They also have some knowledge about some ayurvedic treatment. There is a common belief among the tribes that these people possess some supernatural power to kill or rescue the lives of common people in their community. They receive gifts and token price for their disease detection and treatment which support their living. They also engage themselves in agriculture for economic support. They enjoy distinct status in the community because of their power of black magic. In the current days there are stringent opposition among common people and several cases of murder in suspicions have been found among the tribal people.

## **Artisans:**

Tribal people, especially of the North-Eastern areas of India are well known for their artistic skills and works. They create excellent art and crafts with soil, animal skin, bones,

birds“

feather, bamboo plant and other forest products. They sell these products in Indian traditional markets as well as modern market earn handsome amount of money which supports their livelihood. They have popularized Art and craft of India both in India as well as outside India and continue to contribute to the economic growth of India.

## **Characteristics of Scheduled**

### **Tribes**

#### **Ethnic characteristics of a tribe:**

- Common definite territory, common dialect, common name, common religion and common culture.
- They have strong sense of unity and any stranger is attacked with bows and arrows.
- All tribe members are related by blood, have their own political organization which has a chief who exercises authority over all the members, even recommending marriage of young boys with girls whom they have found suitable for marriage.
- Each tribe is guided by their own religion which is based on totemism, magic and fetishism i.e. believing in god being embedded in a special piece of stone, a special tree or a peculiar strange animal.
- A tribe is an endogamous group, as distinct from a clan which is exogamous, have common name and is engaged in worshipping strange objects, hunting of small animals, and resists entry of any outsiders inside their territory.
- Kinship as an instrument of social bonds.
- Absence of hierarchy among men and groups.
- Absence of strong, complex, formal organization.
- A distinct psychological bent for enjoying life.
- They possess Segmentary character find difficult to mingle with the outsiders

#### **Economic Characteristics of Tribes**

- Communitarian basis of land holding pervades in most of the tribal communities

- The tribal people follow a very primitive methods of agriculture like shifting cultivation leading to very low yield of crops

- Most of the tribals do not have access to an organized market system where they could sell their primary and secondary forest produce.
- Due to lack of access to market system, most of the tribes from remote areas practice barter system which means exchange goods for goods.
- They rely on substantial economy and have little value on surplus accumulation on the use of capital and on market trading which prevents them from receiving the best results out of agricultural activities.
- Tribal people consider forest as their basic right and greatly depend on forest products which constitutes the mainstay of their economic life
- Tribal land is largely transferred to the non-tribals by improper means and massive displacement takes place for development projects leading to land alienation or loss of agricultural land and eventual tribal conflicts.
- There are complains of economic exploitation of tribals by the non-tribal
- Indebtedness and bonded labours are some of the most common features among the tribals in India

They hardly have any transaction because hardly one has any currency and do not have any knowledge and experience of organizing market. The life style of tribal society is primitive, and depends entirely on their characteristic ways of non-monetary transacted life. The families live within themselves, without knowing about their neighbours in the country who are educated, developed, move in cars, have modern dress etc whom they hate and consider them enemy. The domestic division of labor depends only on age and sex.

### **Educational Characteristics**

- Tribal people have very less representation in education as compared to their non-tribal counterparts
- Poor economic condition and family environment hinders them from taking education
- It is reported that the current formal education prescribed for them has little relevanceto their living style



- They lack interest and awareness of the present education system
- Medium of instruction or the language is a major set back in their education
- High rate of drop outs is found among the tribal people.

### **Disabilities suffered by the Scheduled Tribes in India**

The tribals of India are the second worst vulnerable group of weaker sections in India. They have been facing with a number of disabilities among which the following may be noted here:

#### **1. Disabilities of Geographical Separation**

The tribals in India in some way or the other are geographically separated from the rest of the population. Most of them live in the inaccessible areas such as deep valleys, dense forests, hills and mountains. Even some concerted effort by the government to connect them with the civilized world has badly failed. Often it is difficult for them to establish relations with others and hence they are away from the civilized world. The public services and welfare programmes cannot reach to them. They also have very less contact with rest of the population. All these physical, material, social and cultural isolation has contributed to many problems among the tribals.

#### **2. Cultural Disabilities**

Tribal culture is a unique one. It is totally different from that of the civilized world. They are terrified and suspicious towards the civilized world, because the members of the civilized world interfere in their cultural life by introducing or imposing some new and strange culture to them. The Christian missionaries, The Ramakrishna Mission, Viswa Hindu Parishad, Rastriya Soyamsevak Sangh etc. try to spread their own culture among the tribals which has posed a threat to tribal culture. The cultural confusion among the tribals comes on the way of assimilation and integration of tribal people into the mainstream society in India.

### **3. Social Disabilities**

The tribals also have their own social disabilities. Even today they are the victims of superstitious beliefs, meaningless expensive traditional practices, harmful habits like child-marriage, animal sacrifice, exchange of wives, black magic and so on. They have keen desire to maintain all these evil tribal practices which directly or indirectly impede their development. It is for this reason that a statement is made that tribals are the tribesmen first, tribesmen last and the tribesmen all the time.

#### **4. Economic Disabilities**

Tribal people are economically the poorest people in our country. Most of them fall prey to economic exploitation and other situations and live below the poverty line. Some of the main economic problems can be stated under following sub-points.

- i) Taking the advantage of tribal people's innocence, illiteracy and helplessness the non-tribals exploit and impoverish them. During the British rule such exploitation was at its apex level.
- ii) More than 90% of the tribal people in India have landless and practice shifting cultivation. They still follow the outdated traditional methods of agriculture which causes very low yield of crops leading to their poor condition of living.
- iii) A good portion of land has been illegally transferred to non-tribals and has been used for different projects by the government. Further, they believe that forest is their asset and their spirit remains in the forest. So live in dense forests which lack cultivable land
- iv) A large number of tribal youths are either unemployed or under-employed. At times unhappy for they are unable to get works that can keep them occupied all through the year.
- v) Banking facilities in tribal areas are so inadequate that the tribals have to depend on the exploitative money-lenders

## **6. Educational Disabilities**

Illiteracy is a major problem of tribals in India. More than 70% of the tribal people are functionally illiterate. Many of them are ignorant of education, schools, colleges and universities. Since they are in abject poverty, they cannot afford education and from minor age engage in agriculture and other livelihood activities. Problem of language also is another setback in their education. The current formal education doesn't seem to be relevant to their way of living. They are found to be turning off from education from education at very early level of their education.

## **7. Disabilities of Health**

Due to lack of education and awareness the tribals do not appreciate the modern concept of health and sanitation. They believe that diseases are caused by evil spirits or ghosts. So they follow their traditional ways of diagnosis through the help of black magic by the tribal priests and tribal black magicians. Their contact with the outsiders created new diseases like blood pressure, AIDS, STDs etc. On the other hand they don't believe in modern doctors and medicines which make them suffer worse health hazards even in the modern time. Besides, Lack of communication to their remote habitats keep them away from the reach of modern facilities for treatment of their diseases.

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# **1.3. Other Backward Classes: Concept, Criteria, Classification, Characteristics and Disabilities**

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## **Concept of Other Backward Classes**

The Other Backward Classes are the third worst vulnerable group of people in Indian population. They as a category constitute roughly the largest i.e. more than one third of the country's population. The term "other backward class" has not been defined properly either

by

sociologists or by the constitution makers. The backward classes are a large mixed group of persons with more unclear and elastic boundaries. The other backward class consists of a large number of educationally and economically backward people. The term „other backward classes“ is often considered as vague in the sense that it includes a wide variety of lower castes and classes consisting of millions of people. But it is no denying fact that those who are said to be falling in the ambit of this group suffer from many deprivations and disabilities due to their backwardness for whatever reasons.

### **Definition**

Though the term „Other Backward Classes“ is not properly defined by the scholars, few of the relevant definitions for the purpose understanding can be cited here:

Justice K. Suba Rao defined the backward classes as “an ascertainable and identifiable group of persons based on caste, religion, race, language, occupation and such others, with definite characteristics of backwardness in various aspects of human existence-social, cultural, economic, political and such others.”

We can in general sense define them as “those social groups or classes or castes which are characterized by illiteracy, poverty, exploitation of labour and having no adequate representation in politics and services.

It can again be summarized that other backward classes may refer to a social category which consists of all the socially, educationally, economically and politically backward groups in our society.

The term „backward class“ is immensely difficult to define and make the readers understand. Backwardness is expressed in lack of adequate opportunity for group and individual self- development, especially in economic life and in matters of health, housing and education. It is measured in terms of low levels of income, the extent of illiteracy, and the low standard of life demonstrated by living conditions.

On the basis of certain elements of backwardness such as illiteracy and lack of education poverty, exploitation of labour, non-representation in services and untouchability,

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are listed in the Constitution while the third group i.e. Other Backward Class is unlisted. Instead, it is loosely defined. As a result of the absence of clear definition, the problem of Other Backward classes is very complicated and very difficult to deal with.

While the term „backward classes“ has not been defined by the Indian Constitution, the characteristics of backwardness are described here and there and also sometimes the categories are mentioned. Article 15(4) speaks of the socially and educationally backward class.

Article 16 (4) uses the term „backward class“ and speaks of inadequate representation in services. Article 46 mentions the weaker sections of the people and includes in that expression, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Article 340 empowers the State to investigate the conditions of the backward class and to help them by grants.

Recognizing that Indian society is made up of hundreds of millions of citizens who are utterly poor, illiterate and live in small, closed tribal and village societies the Constitution has laid stress on the social, economic and political justice along „with equality of status.

While Article 14 and 15 (1) and (2) emphasize equality of all citizens before law and prohibit discrimination on grounds of caste, creed, birth etc., Article 15 (4) asserts that these Constitutional provisions do not prevent the State from making special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Thus, the Constitution has recognized that it is necessary to take special steps to help the socially and economically backward classes.

The Backward Class Commission was appointed in 1953 with Kaka Kalelkar as the Chairman according to the Article 340 of the Constitution. The Commission was asked to determine the criteria to be adopted to provide concessions to “socially and educationally backward classes” besides The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Commission was also asked to prepare a list of such classes. The Commission prepared a list of about 2400 castes. The words specifically used are classes and sections and not castes and yet, as explained in the body of the report the words „sections and classes“ mean nothing but castes and no other interpretation is feasible. List prepared for backward classes deemed to have been made in terms of castes and the term „backward classes“ has been used to describe and include “backward castes”. But the Constitution does not recognize

caste, except the scheduled castes.



Many of the supporters of Kalelkar Commission claim that it must be recognised that the term „class“ is associated with economic category and indicates an „open“ status group. By contrast, the backward classes in India form an aggregate of „closed“ status groups; they belong to these groups by birth, not because of their individual economic characteristics.

Backward status is ascribed on the basis of birth to certain castes. Hence, for all practical purposes the term backward class is used for backward castes, while the Constitution recognizes special provisions for advancement of any socially and economically backward class.

The Second All India Backward Classes Commission – the Mandal Commission submitted its report in 1980. The Commission evolved 11 indicators – a mix of caste and class features – for assessing social and educational backwardness. It arrived at an exhaustive list of 3473 castes that were declared as backward. The tangible indicators to ascertain a caste or any social group as backward included their lower position in the class hierarchy, lower age at marriage within the group, higher female work participation, higher school drop out rate, inaccessibility to drinking water, lower average value of family assets, higher existence of Kutch houses and so on. The report of the Mandal Commission was partially implemented in 1991.

The Other Backward Classes in terms of the Government of India notification of 8th September, 1993 include castes and communities which are named in both the lists contained in the Report of the Second All India Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission) and in the list of individual State Governments. There is, therefore, a major limitation on historical data about the OBCs. The Registrar General of India and the Census Commissioner had discontinued collection of caste-wise information (except for SCs and STs) since the 1931 census. As a result, there are no time-series data on the demographic spread of OBCs and their access to amenities. Even the Mandal Commission which had estimated the OBC population at 52 per cent of the country's total population, had used the 1931 census data.

There has been a great deal of resentment among people belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) including minorities that they have not been given the benefit of

comprehensive amelioration packages as has been done in the case of SCs and STs. This has often led to conflicts culminating in violence among people.

Mandal Commission's recommendation for reservation of 27 per cent Government jobs for backward classes has also been accepted by the Supreme Court of India and caste has been accepted as the basis for identifying the beneficiaries of reservation. Of course Supreme Court has ordered that the creamy layer has to be excluded from reservation

### **Criteria**

Criterion is the most important component of understanding about the OBCs because it reflects the socio-economic and educational character of the same. Since sufficient writings have not come up regarding various aspects of this group due to its difficulty to define character, it serves an asset to gather knowledge about the group.

According to the Mandal Commission appointed to determine the other backward classes the following criteria have been recommended by the commission to identify the other backward classes in the country:

#### **A. Social Criteria**

- h) Castes or classes considered as socially backward by others.
- i) Castes or classes which mainly depend on manual labour for their livelihood
- j) Castes or classes where at least 25% of families and 10% of males above the state average get married at an age below 17 years in the rural areas and at least 10% females and 5% males do so in urban areas
- k) Castes or classes where participation of females in work is at least 25% above the state average.

#### **B. Educational Criteria**

- i) Castes or classes where the number of children in the age group of 5-15 years who have attended school is at least 25% below the state average
- ii) Castes or classes where the rate of school drop out in the age group of 5-15 years is at least 25% above the state average.
- iii) Castes or classes among whom the number of matriculate is at least 25% below the state average.

#### **C. Economic Criteria**

- i) Castes or classes where the average family assets is at least 25% below the state average

- ii) Castes or classes where the number of family living in kacha houses is at least 25% above the state average.
- iii) Castes or classes where the source of drinking water is beyond half a K.M. away from more than 50% of the house holds
- iv) Castes or classes where the number of house holds having taken consumption loans is at least 25% above the state average.

### **Classification of OBCs**

Classification of the other backward classes on any ground is almost impossible, because of its complex structure. People from many different religion, different castes and different culture constitute the other backward population and no demarcation is possible between them on any ground to stratify them. Even in the economic aspect a specific level of achievement in income and defined occupation is prescribed as a criterion for identifying a other backward class. The other important criterion for this is educational achievement of a social group. There was an unsuccessful effort by the Kalelkar Commission to classify the other backward classes on the basis of their economic position. The First Backward Commission which was appointed under Article 340(1) submitted its Report in 1955. The Report presented a list of 2399 castes and communities considered as backward. Of these, 237 were considered as most backward, requiring special attention. Thus the category „backward classes“ was bifurcated into two categories – the Backwards and most Backwards. The Report was rejected by the Union Government for having used „caste“ and not an economic criterion for identifying Backward Classes. Consequently, the attempt for classifying the category also went in vain. Hence, so far as my knowledge is concern there is hardly any line has been drawn in the same.

### **Characteristics of OBCs**

#### **Socio-demographic characteristics**

- i) These people constitute the largest population among the defined categories
- ii) People of this category cover wide range of social groups and communities across all the minority religions and Hindu groups owing to their lower economic status.

- iii) They have very low social status next to the SCs and STs in the Indian social hierarchy.
- iv) They have abysmal level of performance in economy and education
- v) In terms of health indicators, these people have very low health status next to the SCs and STs

### **Economic Characteristics**

- i) These people belong to lower income groups.
- ii) They have very low representation higher posts in job sector and they are mainly very low profile occupation petty business, basket making, performing magic, agriculture, industrial labour etc.
- iii) The incidence Unemployment, including underemployment is the highest among all social groups OBCs in rural areas and not significantly less than the STs
- iv) Asset ownership (including land) per household of OBCs is double that of SCs and STs, but only about two-thirds of „Others“ in both rural and urban areas.
- v) The incidence of indebtedness, and consequently the debt to asset ratio, is highest among OBCs of all social groups. It also appears that OBCs borrow a lower proportion of their debt from institutional sources and have higher dependence on informal sources as compared to all the other social groups.
- vi) The incidence if Bonded labour and Child labour is higher among these people.

### **Disabilities of Other Backward Classes**

The disabilities or injustices suffered by them are not significantly visible like those of the SCs and SCs, nevertheless, somewhere down the line there are some hints why they lagged behind in the race towards development. Those can be mentioned as us under:

- i) Inheritance of poor education after the independence made them almost handicapped.
- ii) Failure on the part of the successive governments to correctly identify them and make them get into the mainstream of the society.
- iii) Lacks of a comprehensive package for them like that of the SCs and STs, so that they could come forward for a better life.
- iv) They were close to the higher economic class who exploited them for own interest.

- v) Administrative negligence has kept them away from the process of development.



## **Check Your Progress**

### **Section-I (Long type Questions)**

- a) Discuss Meaning, Definition and Criteria of weaker sections in India.
- b) Write about the characteristics and Classification of Scheduled Caste Population in India.
- c) Who are scheduled tribes? Give a brief detail of the socio-economic and educational characteristics of scheduled tribes in India.
- d) “Social disability has been a daunting feature of some sections of Indian population.” Critically examine the statement.

### **Section-II (Short Notes)**

- a) Harijans
- b) Girijans
- c) Other Backward Classes
- d) Creamy layer
- e) Ethnic Classification of Scheduled Tribes
- f) Social disabilities of Scheduled Castes

# **Untouchability**

## **Contents**

- 1.0. Objective of the Unit
- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Historical Analysis of Untouchability
- 1.3. Sociological and Psychological perspectives of Untouchability
- 1.4. Measures to Eradicate Untouchability

## **2.0. Objective of the Unit**

This unit of the paper aims at analyzing the historical footings of the practice of untouchability in relation to caste system in India. It also throws light on the sociological and psychological perspectives of untouchability and responsive measures by the government and other players for the eradication of untouchability. After studying this unit, the students will be able to conceptualize the following topics:

- The basic concept of Untouchability
- Historical Analysis of Untouchability
- Sociological Perspectives of Untouchability
- Psychological Perspectives of Untouchability
- Measures to Eradicate Untouchability

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## 2.1. Introduction

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### Concept

**Untouchability** is the practice of ostracizing a group by segregating them from the mainstream by social custom or legal mandate. It is a very old concept construed from the notion of purity and pollution sprang from the practice of caste system in India. Since the ancient times, the heinous practice of untouchability has been a serious malady in the Indian society. It has severely affected the socio-economic and educational life of a significant part of Indian population by depriving them from almost all forms of human rights and social justice. It is believed that though discrimination was found in many societies, nowhere in the world except that of India such a rigid and organized form of discrimination has ever existed. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation while speaking about untouchability said, "The practice of untouchability is a leper's wound in the body of Indian society". He further said, "It is the hatefulest expression of caste system in India". Untouchability has its roots deep down in our social and religious system. In spite of several legal efforts at the all India level to remove untouchability, it still makes its roaring presence felt in most of the rural areas.

### Definition

It is very difficult to give a clear and universal definition of untouchability. The term „untouchable“ has been found to have been expressed in different statements by different scholars.

According to **Manu Smritis**, the people who follow the lowest kind of occupations include scavenging, leather work, removal of the carrion etc, are to be regarded as untouchables.

**G.S.Ghurye** defines Untouchability as "ideas of purity whether occupational or ceremonial, which are found to have been a factor of practice of untouchability.

According to **Dr.D.N. Majumdar** "Untouchable castes are those who suffer from various social and political disabilities many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by the higher castes."

Thus, untouchables are those castes which are subject to all kinds of disabilities in every walk of life such as social, economic, religious and political in other words, the persons who have no right to



enjoy any privilege, who do not touch the shadow of higher caste, who follow the lowest kind of occupations,

who have occupied the lowest place in the caste hierarchy and deprived from all sorts of things are called to be the untouchables.

Untouchability is a mass phenomenon of group prejudices and discrimination affecting more than 17% of the Indian population. It refers to the solid inhibition of touch emerging from the characteristics of the Indian caste system. It is a practice in which some lower caste people are kept at distance from others and denied of equal rights and social justice for their very touch is considered to be polluting or contaminating the higher caste people.

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## **2.2. Historical Analysis of Caste and Untouchability**

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### **Origin**

Untouchability is believed to be the offspring of caste system in India born somewhere in the ancient time. The exact origin of the caste system and subsequent untouchability is still a matter of great oblivion and surmise. There is no unanimity at any level regarding the origin of the two. Though there are several guessed theories on the origin of caste and untouchability, none of them explain them properly. The history of untouchability in relation to caste is even more confusing as some scholars say that untouchability did not exist even in the caste ridden society since long past. However, as far as our view to the past is concern, untouchability as an anti-human practice is prevailing there in our society atleast for a couple of centuries. Therefore, it is important to look into the past in order to gain knowledge as to how untouchability, a heinous practice started and how it came about catching the minds of even the most learned people in our society.

Today, from our experience in daily life, we cannot deny to believe that our society is vertically divided/stratified into different groups on the basis of caste and its traditional customs. Different studies on caste and untouchability find that untouchables are the people located at the lowest rung of ladder of caste hierarchy. Since caste has divided the society into lower and higher segments, it is believed that the same must have prominent role in bringing in the practice of untouchability to the society. In order to have a better understanding on the history of Caste and untouchability, we can make a close look at different theories formulated by different scholars in the field.

### a) Traditional Theory

This theory holds the view that the origin of caste system and untouchability owes to the ancient religious literature and Brahmanic ideas which greatly have contributed to the development of this theory. The supporters of this theory believe that caste has a divine origin. They have some traditional references in the Vedas where it is mentioned that castes were created by Brahma, the creator who is believed to have divided the society into higher lower strata with defined duties for the harmonious performance of various social and economic functions. According to the “Purushasukta” hymn of the Rig Veda, the Brahmin is born from mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriya from the arms, the Vaishya from the thighs and the Sudra from the feet of the supreme creator. On the basis of this piece of statement from the literature, the traditional theory holds that the emergence of the four castes from different parts of Brahma’s body is only the symbolic is a symbolic description and indicates of the work performed by each of them. The theory states that since the Brahmin has come out of the mouth, the seat of speech, his duty is to serve the society as teacher. The Brahmin in this context is believed to be the spokes person of the God to human being. Arm symbolizes strength. Hence, the duty of the Kshatriya is to defend the society from internal and external aggression and rule the society. In the sameline, the duty of the Vaishya who has come out of thighs is to provide food for the members of the society and to look after the economic wellbeing of the people. The feet serve the body. So the prime duty of the Sudra who is born from the feet of Brahma is to serve the other members of the society. In the job of serving the people, the Sudras were exploited to such an extent that they were cow down to the status of sub-human in the society. They were even deprived of the basic rights of life that led to severe social disabilities in the long run. The believers of this theory justify themselves by drawing instances from the Mahabharat, Ramayana, Puranas and Manusmriti etc.

The traditional theory also tries to explain its footings through the traditional views of „**Karma**”and „**Dharma**”. The **Karma** doctrine holds the view that a man is born in a particular caste because of the result of his action in the previous life. The doctrine of **Dharma** explains that a man who accepts and lives according to the principles of his own caste is following his Dahrma. As a reward to his life ofDharma in the previous life, God makes the man/woman born in a higher caste in the following cycle of birth. On the contrary, one is punished if he doesn’t live according to the principles of Dharma. He is born to a lower caste to suffer the designed disabilities as a punishment for his violation in the previous life.

Thus, traditional theory believes that for what ever reason, fate of a person is decided by the supreme creator. It is the will of God that one is born to a higher or lower caste and no one on earth has the right and power to change the same. Thus the untouchables were believed to have been cursed by God. They were the violators of the principles of Dharma and should be punished for their wrong deeds. This attitude of the rest of the world aggravated their suffering drew sense of hatred from every corner.

This theory has been vehemently criticized for its supernatural nature, lack of biological justification and lack of scientific standing.

#### **b) Occupational Theory**

Nesfield is considered as one of the chief exponents of Occupational Theory of Caste. He believed caste system as the natural product of the occupational division of Hindu society. In his words, "Function and function alone is responsible for the origin of caste system". He holds the view that in the beginning there no rigidity, each individual was free to have occupation of his choice. But with the passage of time, the social systems became rigid and occupational choice and mobility came to a halt. Occupational groups were divided in the name of castes. Castes were identified on the basis of fixed occupation. In view of the value, importance and prestige attached to the occupational groups, they were divided into higher and lower castes. Thus, the persons in noble occupations such as Brahmins (teaching), Kshatriya (fighting battales), Vaishyas (trade and commerce) were considered as the members of the superior castes. On the other hand the people having lower occupations such as Sudras who were engaged in scavenging, basket making, skin tanning, daily wage labour etc. considered as belonging to inferior castes.

Thus, the people who were engaged in dirty occupations like scavenging, skin tanning, carrying human lasses were kept away from others in the sense that they might be contaminated by the germs passed into the dirty workers. This might have been another reason for the emergence of practice of untouchability in the society.

However, this theory also is not free from criticism and rejection on the ground that occupation is not the sole basis of the caste difference and untouchability.

#### **c) Political Theory**

The political theory believes that neither religion nor occupation but political convenience and indomitable urge for manipulation is the prominent reason for resulting origin of caste system and untouchability. The Brahmins who were said to be in a comfortable social status were solely responsible for creating and maintaining this system so as to retain authority in the hands. Dr. G.S. Ghurye said, "Caste is the Brhmanic child of Indo-Aryan culture cradled in the land of Ganges and hence transferred to the other parts of India by Brahmanic Prospectors." Further, according to Abbe Dubois caste system is an ingenious device made by the Brahmins for Brahmins. Brahmins are belived to have imposed restriction on food and social intercourse with the so called untouchables to preserve their purity which they believed as necessary for the religious functions.

In this process, it is believed that the Brahmins wanted others to remain submissive to them in their power game. They wanted the lowest caste to live and die for their interest service.

#### **d) Racial Theory**

Herbert Risley is the most ardent proponent of this theory of origin of caste system. The other supporters of this theory are the scholars like G.S. Ghurye, D.N. Majumdar, Westernmark and others. This theory holds the view that caste system came into existence due to clash of cultures and the contact races. After the Aryan expedition, The Aryans because of their better complexion, physical appearance in comparison to the non-Aryans, placed themselves as the superior race over the non-Aryans. Thus the Aryans considered the natives as inferior to them and maintained their own ideas and ceremonial purity. In the process, the Aryan got married to non-Aryan women, but refused to give their daughter in marriage to the non-Aryans. If any one violated this rule, was subjected to punishment. The off springs born out of such marriages were called „Chandals“ and thrown out of the society and its system. The Chandals had the lowest position in the society. They were deprived of all the rights of social beings. The process of discrimination rose to such extent that the very touch of these people to the higher race was considered as inauspicious. Thus according to this theory, caste system and untouchability gained ground in the Indian society.

#### **History of Caste and Untouchability**

History of caste system and untouchability transcends the age when no form of writing existed. Some believe that caste based division was made by Brahma, the creator. Hence, the history dates back to the very beginning of human race in India. It is therefore very difficult to have systematic and complete study of the history of caste system and untouchability. A sincere effort has been made here to draw a sketch of the history of caste and untouchability in India through the collections of some available literary sources.

#### **Vedic Age (1500-1000 B.C.)**

Rig Veda is the earliest literary source available on the caste system in India. Its „Purushasukta“ hymn talks about the origin of 4 varnas. The term untouchability found no mention here but some other relevant terms like „Avarnas“, „Dasas“ and „Dasyus“ were frequently used and those can be referred to the untouchables who were prescribed the bottommost place in the society then. During the Vedic age these people were denied the right to education and even the right to desirable life. They were the most exploited and oppressed lot, condemned to labour freely or for little wage.

### **Age of Upanishads (800-600 B.C.)**

By the time the Upanishads texts came into being the problem of the people of the lowest rung of social ladder was becoming deeper and clearer. The famous „Chandogya Upanishad“ refers to the first three castes. It also compares the life of the „Chandalas“ (the Out castes) with a Dog and a Swine. (Ref.-Chandagya Upanishad, Khanda 10, Verse 7). This kind of comparison of the chandalas in the scriptures speaks volumes about the socio-economic condition of the so called untouchables in the contemporary India.

### **Budhist Period (600-400 B.C.)**

It is the fact that Buddhism and Jainism are the first attacks or revolts in general against caste system and untouchability in India. Budha criticized the religion which believed in the concept of pollution and consequent practice of untouchability. He rejected the idea of Brahmanic supremacy and exploitation of the poor. He wanted to establish a casteless and classless society through his religion without any discrimination on the basis of birth or any other ground. It implies that the situation of the untouchable was strong enough to move the heart of conscious human being to fight against it and reject it.

### **Age of Dharmasutras (600-300 B.C.)**

In the time when Dharmasutras were compiled, the Sudras were compelled to serve the other three groups. They were forced to serve the people from higher caste when the higher castes were in problem. They were not allowed to use new shoes and umbrellas before the higher castes people and were forced to use the cast-off shoes, umbrellas, garments and to eat the left-over foods by the upper castes.

### **Age of Manu (200 B.C.-100 A.D.)**

Manu was a famous ancient law giver of India. His book „**Manusmriti**“ contains some laws that codified the caste system. **Varna** is mentioned as the caste equivalent in Manusriti. It spoke of four

Varnas. Besides it spoke about the untouchables who were excluded from the main society and were called „Parijanya“ or Antyajas“. It strongly disapproves of marrying outside one's caste. The progeny of

such faultier were segregated from the Varna system. According to the Smritis the Chamaras and Chandalas were born out of the sexual relationship between Brahmin women and Sudra men. They were treated as polluted and kept away from the mainstream society. During this period also the concept of „**Varnasamkara**“ was developed and those who did not perform the sacred duties of their own castes were punished.

### **Gupta Period (300-700 AD)**

During Gupta period with the strong patronage of the Gupta kings, Brahmanism was integrated with several other Sects. Popular other deities were absorbed into the Vedic cult. Even Budha was proclaimed as Vishnuite incarnation. During this period the Brahmanic supremacy found to have declined to some extent and the exploitation of weaker members was also reduced.

### **Medieval Period**

Tsuang Tsang visited India in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. His travel accounts are considered as very important sources of Indian history in the said period. He speaks very little of caste and very silent about the practice of untouchability. Of course, some people believe that the issue of untouchability might not have attracted the attention of the Chinese traveler for whatever reasons or he might have been not interested of speaking about the caste system and untouchability then.

It is also worth mentioning that Al Beruni, another traveler in 11<sup>th</sup> century also was almost silent about the plight of the untouchables.

### **The Period of Bhakti Movement**

The mystic saints of medieval India were the exponents of the Bhakti Movement. They were not affiliated to any particular sect. the Bhakti Movement, a socio-religious expression of the revolt of masses against the Brahmin supremacy and blind faith in the country. Bhaktas were seen as the representative of the aspirations of the down-trodden masses as against the so called twice-born in our society.



The **Bhagawat Purana**, the main spiritual authority of the Bhakti Movement came out with the idea of God who is partial to the poor. „**Hari**“, the most accepted God in the movement is believed to be fond of the destitute and their humble sacrifice and doesn't like to accept the sacrifice of the evil minded persons who by their conceit about Vedic learning, wealth, family and deeds bestow harm on the poor and destitute who here refer mainly to the untouchables.

### **British Period**

During the British period spanning from the 16<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century the plight of the untouchables crossed all limits. On one side they were exploited by the higher caste people and on the other they were exploited by the Britishers who took the maximum advantage of their ignorance and socio-economic distress. British government was almost indifferent about welfare of the SCs and did not pay heed to their suppressed voice that were raised sporadically in some places against exploitation.

During the pre-independence period, some social reformists and nationalist leaders realized the plight of the untouchables. Leading among them were M.G. Ranade, Mahatma Gandhi, Jyotiba Phule, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who vehemently criticized the heinous practice of untouchability and spearheaded the crusades against practice of untouchability. Especially, the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr.

B.R. Ambedkar is incredible in this regard.

After the Independence with tireless effort and strong advocacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his supporters, some special provisions were incorporated in the constitution of India for the welfare and upliftment of the downtrodden.

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## **2.1. Sociological and Psychological Perspectives of Untouchability**

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### **1. Psychological Perspectives of Untouchability**

Untouchability is a direct product of the caste system. It is not merely the inability to touch a human being of a certain caste or sub-caste. It is an attitude on the part of a whole group of people that relates to a deeper psychological process of thought and belief, invisible to the naked eye, translated into various physical acts and behaviours, norms and practices.

Untouchability is prompted by the spirit of social aggression and the belief in purity and pollution that characterizes casteism. It is generally taken for granted that untouchables are considered polluted people at the lowest end of the caste order. The jobs considered polluting and impure are reserved for untouchables, and in many cases they are prevented from engaging in any other work. These jobs include removing human waste (known as “manual scavenging”), dragging away and skinning animal carcasses, tanning leather, making and fixing shoes, and washing clothes etc. They are supposed to reside outside the village so that their physical presence does not pollute the “real” village. Not only are they restricted in terms of space, but their houses are also supposed to be inferior in quality and devoid of any facilities like water and electricity. All these socially forceful practices have been putting a tremendous impact in the minds of the untouchables and have been contributing to their lot of misery.

#### **i) Internalized sense of inferiority**

As an instrument of casteism, Untouchability also serves to instill caste status to untouchable children from the moment they are born. Kachro (filth), Melo (dirty), Dhudiyo (dusty), Gandy (mad), Ghelo (stupid), Punjo (waste) are just some of the names given to the untouchables in Gujarat. This shows the debilitating effect of Untouchability, as it becomes a conscious act of cooperation between two individuals of distinct caste or sub-caste identity. Again, this has been happening for almost one thousand years or so. The untouchables have almost adapted themselves to bear all forms of disabilities born from untouchability. The person treated as untouchable submits himself or herself to untouchability practices because of a generational integrated belief that it is right, justified, religious and natural. That’s why an untouchable continued to submit himself to the grip of inferiority and humiliation and unable to come out of that mentality. This badly affects the performance and behaviour of an untouchable in his day today life.

#### **ii) Unstable mind**

Capacity to respond to and benefit from education depends upon a child’s intellect, language, and emotional maturity. As the children from the traditionally deprived communities lack a role model to follow in the area of education, they carry low aspiration for money, material things, and occupational status. It is observed that they have very low self-concept, low self-esteem, and lower need to achieve. They have an overwhelming concern for the immediate needs of sustenance, with a static level of aspirations. They are extremely cautious and avoid taking risks, where a possibility of failure is present. They are generally vague, fantasy-oriented in their future planning, comparatively older in age, and from illiterate parents.

India’s deprived caste illiterate parents engaged in defiling and hateful occupations breed

emotionally less stable children. Due to lack of a meaningful interaction in early childhood, they have poor verbal language expression and lack of stimulation makes their intellect

sluggish. Destined to low achievement because of lack of qualitative interaction and inadequate development of cognitive and linguistic skills, they lag behind in their scholastic achievements.

### **iii) Aggressiveness**

People who experience mass rejection generally have three sets of motives. The first motive involves a heightened desire for social connections, those who can possibly provide acceptance and support; the second set of motives involves angry, antisocial urges to defend oneself or to hurt the source of rejection; third, the rejected people are motivated to avoid further rejection, therefore withdraw themselves. Members of India's deprived castes often crave for establishing social connections with the members of privileged castes and wish to gain their acceptance, and when they fail in doing so anger and hostility generates. Anger and aggression are common responses to rejection and often lead to long-lasting break in social bonds. Studies have shown aggressive behavior among rejected persons by their peer groups at all levels. Anger and aggression in rejected persons occurs as a result of pain or frustration associated with rejection. Moreover, rejection by the peer group not only creates a great deal of suffering in the development stage, but also predicts negative emotional and behavioral outcomes in the future.

### **iv) Criminal behaviour**

Rejected people may withdraw from and avoid interpersonal interactions, not only with those who rejected them but often with other people as well. They may either physically leave the situation or withdraw socially and psychologically, while remaining physically present when they cannot escape or avoid social encounter. The events that connote rejection immediately elicit negative emotions, such as, sadness, loneliness, hurt, anger, and jealousy and lower self-esteem in the victims. India's deprived castes who perceive rejection from the majority groups breed negative emotions, low self-esteem, avoidance behavior, revenge mode, hatreds and aggressive traits among their members leading to criminal behaviour.

### **v) Personality**

The university and professional college students hailing from illiterate deprived caste families generally do not attribute their success to their own efforts and hard work; rather they refer their success to external factors such as the kindness of their teachers, mercy of God, and their good luck. This tendency leads to superstitious behavior, perpetuation of a fatalistic outlook, ritualism, and ingratiation of their significant others. On the other hand, failure is often ascribed to oneself. These people have harsh self-criticism, less favorable self-concept, and rigid standards to evaluate one's own performance. It builds an ego-damaging and self-discouraging internalized mechanism.

In a study of medical students of various categories, it was found that the deprived students

had low activity and emotional temperament. Depression and emotional instability was observed to

be higher in these students. They exhibited more of the socially undesirable behavior than others.

#### **vi) Lack of self-confidence**

„Cognitive approach hypothesis“, says that negative self-evaluation individuals results in social anxiety. This anxiety leads to lack of self-confidence and avoidance behavior in certain social situations that demand their attention and decision making. In these situations they are found to be more tense and anxious for the fear of things going wrong. A so called untouchable is generally more cautious, over-careful, self-restraint and less confident as compared to the privileged caste person. A „Memory for self-relevant information“ research suggests that once a person views himself and his performance negatively, he is more likely to recall incidents in which he performed poorly. These easily accessed negative memories serve to precipitate social anxiety when future encounters are contemplated.

#### **vii) Anxiety**

People are generally sensitive to others perception and evaluation about them and they are highly motivated to seek others' approval, acceptance, and affection, than to seek others disapproval and rejection. When need for approval is high, a person tries to manage a better impression. Therefore, the factors that heighten people's motivation to seek approval are associated with increased social anxiety and that is why a person's feelings of self-worth are partially dependent on other's evaluation. Untouchables are the deprived who are in want of social approval and acceptance, carry high levels of social anxiety as compared to the general population. This anxiety interferes with their work efficiency resulting in their poor performance.

#### **viii) Lack of Motivation**

Studies reveal that deprived people have unrealistic motivation, external locus for success, personal inadequacies for failures, harsh and rigid self-evaluation, and extreme anxiety for the outcome of personal performance. They exhibit avoidance behavior, lack the decision-making capacity, tend to have negative memories of past experiences, carry a very low self-concept, and need social approval. Success is not that reinforcing as it should be, and failure is extremely discouraging. They experience the fear of failure because of internalization of personal inadequacies, negative memories, and low perception of self, and heightened social anxiety. The entire personality mechanism of untouchables stemmed out of their psychosocial experience is motivationally damaging accounts for the largest failures in examinations, drop-outs from educational institutions and other works.

The untouchables encounter a number of difficulties related to psychological development. Their developmental process to assume psychological maturity and to achieve

mental health is retarded due to factors like deprivation of childhood experiences, lack of qualitative interaction for healthy cognitive and linguistic development, unrealistic motivation, external locus for success, harsh and rigid self-evaluation, high levels of social anxiety, internalized sense of inferiority, lack of self-motivation, and so on.

They are exposed to multiple psychological strains that lead to mental health aberrations. Nearly 90 percent of all the poor Indians and 95 percent of all the illiterate Indians are from deprived castes. Thus far, India has not succeeded to uphold its international legal obligations to ensure the fundamental human rights of the deprived, despite laws and policies against caste based untouchability. This state of the problem has made it imperative look at the issues of untouchables with deeper concern.

They need more attention in the form of recognition and encouragement. This need is readily satisfied in privileged group students, while the untouchables get far less recognition; yet their need is immeasurably greater.

## **2. Sociological perspectives of untouchability**

Untouchability is clouded nearly every sphere of life, practiced in an infinite number of forms and pervasive in every corner of social environment of the untouchables. At the village level, they are barred from using wells used by non-untouchables, forbidden from going to the barber shop and entering temples, while at the level of job recruitment and employment they are systematically discriminated and paid less, ordered to do the most menial work, and rarely promoted. Even at school, untouchable children may be asked to clean toilets and to eat separately. All these are the social aspects of untouchability. More over, different sociological perspectives of the practice of untouchability can be discussed the following points:

### **i) Social Stigma**

Social stigma refers to defect in a person's social identity-negative information about a person that is known by others. In the traditional Hindu social hierarchy an untouchable is evaluated so low that the depth of degradation accords him a sub-human status. Negative reactions from others may take many forms – ranging from disinterest, criticism, prejudice, avoidance, rejection, betrayal, stigmatization, ostracism, abandonment, and abuse to bullying. On account of the stigmatized existence, a deprived caste person is highly self-conscious, sensitive to others' comments and criticism, has real or imagined evaluation, and is likely to feel socially anxious, especially when under observation. It poses a great threat to the constructive social relation and effective social interaction of the victim of social stigma.

### **ii) Violation of Human Rights**

The 1950 national constitution of India legally abolishes the practice of untouchability, and

there are constitutional reservations in both educational institutions and public services for the untouchables. Unfortunately, these measures have not changed the reality of daily life for most these people, as the Indian government frequently tolerates oppression and open discrimination



aimed at this group. The untouchables usually live in separate areas away from the upper caste Hindu communities, and they are often forbidden to access public wells. In many areas, when they eat in public restaurants or patronize street vendors, they must use a separate glass for drinking tea or coffee to prevent sharing between untouchables and higher caste Hindus. The untouchables in different parts of India cannot enter Hindu temples and many religious and caste leaders forbid inter-caste marriages with these people.

It has been often seen that if an untouchable person break one of these rules, frequently the entire untouchable community is punished for the perceived individual transgression. This communal punishment often takes the form of denial of access to land or employment, physical attacks on the women, and the burning down of Dalit homes. Despite a clear record of violence against the untouchables, there are numerous reports that police officials have refused to register complaints about violations of human rights and the law or to prosecute those responsible for the abuses. With little knowledge of their rights, limited access to attorneys, and no money for hearings or bail, untouchables are easy targets for human rights violations.

### **iii) Social inequality**

Deprivation is the consequence of socioeconomic disparity due to the caste-system that is peculiarly fitted in the Indian society; to hand on cultural patterns and particular items of the culture. The traditional Hindu society that is compartmentalized into various caste-groups is a social institution dictating superior and lesser beings among its members. This system that places the untouchables at the bottom of the caste-pyramid is one of the obvious institutions of caste-inequality, a system of legalized inequality, a variant of an ascribed system of stratification, wherein, the allocation of roles and status is governed by its own principles, determining the social, economic, political, and ritualistic structure of individuals in relation to each other. The deprived masses described compendiously as Scheduled castes in the constitution of India are in fact low castes and tribes in the Hindu social order, treated as

„caste-less“, outcastes or untouchables and have been subjected to deprivation and discrimination for centuries.

For the first time in history, untouchables were accorded equal status to other citizens in the constitution of independent India. With the desire to bring them in step with the privileged ones, the policy of reservations was introduced, offering them the advantage of education and jobs. The last 62 years of independence have witnessed a massive social mobility and transformation as well as the emergence of “the educated” among the deprived castes, generally looked down upon with contempt by the larger society for their mobility on the crutches of reservations. Although untouchability is outlawed and the caste-system is not overtly practiced, at least in the bigger cities, there are other ways of isolating and segregating them similar to abolition of slavery in the USA, where injustice to African-Americans continued until the passing of the Civil Rights Act.

### **iv) Poor Education**

Human resources are essential components for human development and education is given overriding the priority, to achieve the goal. The process of education begins in the family

where the child spends most of his time and receives informal learning, which gradually prepares him for the formal education. Among a number of equalities offered to deprived castes, equality in education is enshrined in the constitution of free India. However, the spread of education among the deprived castes has remained very slow due to various reasons. For several decades, low achievement among children of deprived castes has been a serious problem. The gap in educational achievement in these children and children from privileged castes increases significantly during the elementary and secondary grades. This gap can be primarily attributed to, (a) inadequate educational facilities (b) lack of motivation, and (c) socio-economic status of parents. Parental illiteracy, low economic status, large size of the family, and impoverished home environment are the contributing factors for low educational achievement.

Poverty and ignorance were the main hindering factors, especially during the first three to four decades of independence. In the initial years, high dropout rate from the schools was observed among deprived caste students, as they were not tolerated by the privileged caste students for their unclean status, while later when these students started making their presence felt in the educational institutions in increasing numbers, they became a source of irritation, heart-burn, and inter-community tension.

#### **v) Poor Health**

The preamble of the World Health Organization (WHO) succinctly underscores the enjoyment of the highest standard of health as a fundamental right of every human being. According to Article 25 of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights, every one has the right to a standard of living, adequate for the health of himself, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and necessary services. Studies reveal that individuals' poorer health status, including higher morbidity, lower life expectancy, and higher rates of infant mortality are linked to their race, ethnicity, and caste. Studies also reveal that any kind of discrimination rooted in social, including caste or racial origin affects people's health in at least three distinct ways: (a) health status, (b) access to healthcare, and (c) in quality of health services.

Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is a basic and dynamic force in our daily lives, influenced by our circumstances, beliefs, and culture, and social, economic, and physical environment. Health has also been defined as a unity and harmony within the mind, body, and spirit, which is unique to each person. The level of wellness or health is, in part, determined by the ability to deal with and defend against stress. Health is on a continuum with movements between a state of optimum well-being and illness. It is determined by physiological, psychological, socio-cultural, spiritual, and developmental variables. All these variables are suppressed by the numerous disabilities the so called untouchables suffer leading to poor physical and mental health.

#### **vi) Poor social environment**

Early environmental influences of stimulation or isolation have a marked effect on

measurable cognitive functions. Social class differences affecting language development emerge during the

first year of life. Early environmental influences have a marked effect on the measurable functioning of vocabulary, and social class differences affecting the language development become unequivocal by three years of age. Some amount of linguistic deficiency due to this socio-cultural disadvantage has been observed in rural children also, as compared to urban ones. Language is an important weapon of expression and shapes an individual's personality, which the deprived caste children lack in comparison to the privileged ones. Deprivation from somato-sensory stimulation leads to inadequate intellectual growth. Between the ages of three and six years, incipient attitudes of his/her social group show systematic development, which gets correctly categorized around eight years of age. A child growing in a disadvantaged family may suffer on account of not being able to enter the larger mainstream of society, as his social circle remains sharply limited. Such a child would emerge out with a checkered personality, ill-equipped to face the divergent ways of society and culture at large.

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## **Measures to Eradicate Untouchability**

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The measures to eradicate untouchability, a serious blot to Indian society were taken long back the Indian Independence but those were found to be too small and less organized to tackle the long established evil practice. The British colonialism did not do much for the cause of emancipation of millions untouchables. After the independence, some organized efforts were made at various levels to root out the problem. The framers of Indian constitution, especially Dr. B.R. Ambedkar gave a strong hand to raise the issue and crafted various provisions in the constitution to mandate the measures for eradication of untouchability nationwide. Many efforts also came up from the government in the form of social policy and social legislation. Even at the non-governmental level, numbers of civil society organizations and religious and voluntary organization came forward to make away the social evil. Some of those efforts can be discussed under the following points:

### **1. Constitutional Safeguard**

As it is already mentioned, there are many provisions in different parts of the constitution aimed at attacking untouchability and providing safeguard to the untouchables. Some important among them are:

- i) The preamble of Indian constitution speaks about the establishment of equality and social justice- social, economic, political and educational for all the citizens in the country.

ii) Article 15 reads that the state will not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or the like. Further, it ascertains that no one should be subjected to any kind of disability or restriction with regard to (i) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of entertainment, (ii) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resorts maintained wholly or partially out of state funds or dedicated to the use of general public.

iii) Article-16 (1) guarantees equality of opportunity for all the citizens in the matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.

iv) Article 16 (2)- says that no citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them be ineligible for or discriminated against in respect of any employment office under the state

v) Article 16 (3)- Empowers the parliament to make special provision for some special categories including the SCs as demanded by the situation without harming the integrity of the constitution.

vi) Article 17- Abolishes untouchability in and its practice any form is strictly forbidden. The enforcement of any disability due to untouchability is an offence punishable in accordance with law.

vii) Article 23 prohibits bonded labour or labour without proper wage which is prominent among the untouchables

viii) Article 24- prohibits practice of child labour which is also prominent among the untouchables

ix) Article 29- Has removed the denial or restriction of admission any section to educational institutions maintained by the state or receiving aid out of the state fund.

x) Article 46- promises that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of the SCs and STs and shall protect them from all forms of exploitations.

xi) Article 164- Provides for a special ministry for the welfare of the SCs in certain states like Bihar, M.P. and Odisha etc.

xii) Article 330- reads that seats shall be reserved in the house of the people for the SCs and STs

xiii) Article 332- says that seats shall be reserved for the SCs in the state Legislative Assemblies of the states specified under the First Schedule

xiv) Article 335- Enables the SCs or untouchables to claim for the reservation in services under the government.

xv) Article 338- Empowers the president to appoint a special officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided to the SCs (so called untouchables) and report to the president who presents all such reports in the parliament for consideration.

xvi) Article 340- Empowers the president to appoint a commission to investigate analyze and make necessary recommendation for the welfare of the SCs.

## **2. Legislative Measures**

Legislative measures are those made comprehensively to deal with specific problems of certain people, those are of serious concern for the society. In the backdrop of serious disabilities suffered by the untouchables in our society, many social legislations were crafted and enforced to fight against untouchability and provide safeguard to the untouchables. Some of those legislations can be briefly cited as under:

### **A) Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850**



Prior to the Indian independence, though many efforts were made by some religious and voluntary organizations to fight against the practice of untouchability, the British Government did not do much on the issue. But in view of the severity of the matter, with the pressure by some Indian voluntary associations, it took small initiatives for the cause.

The **Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850**, also **Act XXI of 1850**, was a legislation passed in British India under East India Company rule, that abolished all laws affecting the rights of persons converting to another religion or caste. In the backdrop of the enactment of the Act, there were large scale religious conversions from Hinduism to other religions like Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity etc. Under ancient Hindu law a person converting from Hinduism to another religion became ineligible for inheriting property from other family members. The new Act allowed Indians who converted from one religion to another religion equal right under law, especially in the case of inheritance.

Under the Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850 it was provided that no person shall be deprived of his rights or property as reason of renouncing or being excluded from any

religion or as a reason of being in any caste. Later, this Act was criticized and rejected for having many defects deterrent to social cohesion.

## **B) The Untouchability (Offence) Act, 1955**

Untouchability existed along with the caste system as a socially prescribed practice for centuries even perhaps, for millennia. Though many efforts were made by some noted social reformists and enlightened personalities, the heinous practice of untouchability continued to plague the lives of a significant section of the Indian population. The founding fathers of the Indian constitution gave an emphasis to make a special provision to fix the problem and Article 17 was dedicated to this problem. Subsequently, it was felt that the provision under article 17 was not adequate to deal with such a long standing compound problem like untouchability. Hence, The Untouchability (Offence) Act, 1955 was enacted by the government to curb the problem of untouchability.

This Act aimed at eradicating the problem of untouchability by abolishing untouchability in any form. It also prescribed punishment for the preaching and practice of “Untouchability” for the enforcement of any disability arising there from for matters connected therewith.

### **Salient provisions of the Act:**

- Any person who prevents a person belonging to Scheduled Caste community from entering places like a public temple, using a well, water room, hotel, inn, shall be prosecuted under the Act
- In case if a barber disagrees to cut the hair of a member belonging to Scheduled Caste or a laundryman refuses to wash his clothes, they shall also be considered as offenders under this Act.
- It would be considered an offence if a member of Scheduled Caste community is prevented from occupying a seat along with other people without any discrimination at the place of religious service or prayer at a public place in the village.
- It would also be considered an offence under this Act if a member belonging to a scheduled caste is treated with any discrimination at flour mill.
- The persons who maintain separate set of utensils for members of the Scheduled Caste at the water tank and hotel shall also be considered as offender under this Act.
- All the offences of untouchability under this Act are cognizable offences (arrest without warrant).
- There is no provision for compromise under this Act.
- A person committing an offence under this Act for the first time is punishable with a minimum of 1 month imprisonment and a fine of Rs.100 and a maximum of 6 months imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500.
- If a person commits an offence for the second time, he is liable to be punished with imprisonment for a period from 6 months to 1 year and a fine of Rs. 200 to Rs.500.
- If a person commits an offence for the third time he is liable to be punished with imprisonment for a period from one to two years and a fine of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000.
- If a person propagates “untouchability” or its practice in any form, an offence can be registered under this Act against such person.
- Any person who justifies, whether on historical, philosophical or religious grounds or on the ground of any tradition of the caste system or on any other ground

An examination of the working of the Untouchability (Offences), 1955 Act showed that its implementation was inadequate because of various loopholes. Few cases had been filed under the Act. The compoundable nature of the offences resulted in compromises and the punishments were small. Most of the victims were reluctant to lodge complaints for fear of social reprisal and harmful economic

consequences at the hands of their land lords, money lenders and rural oligarchies who would not give them work or full wages for the work done by them. Thus, The untouchability Offences Act failed badly in terms of fulfilling its goals of eradicating untouchability. It led the law makers and the government to think for the amendment social legislation.

### **C) The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1976**

In September, 1976 a bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha to amend the Untouchability Offences Act, 1955 and the act was renamed as “Protection of Civil Rights Act”. Introspectively, this Act was declared as PCR Act, 1955. Then this bill was passed in the Lok Sabha. This amended Act with a new name proposed for more stringent action against those who still practice untouchability. With a new spirit, it sought not to spare even the officers who neglected in the implementation of any provision relating to the problem of untouchability as enshrined in the Act.

#### **Salient Features**

- It provides that person disqualified under the Act would be barred from contesting elections to the central or state legislature.
- It also provides for conducting surveys and field works for determining the areas where untouchability is practised.
- It envisages the setting up of committees for implementing the Act and grant of adequate facilities to the persons subjected to various disabilities arising out of untouchability so that they will be in a position to avail their civil rights.
- The Act makes the direct or indirect practice or preaching of untouchability or its justification on historical, philosophical or religious grounds an offence.
- It prescribes punishments to any person for compelling any person to scavenge, sweep, remove carcasses, flay animals or remove umbilical cords.
- It empowers the state to Government to impose collective fines on the inhabitants of any area who were concerned with abating the commission of untouchability offences.
- All punishments relating to untouchability were made non-compoundable under the PCR Act and in any cases where the punishments given are less than three months, they can be tried summarily.

- Under the new Act, both fine and imprisonment have been prescribed for offences relating to untouchability. For the first offence the minimum punishment is one month imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 and the maximum imprisonment is six months and a fine of Rs. 500. For the second offence of the same nature, the maximum punishment is prescribed to be one year imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500. For the third offence or more offences thereafter by the same person may at the highest lead to 2 years imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 1000.

The Protection of Civil Rights Act again, did not have the effect of curbing effectively either the practice of untouchability or the atrocities committed against Scheduled Castes flowing from the practice of untouchability. Further, social change and transformation in the social, political and economic conditions of the former untouchables has met with considerable (often violent) resistance by those who derived power from the extant social organization. This led to an increase in the atrocities perpetrated against the Scheduled Castes. In 1989 another legislative attempt took place to prevent the same, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was enacted.

#### **D) The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**

The **Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to prevent atrocities against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The Act is popularly known as POA, the SC/ST Act, the Prevention of Atrocities Act, or simply the Atrocities Act. Though this Act has been enforced for the combined interest of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, it is of greater significance to know about the Act for understanding the provisions made in this for liberation of SCs from vicious clutch of gross injustice which has implication for untouchability.

Despite various measures adopted to improve the socio-economic conditions of the SCs and STs they remain vulnerable and are subject to various offences, indignities and humiliations and harassment. When they assert their rights and against the practice of Untouchability against them the vested interest try to cow them down and terrorize them. Atrocities against the SCs and STs, still continued. The normal provisions of the existing laws like, the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and Indian Penal Code have been found inadequate to check these atrocities continuing the gross indignities and offences against Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Recognizing these, the Parliament passed „Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act“, 1989 & Rules, 1995 were enforced by the Indian government.

**The aim of the POA is**

- To prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes
- To provide for Special Courts for the trial of such offences and for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of such offenses and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Thus objectives of the Act clearly emphasize the intention of the Government to deliver justice to these communities through proactive efforts to enable them to live in society with dignity and self-esteem and without fear or violence or suppression from the dominant castes. The practice of untouchability, in its overt and covert form was made a cognizable and noncompoundable offence, and strict punishment is provided for any such offence.

### **Salient features**

The provisions of SC/ST Act and Rules can be divided into three different categories, covering a variety of issues related to atrocities against SC/ST people and their position in society.

- The first category contains provisions of criminal law. It establishes criminal liability for a number of specifically defined atrocities, and extends the scope of certain categories of penalizations given in the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- The second category contains provisions for relief and compensation for victims of atrocities.
- The third category contains provisions that establish special authorities for the implementation and monitoring of the Act.

### **Some of the important features of the Act are:**

1. Identification and explanation of new types of offences not in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or in the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 (PCRA).
2. Inclusion of offences only by specified persons (atrocities can be committed only by non-SCs and non-STs on members of the SC or ST communities. Crimes among SCs and STs or between STs and SCs do not come under the purview of this Act).
3. Definition of various types of atrocities against SCs/STs (Section 3(1)i to xv and 3(2)i to vii).
4. Prescription of stringent punishment for such atrocities (Section 3(1)i to xv and 3(2)i to vii).
5. Punishment for neglect of duties by a public servant (Section 4).
6. Attachment and forfeiture of property (Section 7).
7. Suppression of potential offenders (Section 10(1), 10(3), 10(3)).
8. Creation of Special Courts (Section 14).
9. Appointment of Special Public Prosecutors (Section 15).
10. Empowers the government to impose collective fines (Section 16).
11. Denial of anticipatory bail (Section 18).

12. Denial of probation to convict (Section 19).

13. Provides compensation, relief and rehabilitation for victims of atrocities or their legal heirs (Section 17(3), 21(2)iii, Rule 11, 12(4)).
14. Identification of atrocity prone areas (Section 17(1), 21(2)vii, Rule 3(1)).
15. Setting up deterrents to avoid committing of atrocities on the SCs amongst others (Rule 3i to 3xi).
16. Setting up a mandatory, periodic monitoring system at different levels-District, State and National (Section 21(2)v):
17. Legal aid is available for all victims regardless of financial status. For all others legal aid depends on the financial status.

Protections of SCs/STs under the Act can be broadly divided into protection from:

- Social disabilities (denial of access to certain places and to use customary passage and to get water from any spring, reservoir or any other source).
- Personal atrocities (forceful drinking or eating of inedible or obnoxious substance, against stripping, outrage of modesty, sexual exploitation, injury or annoyance).
- Atrocities affecting properties (land, residential premises, existing properties).
- Malicious prosecution.
- Political disabilities.
- Economic exploitation.

#### **E) The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 2013**

Manual scavenging is historically linked to the practice of untouchability and the continuation of such practices is forbidden under the Constitution of India (Article 17).

The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 prohibits the engagement or employment of persons for manually carrying human excreta and further prohibits the construction or maintenance of dry latrines. However, it has not seen a single conviction in the 19 years that it has been in force. A new bill was drafted in 2012 with a view to make the law regulating manual scavengers more effective. It was passed by both

Houses of Parliament on September 7, 2013 as The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. Its main objectives are:

- Prohibition of employment as manual scavengers
- Rehabilitation of manual scavengers

The Act recognizes the link between manual scavengers and weaker sections of the society. It therefore, views manual scavenging as being violative of their right to dignity. Insanitary latrines and open drains or pits into which human excreta is disposed are included in the definition of a manual scavenger under s. 2(g) of the Act. However, water flush latrines in railways that require cleaning by employees are not considered as insanitary latrines, if it is done with the use of protective gear. Employees can be employed on contract or regular basis, and hence this definition has a decently wide ambit. Cantonment boards, PSUs, railways etc. have been recognized as „appropriate government“.

The Act first provides for identification of insanitary latrines by local authorities within their jurisdiction, who must publish the report and give a notice to the occupiers of the latrines. The occupiers would then be obliged, at their own cost, to either demolish them or convert them into sanitary latrines within six months from the date of commencement of the Act. If the occupier fails to do so, the local authority will convert the latrine and recover the cost from the former.

Under chapter III, the Act prohibits construction of insanitary latrines and employment of manual scavengers. Section 6 of the Act renders void any agreement engaging a manual scavenger entered into before its commencement.

The Act has a wider scope for higher penalties than what was provided under the 1993 Act. Offences under the Act are cognizable and non-bailable and may be tried summarily. The Act seeks to wipe out the “social stigma” by arranging for alternative jobs and offering other provisions to those in such work and their families.

### **3. Non-governmental efforts for eradication of untouchability:**

Government undertook the task of eradicating untouchability only after the country’s freedom. Prior to that it was non-government bodies including Indian national Congress and Gandhi’s Sarva Seva Samiti, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s Depressed Class League and Servant of India Society of Gokhale are some of the most important associations that made efforts for the eradication of the untouchability before



Independence. Now various voluntary organisations are in the field. Some of these existed even before and some of them have now come into being.

Some of the classic examples of non-Governmental Organizations engaged in eradicating untouchability are:

- Harijan Sevak Sangh, New Delhi
- Indian Depressed Classes League, New Delhi
- Hind Sweepers Sevak Sangh, New Delhi
- Servants of India Society, Poona
- Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi,
- Ishwara Sharana Ashrama , Allahabad,
- Depressed Classes Conference
- Scheduled Caste Federation
- Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapura, West Bengal
- Hindus Seva Prathisthana
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad
- The service units of Rashtreeya Swayam Sevak Sangha
- Dalit Organisations and
- Christian Missionary Organizations.

Apart from it, there are various State level organisations in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha etc; these bodies are providing facilities to Harijans young boys and girls for education. They are setting up Harijan hostels, institutes for training Harijans Women in useful crafts and so on.

The Government of India and the State Government provide financial assistance and grants-in-aid to these bodies. These bodies in their turn collect donations and also finance their programmes. The job of these bodies is to assist the Government in the task of eradication of untouchability. The Central Government has been giving financial assistance to these organizations for their Harijan Welfare activities. Some other organizations which are not getting any financial help from the Government are also rendering Yeomen service to the Scheduled Castes.

The Elayaperumal Committee clarified that merely enacting legislations would not solve the problem of untouchables. To quote from its report, "The problem of untouchability is, therefore, inseparably linked up with the question of the caste system and the social set up based on that. It is an indisputable fact that the caste system is the dominating social force in this country. Hence any attempt to remove untouchability without striking at the root of the caste system is simply to treat

the outward symptoms of a disease or to draw a line on the surface of the water. Untouchability cannot be abolished

in this country unless the social order is changed by establishing new values, and for this purpose the values relating to caste and untouchability based on the Hindu religion must be changed first.”

## **Check Your Progress**

### **Section-I (Long type Questions)**

- a) Give a portal of historical analysis of Caste and Untouchability
- b) “Untouchability is the offshoot of caste system in India.” Justify.
- c) Discuss the sociological and psychological perspectives of untouchability in India.
- d) Define untouchability. Enumerate the constitutional provisions and legislative measures to eradicate untouchability.

### **Section-II (Short Notes)**

- a) Problem of untouchability
- b) Traditional Theory
- c) Psychological perspectives
- d) Constitutional provisions against untouchability
- e) PCR Act

# **Tribal Development**

## **Contents**

- 3. 0. Objective of the Unit**
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- 3.5. Tribal culture and Economy**
- 3. 6. Problems of the Tribes**
- 3. 7. Tribal Rehabilitation**
- 3. 8. Constitutional Provisions for Scheduled Tribes**

## **3. 0. Objective of the Unit**

This unit aims to have a close insight into the tribal community in India. This unit also intends here to give a decent view of different aspects associated to concept and origin of tribes, tribal way of living, tribal life situation including their problems, Government efforts and Constitutional provisions for the protection, welfare and development of the marginalized members of our society. After the study of this unit the readers will get to know a considered level of understanding about:

- Concept of tribes and Origin

- Characteristics of and Classification of Tribes
  - Tribal culture and Economy
  - Problems of the Tribes and Tribal Rehabilitation
  - Constitutional Provisions for Scheduled Tribes
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## **3. 1. Introduction**

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Tribes are the second worst victims of various socio-economic disabilities next to the Scheduled Castes in India. According to the census of 2011, they constitute near about 8% of the India's population. The tribes are the earliest groups living in India. It is a matter of fact that even after more than six decades of India's independence, they are still in primitive stage and far from the impact of the modern world and the process social development.. They live in forest areas, hilly regions, mountains and deep valleys. They are known by various names such as: Primitive people, Animists, Jungle people, Girijans, Adivasis, Aborigines and Original inhabitants of India. Gandhiji called them as „Girijans“. The constitution of India has referred to them as “Scheduled Tribes”. They have undergone a historical suffering for centuries. They have been exploited by the non-tribals both from outside and from within the country and have been deprived of their basic rights. Many say that they have not seen the fruit of independence and the fruit of our social development. Looking at the severity of the problems encountered by them, the government has made some special provisions to bring them to the mainstream society.

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## **3. 2. Concept**

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A tribe is a group of people, usually staying in jungle areas, in a small locality, absolutely illiterate poor, hardly clad in clothes, usually dark and frail, fully living within their own community whose marriage always takes place among themselves, engaged in hunting and searching for roots, shoots and fruits as their veg food and roasted animals as non-veg

food,

completely oblivious of the country's political and economic condition, resisting all efforts of development and have a strong dislike for strangers and educated modern community. The number of such tribal community is very large e.g. Santhals, Kora people, Kol, etc. Most of the projects and efforts for uplifting their health, education and economic condition have failed both for their own unwillingness for change and absolute non cooperation as well as lethargy, dishonesty and corruption of the intermediaries.

According to **Oxford Dictionary** "A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor."

**D.N Majumdar** defines tribe as "a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes. According to Ralph Linton tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests."

**L.M. Lewis** believes that tribal societies are small in scale are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations and possess a morality, a religion and world view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too tribal languages are unwritten and hence the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow. At the same time tribal societies exhibit a remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self-sufficiency lacking in modern society.

**Gillin and Gillin** has given a very simple definition saying, "A tribe is a group of local communities which lives in common area, speaks a common dialect and follows a common culture."

According to the **Imperial Gazetteer of India**, "A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying a common territory and not is usually endogamous, though it might have been originally so."

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## 3. 3. Characteristics of Scheduled Tribes

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### 1. Ethnic characteristics

- Common definite territory, common dialect, common name, common religion and common culture.
- They have strong sense of unity and any stranger is attacked with bows and arrows.
- All tribe members are related by blood, have their own political organization which has a chief who exercises authority over all the members, even recommending marriage of young boys with girls whom they have found suitable for marriage.
- Each tribe is guided by their own religion which is based on totemism, magic and fetishism i.e. believing in god being embedded in a special piece of stone, a special tree or a peculiar strange animal.
- A tribe is an endogamous group, as distinct from a clan which is exogamous, have common name and is engaged in worshipping strange objects, hunting of small animals, and resists entry of any outsiders inside their territory.
- Kinship as an instrument of social bonds.
- Absence of hierarchy among men and groups.
- Absence of strong, complex, formal organization.
- A distinct psychological bent for enjoying life.
- They possess Segmentary character and find difficult to mingle with the outsiders

### 2. Economic Characteristics

- Communitarian basis of land holding pervades in most of the tribal communities
- The tribal people follow a very primitive methods of agriculture like shifting cultivation leading to very low yield of crops



- Most of the tribals do not have access to an organized market system where they could sell their primary and secondary forest produce.
- Due to lack of access to market system, most of the tribes from remote areas practice barter system which means exchange goods for goods.
- They rely on substantial economy and have little value on surplus accumulation on the use of capital and on market trading which prevents them from receiving the best results out of agricultural activities.
- Tribal people consider forest as their basic right and greatly depend on forest products which constitutes the mainstay of their economic life
- Tribal land is largely transferred to the non-tribals by improper means and massive displacement takes place for development projects leading to land alienation or loss of agricultural land and eventual tribal conflicts.
- There are complains of economic exploitation of tribals by the non-tribal
- Indebtedness, child labour and bonded labours are some of the most common features among the tribals in India

They hardly have any transaction because hardly one has any currency and do not have adequate knowledge and experience of organizing market. The life style of tribal society is primitive, and depends entirely on their characteristic ways of non-monetarily transacted life. The families live within themselves, without knowing about their neighbors in the country who are educated, developed, move in cars, have modern dress etc whom they hate and consider them as foreigners and enemies. The domestic division of labor depends only on age and sex.

### **3. Educational Characteristics**

- Tribal people have very less representation in education as compared to their non-tribal counterparts
- Poor economic condition and family environment hinders them from taking education
- It is reported that the current formal education prescribed for them has little

relevance to their living style

- They lack interest and awareness of the present education system
  - Medium of instruction or the language is a major set back in their education
  - High rate of drop outs is found among the tribal people.
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## **3. 4. Classification of Tribes**

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There are more than 570 tribes spread all over India. Tribes are well known as socially, economically and culturally homogeneous groups. So it is difficult to classify them on any of such grounds. Nevertheless, thin line of classification can be made on the basis of different grounds. The tribes are classified on the basis of 1.Ethnicity, 2. Geographical location and 3. Economic practices etc.

### **1. Ethnic Classification:**

Based on Ethnicity the tribes in India are classified into the following categories:

#### **a) Negritos**

Negritos are believed to be the earliest inhabitants of the Indian peninsula who were unable to defend themselves and were gradually forced to recede before the invading hordes of Indo- Aryans coming from Central Asia. These tribes were not only inferior to the invaders in numerical strength but also in mechanical equipment. After being defeated these tribals took shelter in the mountains and thick forests where a considerable number of them are still found and have been estimated to be about ten million. Those who were left behind in the plains gradually disappeared either by absorption or by acculturation. Some tracts of them are still found among the tribals of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands known as the Onne, the Great Andamanese, the Sentinelese and the Jarwas also in Kerala among the Kadars, the Irulars and the Paniyans. Physical Features of These group of tribes are dark skin, curly hair, broad nose and medium height.

## **b) The Mongoloid**

Mongoloid represented by the tribal people of sub- Himalayan region. They may be divided into two mongoloid Sub-categories:

**Palaeo Mongoloids:** This category of tribes is generally seen in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur.

**Tibeto–Mongoloids:** They are generally found in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. They are believed to have migrated from Tibet. They have typical eyes and facial features. They speak Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burmese dialects.

**c) Dravidians:** They form bulk of the tribal population and are generally known as the Dravidians. Dravidian is, however, the name of the language group spoken by these people and has no ethnic significance. The tribes believed to be belonging to the Dravidian race are found in the Chhotanagpur Plateau, Rajmahal Hills region, Aravalli ranges, Central Vindhya, Deccan Plateau region and Nilgiri Hills.

Dravidian language still survives not only in Southern India where Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada are its leading representatives, but also in Central India where its traces are found in the dialects spoken by the Oraons, Gonds, Mundas, Malers, Khonds and other tribes.

The Dravidians are presumed to be of two stocks on the basis of their language:

**i) Kolarians:** these groups of tribes speak a dialect called Mundari examples: Mundas,

Santhals, Oraons and other tribes inhabiting Chhotanagpur Plateau region

**ii) Dravidian Proper:** This group of tribes speak dialects of Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. Gonds, Kondhs, and other tribes found in Central Vindhya and the Deccan Plateau regions.

The tribes of India belong to different anthropological stocks. According to **Dr. B. S. Guha**, the tribal population of India is derived from five main ethnic groups:

**(1) Negritos:** The Negritos or the brachycephalic (broad headed) from Africa were the

earliest people to inhabit India. They are survived in their original habitat in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Jarewas, Onges, Sentelenese and Great Andamanis tribes are the examples.

Studies have indicated that the Onges tribes have been living in the Andamans for the last 60,000 years. Some hill tribes like Irulas, Kodars, Paniyans and Kurumbas are found only in patches among the hills of south India on the mainland.

**(2) Pro-Australoids or Austriacs:** This group was the next to come to India after the Negritos. They represent a race of people, with wavy hair plentifully distributed over their brown bodies, long heads with low foreheads and prominent eye ridges, noses with low and broad roots, thick jaws, large palates and teeth and small chins. Austriacs tribes, which are spread over the whole of India, Myanmar and the islands of South East Asia, are said to "form the bedrock of the people". The Austriacs were the main builders of the Indus Valley Civilisation. They cultivated rice and vegetables and made sugar from sugarcane. Their language has survived in the Kol or Munda (Mundari) in Eastern and Central India.

**(3) Mongoloids:** These people have features that are common to those of the people of Mongolia, China and Tibet. These tribal groups are located in the Northeastern part of India in states like Assam, Nagaland and Meghalaya and also in Ladakh and Sikkim. Generally, they are people of yellow complexion, oblique eyes, high cheekbones, sparse hair and medium height.

**(4) Mediterranean or Dravidian:** This group of tribes is believed to have come to India from the Southwest Asia and appears to be people of the same stock as the peoples of Asia Minor and Crete and the pre-Hellenic Aegeans of Greece. They are reputed to have built up the city civilization of the Indus Valley, whose remains have been found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa and other Indus cities. The Dravidians must have spread to the whole of India, supplanting Austriacs and Negritos alike. Dravidians comprise all the three sub-types, Paleo-Mediterranean, the true Mediterranean and Oriental Mediterranean. This group constitutes the bulk of the scheduled castes in the North India. This group has a sub-type called Oriental group.

**(5) Western Brachycephals:** These include the Alpinoids, Dinaries and Armenois. The Coorgs and Parsis fall into this category.

## **2. Geographical Classification**

The tribes live all over the country from the foot-hills of Himalayas to the land tip of Lakshadweep and from plains of Gujarat to the hills of North-East. There are also tribals in Chamba and Mahasu; and in Dehradun and Darjeeling. However, in Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa and Pondicherry there exists very little tribal population. The rest of the states and union territories possess fairly good number of tribal population. Madhya

Pradesh registers the largest number of tribes (73) followed by Orissa (62), Arunachal Pradesh (56) Maharashtra (52), Andhra Pradesh (43).

In India there is almost a continuous belt of high tribal concentration starting from the Western coast – from Thane district in Maharashtra passing through Surat and Dang districts in Gujarat to Mayurbhanj in Orissa on the Eastern coast and Bihar. Dhulia in Maharashtra; West Nimar, Betul, Chhindwara, Seeni, Mandla, Shandol and Sarguja in Madhya Pradesh; and Ranchi, Santhal Parganas\_ and Singhbhum district in Bihar are some of the areas with large tribal concentration.

Another long range of tribal belt is found in the North-East spreading over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizo Hills, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills of Assam and hilly regions of Manipur and Tripura. These belts are also linked up by a chain of pockets of tribal concentration at Taluk or sub-divisional levels. Tribal concentrations are also found in Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh, Korapur, Bauch- Khandenals tracts of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh which are linked up with the Central belt by a chain of small pockets of tribal concentration. The scheduled tribes live in exclusive pockets of the territory, upon which they have traditional ownership rights. The entire tribal pockets of the country are classified into the following geographical Zones.

### **1. Northern and North-Eastern Zone**

In the mountain valleys and other areas of North-East, Indian tribes largely belong to Mongolian social stock. The tribal people are distributed all over the sub-Himalayan region and the mountain valleys in the North-East from Simla in the West to the Lushai hills and the Mishmi tract in the East which merge imperceptibly with those of Burma in the South-East. This zone covers Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram, Eastern Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tarai areas of Uttar Pradesh and the mountainous West Bengal.

**Assam:** Paro-Barokachari is numerically the strongest tribe in Assam then come Miri and Mizo. The hill districts, i.e., Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills are predominantly inhabited by scheduled tribes. In the plains Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Darrang and Kamrup districts possess fairly large number of scheduled tribes.



**Manipur:** In Manipur, the highest distribution of scheduled tribes is found in Manipur west districts followed by Manipur east districts. The third highest position goes to Manipur south districts. North Manipur contains the lowest number of scheduled tribe population. The major tribes inhabiting the region are Anal, Kabui, Gangte, Zarao, Moyan-Mansang, etc.

**Meghalaya:** The major tribes residing all over Meghalaya are the Khasis, Garos and Jaintias.

**Mizoram:** Mizos, Pawis\_ and Lakhers are the tribes of importance in Mizoram.

**Nagaland:** Basically, this tribal state is inhabited by Nagas as the single predominant tribes.

**Himachal Pradesh:** The major tribes found in the state of Himachal Pradesh are: **Gaddi** reside exclusively on the snowy range which divides Chamba from Kangra; **Kinner** settled in the frontier district of Kinnaur; **Pangwal** are in the Pangi region of the Chamba district; and **Lahuli** live in Lahul-Spiti region of the state.

**Uttar Pradesh:** The declared scheduled areas of Uttar Pradesh are basically inhabited by the Jaunsari, Bhotia, and Raji tribes. Bhotias are a late introduction in the scheduled tribes following the set back they suffered after Indo-China war. The eastern and northern parts of Tarai Bhabar tract are inhabited by Tharu and Buxa tribes.

## **2. Central Zone**

In the Chhotanagpur Plateau, along the dividing line between peninsular India and Indo-Gangetic basin, live many tribal communities like the Bhumij, Gond, Ho, Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Bhil, etc. They belong to Proto-Australoid group. This group occupies the mountain belt between Narmada and the Godavari – the central barrier that divides the north from the Peninsular India has provided a shelter for these tribes from very ancient times. It includes West Bengal, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. This region further extends to the Santhal Pargana (Bihar) in the east, Hyderabad in the South and Rajasthan and Gujarat with a strong Bhil population in the West.

**Bihar:** The tribes like Oraon, Munda, Chero, Parhaiya, Santhal\_and Asuras are very dominant in the state of Bihar.

**Rajasthan:** Banjaras, Moghias and Sathiyas are major tribal groups of Rajasthan. They mostly inhabit the Thar desert.

**Gujarat and Maharashtra:** Bhil is the most important tribe in Gujarat. Anal, Chiru and Konkans are important tribes inhabiting in Maharashtra.

**Madhya Pradesh:** Madhya Pradesh is inhabited by the Murias in the Muria Hill and Abujhmar mountains, Dorla tribe in south Bastar. The word Dorla, appears to have been derived from the Telugu word Dora meaning Lord.

**West Bengal:** Mala and Sabar tribes are the majorities of tribal groups in West Bengal.

**Orissa:** Out of the 62 Scheduled tribes, Bhuiya, Baiga, Dharua, Gaaro, Ho, Koli, Lodha, Mundas, Santhals, Sabars and the Konds are the major tribes in the state. The Baiga appears to be a branch of the great Bhuiya tribe of Madhya Pradesh. Baiga means a sorcerer or medicine man. The name Baiga also applies to anyone who serves as a village priest in the Central Provinces.

### **3. South-Western Zone**

In the hills and converging line of the Western Ghats live the Chenchus, Irulas, Kadars, Ketas, Kurumbas, Jedas, etc. having Negrito, Caucasoid, and proto-Australoid features.

This group is chiefly concentrated in the southern-most parts of the Western Ghats stretching from Vindhyas to Cape Comorin. It is believed that they occupy the marginal areas. It is known from the records in the oldest Tamil literature of the Sangam period that they appear to be one of the most ancient and primitive inhabitants of India. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamilnadu also fall within this zone. Chenchus and Lambadi in Andhra Pradesh, Koragas, Kuruba in Karnataka and Koragas in Kerala are the most significant tribes found in this geographical zone of India.

### **4. Scattered Zone: (Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar)**

There are various scattered tribal groups like the Andamanese and such other tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and other Union territories. The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may be described as a race by themselves, and can be divided into two groups, i.e.:

i) **Negrito:** (Andamanese, the Onges and the Sentinelese): This group is found in the Andaman group of Islands and has an affinity with the Semangos and Sakais of Malaya, the Vedas of Sri Lanka and other Negrito groups of South-East Asia. It is believed that these aborigines migrated from the lower regions of Burma. On their arrival at these islands, they moved to different parts of the islands and very likely on account of the different types of physical environment they developed different traits.

ii) **Mongoloid:** inhabitants of Nicobar group of islands, i.e., the Shorn Pens and the Nicobarese. Besides, **Jarawa** group is confined to the western part of the south, middle and north Andamans. The Andamanese, who are extremely limited in number, live along the coastal areas; **Onges** inhabit the little Andaman and Rutland island; **Sentinelese:** are found in the Sentinel island; **Shorn Pens** are confined along the eastern and south-eastern coast of Great Nicobar island. They are also reported to have come from the banks of Dagmar, Alexandra and Galathoa rivers respectively. The **Nicobarese (Holchu):** inhabiting these small islands are unevenly distributed and only in the two islands, the Car Nicobar and Chowra.

#### 4. Economic Classification:

i) **Agriculturists:** Scheduled Tribes of India claim themselves to be the real owners of forest and land in India. Most around 80% of the ST people are involved in agriculture. They follow traditional technology in agriculture which left them in poor production and consequently, poor economic condition.

ii) **Hunters and gatherers:** Tribes are known as the aborigines or the primitive people. Hunting and gathering is the most common feature of the primitive or tribal people. Most of the primitive tribal groups belong to this category. They gather forest products like honey, fruits, roots for their food; timber, bamboo, leaves, ropes for their thatched shelter and other forest products for their commercial purposes. Their life is very simple and primitive far away from the modern way of living. Now days, most of the people from this group have started to engage themselves in agricultural activities.

iii) **Labours:** Most of the tribal people are educationally and economically backward. They have no or very low representation in education, service and business. For their

survival, they mainly depended on agriculture or forest product. But in the current days, due to ongoing land

alienation, displacement and deforestation activities, they are running out of those resources. Consequently, most of them migrate to the industrial areas and work as industrial labours. Some tribals also continue to work in agriculture sector as land labours. They are mostly influenced by the modern culture and slowly forget their traditional culture of dance and music and unique way of entertainment.

**iv) Shepherds-Cattle-bearers:** Some tribes are also known for their engagement in cattle- breeding and rearing. They move from place to place in search of pasture land with their family or without it. They meet their basic needs from the sale of animals they rear. Animals like cows, goats, sheep and buffalo are some of the important animals for animal husbandry they practice.

**v) Black magicians:** There are a few people among the tribal groups who practice black magic and make their living from it. These groups of the tribal people are the proximate to the Brahmins in non-tribals in India. They basically are the priestly groups who conduct traditional yajnas for good harvest of the community, for good health, healing and killing. They also have knowledge about some ayurvedic treatments. There is a common belief among the tribes that these people possess some supernatural power to kill or rescue the lives of common people in their community. They receive gifts and token price for their disease detection and treatment which support their living. They also engage themselves in agriculture for economic support. They enjoy distinct status in the community because of their power of black magic. In the current days there are stringent oppositions from common people and several cases of murder in suspicions have been reported among the tribal people.

**vi) Artisans:** Tribal people, especially of the North-Eastern areas of India are well known for their artistic skills and works. They create excellent art and crafts with soil, animal skin, bones, birds' feather, bamboo plant and other forest products. They sell these products in Indian traditional markets as well as modern market earn handsome amount of money which supports their livelihood. They have popularized Art and craft of India both in India as well as outside India and continue to contribute to the economic growth of India.

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## 3. 5. Tribal Culture and Economy

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### 1. Tribal Culture

According to Tylor, “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals customs acquired by a man as a member of the society.” culture is very broad term that includes in itself almost every aspect of social life-our modes of behaviour, our philosophies and ethics, our morals and manners, customs and traditions, religious beliefs, language, dress patterns, political and economic and wide varieties of such activities that become the part and parcel of our social life.

Tribals are known to be the centre of cultural heritage all over the world. Culture is known to be in their flesh and blood. They maintain their culture at the cost of everything in their life. You will agree with me that if anything that bears the rich heritage of traditional culture in the modern world that is tribes. Every tribe has a unique culture of its own. The culture of tribe in a particular spatial, economic and social situation has been developed in consonance to its livelihood, topography and social situation around it.

Tribals are the storehouse of Indian traditional culture. Richness of culture is vibrantly reflected in their belief, action, arts, morals customs and above all, in their way of living. In every bit of their lives tribes keep themselves in touch with some or the other cultural activities. Culture plays a dominant role in their socio-economic life. They cannot live without their culture. Even if they migrate to the cities and remain with all modern amenities, they don’t forget their culture. Every tribe has a unique culture of its own but there are some cultural traits that are found in common across all the tribal groups. Since it is impossible here to discuss the distinct culture of each of more than 700 tribal groups in India, some common cultural traits of tribes as whole can be reflected here:

#### Religion

Tribes are lovers of the nature. There is an unbroken relationship between the tribal people and the nature. They believe that nature bear supernatural power for them. Hence, they worship some objects of the nature like tree (the giver of fruits, shadow, wood), rock (implements), river (source of water), sun (source of power and light), moon, the earth soil, (the giver of food crops), some animals (tiger, the king of forest) etc. with whom they believe to have a spiritual bond. They also believe that these things are inhabited by spirits. This is known as Totemism. Most of the tribes also worship the spirits of their ancestors that believed to be residing in their houses and in certain totems. It is a common practice among

some tribes like Mundas, Kharias

etc to preserve a room for those spirits in their residential houses. Most of the tribal villages have their village deities placed generally at the entrance of the village/hamlets and as they believe she protects their village from any kind of danger. In case of failure of crops in the village or spread of epidemic they worship the village deity believing that she might have been displeased for some reasons. Sarna puja of Mundas, Sekrenyi of Angamis, Losa and Loosang Parabs of Bhutias, Madai of Gonds are some the famous festivals celebrated by tribes. Most of the festivals of the tribal people are found to have very close connection with agriculture and allied activities. They celebrate their festivals in a unique way to appease their deities and engage themselves in singing dancing and marrying making through different ways.

### **Dress pattern and Ornaments**

There is wide variation with regard to dress patterns across different tribal groups in connection to their topography, locations, occupations etc. The red bordered white sarees of Santhal women, cotton towels with cholis and blouse of Munda women, Bakhu (long dress with full sleeves) of Bhutia men, Silver Honju (a long full-sleeve garment with a loose gown) of Bhutia women, Cincture (decorated with shells) of Great Andamanese men, Mechala (shirts and shawls of unique designs and patterns) of Angami women and Mhousu of Angami men are some the famous traditional dresses worn by the tribes in India . Some of the primitive tribal groups in Andaman & Nicobar and Koraput district of Odisha are still found half clad. Generally, most tribal men wear a towel and put a Katchha with it for better mobility and women wear thick towels with blouse that help them also for mobility. In the current days the trend has been changing. The new generations of tribals come into contact with the modern world and use all available modern dresses, though most of them are not able to maintain them in their family environment.

Most of the tribal people use traditional ornaments mostly made up of different parts of animals, plants and other objects of the nature. They generally put on the ornaments like silver bangles, aluminium and silver bracelets, waist thread, decorated caps, silver ear rings (in largenumbers), leg rings and nose rings of silver. Some tribes also put on gold, silver and bronze coins decorated necklace. Most of the ornaments of tribals are made of shells, teeth of the animals (including ivory), feathers, bones, nails, silver, aluminium, bronze and gold. Chains made of human bones to be put on around the neck on forehead among Great Andamanese girls is one of the most eye catching ornaments in Andaman.

### **Song & Dance**

Tribal people are great lovers of dance and song. In many instances, common people from outside recognize them as singing and dancing groups. Singing and dancing are the mainsource of entertainment for most of them in a public sphere as they are far away from



modern amenities of entertainment. On special occasions, they come together with special costumes and perform dance and sing in unique pattern of body movement. The forms of dance also

differ from tribe to tribe. Gusadi dance of Gonds, Santhali of Santhals, Chaan dancing of Bhutias, Ghoomar dance of Bhils, a unique line sequence dance form of Santhals and Mundas are some of the dance forms performed by the Indian tribes. For their dancing the tribal people generally use their traditional music instruments like Tirio (a bamboo flute with seven holes) Dhodro banam (a bowl like instrument covered with animal skin), Tumdak etc. of Santhals; drums, gutars, flutes, wooden pipes metal cymbals of the Kahsis that are known all over India.

### **Youth dormitory**

Youth dormitory is a well known and unique feature of tribes in India. Every tribal village/hamlet has a youth dormitory which is known as cultural centre of the village. Basically, tribal youths from the village, after day long work, come together in the dormitory and perform cultural activities before going to bed. It is a common sleeping hall for both young boys and girls of the village. A striking feature of the dormitory is that though the boys and girls sleep under a single roof, they are away from foul plays as they are regulated by some rules and most importantly, they are cultured to maintain their chastity for the dignity of their family, their village, dormitory and of their own. Of course, there is an accepted culture in some of the tribes that when boys and girls are ready for marriage they can choose their mates from the dormitory and propose their parents for engagement. Even when a youth from outside the village comes to fetch a match for marriage, he lives in the dormitory with permission from the village head and finds the right match for himself. The youth dormitory also serves as the community hall in some cases. Important meetings of the village are held in this hall. Thus, youth dormitory plays an important role in the socio-cultural life of the tribal villages.

### **Marriage**

Marriage is a socially solemnized relationship between a man and woman with some objectives-sexual cohabitation, procreation, raising children and co-related socio-economic activities etc. D. N. Majundar says that the marital bond among tribal of India is found to bring together not just two individuals, but two families and even villages in order to create social solidarity. Earlier, group marriage was prevalent among the tribes in India but, gradually polyandry and polygyny and then polygamy after that monogamy is common among the tribes except few tribal groups who still follow the rule of polygamy. Most tribes like Gonds, Baiga, the Ho, the Korwa, the Kahsi, the Nagadsoon practice endogamous clan exogamy. Some follow village exogamy. They believe in totem and taboos and observe them during rituals and ceremonies of marriage. There are numbers of forms of marriage followed by the tribals in India but only few of the most common ones can be discussed here.

According to Majundar there are 8 ways followed among the tribals to acquire mates for marriage, such as:

i) **Probationary Marriage:** In this type of marriage, the tribal man lives in the house of his proposed mate for weeks or months. If he succeeded in winning the heart of the girl and liked the girl, the marriage is solemnized. In case of dislike from any part separates them. In case of rejection from the boy, he has to pay compensation to the girl's parents. This type of marriage common among the Kuki tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.

ii) **Marriage by Capture:** It is a popular type of marriage among several tribes of India. Marriage by capture takes place when the girl and parents don't agree for the marriage or when the boy is unable to pay the bride price. The boy in this case finds only way out is capture. He forcefully takes the girl away and lives with her. It is worth mentioning that once a girl is touched by a boy in this purpose is hardly accepted by others. It forces the girl to remain with the boy. Some times, the captures are pre-arranged in the places like markets, fairs, marriage ceremonies etc. This type of marriage is common among the Kondha, Juang, Bhuinya, Kaharia, Birhor tribes of India.

iii) **Marriage by Trial:** This is type of marriage mainly practiced among the Bhil tribes of Madhya Pradesh. In this type of marriage the courage and wit of the young man is tried by the village people before granting the hands of the girl in marriage to the boy. If he succeeds in the challenge he is permitted to choose any girls present at the spot for marriage and the marriage is solemnized.

iv) **Marriage by Purchase:** In this kind of marriage after selection of a girl the boy pays bride price to the bride's parents before he has her as his wife. The price may be paid in the form cash or kind. This type of marriage is widely prevalent among most of the tribes of India. It is mostly prevalent among the Kondhs, the Mudas, the Hos and the Juangs. This kind of marriage has caused problems among the poor tribes. For this reason, many poor youths either remain unmarried or marry by capture.

v) **Marriage by Service:** This type of marriage is said to be the alternative for the poor tribal youths who cannot afford to pay the determined bride price. In the case where the youth is unable to pay the bride price, he has to stay in the proposed in-laws as servant and marries the proposed girl after the completion of the term of service. During the service period he is not paid. The Gonds and Baigas practice this form of marriage.

vi) **Marriage by Exchange:** If a son and a daughter of marriageable age are available in two families they may exchange the daughters and are exempted from the payment of bride price. This kind of marriage is prevalent among the Kondhs, the Saoras, the Juang, Bhuyan, the Santals of tribal India.

vii) **Marriage by Elopement:** Young and unmarried boys and girls of many Indian tribes follow this type of marriage practice. The mutual contact in the youth

dormitories among many tribes gives them a platform to elope with each other and marriage. In many cases the young couple loves each other in the dormitory system but fail to win the consent of their parents. So they run away and leave together and later they are accepted in their families.

viii) **Marriage by Intrusion:** in this type of marriage, unlike the marriage by capture, a girl who likes to marry a man expresses her willingness and goes to his house. She enters forcefully in house to live with him and marry him. In this process, at times, she has to face humiliation and rejection from the man's family. Some times her dream in this regard comes true but, some times she fails to turn her expectation into marriage.

Widow marriage is widely prevalent among most of the tribes of India. Divorce also is allowed among most of the tribes on the grounds of adultery, chronic diseases, barrenness, sexual impotency, disloyalty to husband etc.

### **Birth and Death Rituals**

Most of the tribes have some peculiar taboos and rituals with regard to birth and death in the community. There are strict guidelines to observe those rituals in their community. In the birth of baby tribals they beat the thatch of their house as symbol of passing the message of new birth. When it is baby boy they beat front side of the thatch and when it is baby girl they beat the back side of the thatch. After giving birth, the mother is kept untouched for a period of some days as prescribed by the community. In contrast to the medical advice, the tribal women are offered less food denied oily food during few days after the birth. There is a common practice of Naming Ceremony among tribes. Some senior members of the community come together and name the child which is followed by a feast. A First Haircut Ceremony with a feast also is common among the tribes of India.

In case of death of tribal person the tribes come together and declare halt of all the works of the village for the day. The burial ceremony differs from tribe to tribe. Among the Christian tribes, the body is buried in the ground. Among most of others it is burnt in fire. After the cremation they come together and share alcohol brought by relatives for the occasion. They believe that by drinking alcohol the grief of the relatives of the deceased can be reduced. After three or seven or nine days a purification ceremony is arranged by the family of the deceased.

### **Language**

Language is the most important medium for exchanging information, thoughts and emotions between individuals. There are more than 2000 dialects spoken by different tribes all over India. Some dialects have now promoted to the status of language after creation of their own scripts. But number of such languages is very few. Still large number of the tribal dialects are only spoken and have not developed their scripts. Sikkimese of Bhutias, Garo of Garos,

Kui of

Kondhs, Al-chiki of Santhals, Tenyidie of Angamis, Khora and Jeru of Great Andamanese are some of the noted dialects of tribals in India.

## **Arts and Crafts**

Art and Crafts of tribal people in India are famous not only in India but also outside India. Tribal culture is reflected in the art and craft as well. Beautiful arts made from the objects of the nature has gained popularity in India and abroad as well. Indian tribes are known to be skilful in making arts. Beautiful furniture and caps of bamboo, beds, woolen shawls, and powerful machetes are made by the Angamis. Bhil tribes are talented in making sculpture work. They make beautiful horses, elephants, tigers, deities out of clay. The tribes from Sikkim and Manipur are famous for making beautiful dolls with different natural objects. The Santhals and Mundas are famous for drawing decorative arts on the walls of their houses. Chenchus are famous for making beautiful plates and cups out of tobacco leaf and sell them in the local market.

To conclude with, tribal people of India express the deep sense of love for unique traditional culture in every segment of their socio-economic life.

## **2. Tribal Economy**

The primitive societies have passed through several stages of economic development everywhere in the world. Thus one finds the stages of food gathering, hunting and fishing, farming, etc. among the Indian tribes. The tribes living in the forests and hills usually earn their livelihood by means of food gathering, hunting and fishing. Such is the life of Kadar of Kerala, Birhor and Kharia of Bihar and other tribes. The tribes living in dense forests, full of wild beasts, live on hunting. Such are the tribes of Naga, Kuki, Bhil, Santhal and Gond.

The hunters leave the females to carry out household activities in the morning and return in the evening after hunting. In some tribes there is a usual custom of hunting collectively. The Nagas use spears and arrows and bows. The Bhils are very much specialized in shooting by arrow.

The tribes living near rivers and seas usually earn their livelihood by catching fish. The hilly tribes rear the cattle, examples of which are Goojars and the tribes of Chamba. The Todas of Nilgiri rear buffaloes. Some tribes also carry out cultivation, but they are generally shifting from one place to another.

Among the cultivating tribes are the Santhals and Gonds. Cottage industries, such as weaving cloths, preparing ropes and skins and utensils of different metals are prevalent in

many tribes. The Kharia people are very much specialized to cottage industries.



## **General characteristics of tribal economy**

The tribal economic organization is mainly concerned with producing such things as are necessary for their daily needs and consuming them. These activities are very much determined by the geographical environment of the tribe. Usually, the tribals have to struggle very hard to meet their economic needs. The following are the important characteristics of Indian tribal economic organization which can give you more insight into the tribal economy.

### **1. Primitive Methods of Production**

As the tribals are illiterate and cut off from the civilized world, they generally carry out production with primitive methods and without adequate technological aids with the result that there is much loss of material with very little production. The tribals are, therefore, generally very poor in spite of working very hard.

### **2. Taboos in Economic activities**

The tribals live in a natural environment where there is no distinction of economic, religious and magical activities. There is, therefore, a tendency to mix all these. In the economic activities also religious and magical activities are utilized to attain economic ends. Many superstitions in this respect are prevalent among the tribals, for example, among Nagas there is a custom of human sacrifice and sprinkling human blood over land in order to increase its fertility.

### **3. Substantial Economy**

In the absence of sufficient technological aids and scientific knowledge regarding agricultural and other production, the tribals generally produce only to consume. Hardly anything is left for exchange or hoarding. In the materials of consumption, food and clothing are generally given first preference among the tribes, and then there is the place for the home or other needs.

### **4. Absence of currency**

The tribal people do not use currency in deciding the price of commodities and in exchange. There are no banks of economic exchanges in their societies. They hardly carry out any exchange of economic goods with outside groups. There are some tribes in India, who hardly see currency in their daily life.

## **5. Absence of regular markets**

There are very few regular markets found in tribal societies and, therefore, there is no competition, business or trade in their economic organization. There is nothing to raise their motivate them to look for market based economy. In few places some middle men are there who in different ways prevent them from reaching to the markets which are far from them.

## **6. Absence of profit making**

There is absence of profiteering in tribal economic organization due to two important causes. Firstly, the absence of currency to fix the price of commodities and secondly, the connection of unity sentiments with economic activities.

## **7. Community basis of economic activities**

A feeble conception of personal property is found in almost every tribal society. A person is allowed a right over the things produced by him or his family. There is, however, group ownership over the ponds, the land and the forests, etc.

Thus, the chief aim of economic activities in a tribal society is to fulfil the community duties. The organization of most of the economic activities is cooperative and community based. There is no place for spirit of competition for personal profit.

## **8. Absence of specialisation**

There are no specialists in different branches of economic organization in tribal societies, with the result that there is no division of labour and specialization.

## **9. Economic backwardness**

The above mentioned characteristics of tribal economy account for their economic backwardness. They do not know the new changes and inventions in different fields of production. Their methods and implements of cultivation, hunting and fishing are very primitive. They do not know anything about trade and commerce. The cottage industries are carried on by means of unrefined and primitive tools and methods. Hence the economic status of Indian tribes is very much backward.

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## **3. 6. Tribal Problems**

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### **1. Land Alienation and Displacement**

The history of land alienation among the tribes began during British colonialism in India when the British interfered in the tribal region for the purpose of exploiting the tribal natural resources. Coupled with this tribal lands were occupied by moneylenders, zamindars and traders by advancing them loans etc. Opening of mines in the heart of tribal habitat and even a few factories provided wage labor as well as opportunities for factory employment. But this brought increasing destitution and displacement. After the British came to power, the Forest policy of the British Government was more inclined towards commercial considerations rather than human and the forest -dwellers were kept isolated deliberately within their habitat without any effort to ameliorate their economic and educational standards. The expansion of railway in India heavily devastated the forest resources in India. The Government started reserving teak, Sal and deodar forests for the manufacture of railway sleepers. Large amount of land was acquired for industrial and development projects by which many tribals were displaced. Forest land and its resources provide the best means of livelihood for the tribal people and many tribes including the women engage in agriculture, food gathering and hunting they are heavily dependent on the products of the forest. Therefore when outsiders exploit the tribe's land and its resources the natural life cycle of tribal ecology and tribal life is greatly disturbed.

### **2. Poverty and Indebtedness**

Majority tribes live under poverty line. The tribes follow many simple occupations based on simple technology. Most of the occupation falls into the primary occupations such as hunting, gathering, and agriculture. The technology they use for these purposes belong to the most primitive kind. There is no profit and surplus making in such economy. Hence there per capita income is very meager much lesser than the Indian average. Most of them live under abject poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and Zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders. Indebtedness is almost inevitable since heavy interest is to be paid to these moneylenders.

### **3. Health and Nutrition**

In many parts of India tribal population suffers from chronic infections and diseases out of

which water borne diseases are life threatening. They also suffer from deficiency diseases. The Himalayan tribes suffer from goiter due to lack of iodine. Leprosy and tuberculosis are also common among them. Infant mortality was found to be very high among some of the tribes. Malnutrition is common and has affected the general health of the tribal children as it lowers the ability to resist infection, leads to chronic illness and sometimes leads to brain impairment. The ecological imbalance like cutting of trees have increased the distances between villages and the forest areas thus forcing tribal women to walk longer distances in search of forest produce and firewood.

#### **4. Education**

Educationally the tribal population is at different levels of development but overall the formal education has made very little impact on tribal groups. Earlier Government had no direct programme for their education. But in the subsequent years the reservation policy has made some changes. There are many reasons for low level of education among the tribal people: Formal education is not considered necessary to discharge their social obligations. Superstitions and myths play an important role in rejecting education. Most tribes live in abject poverty. It is not easy for them to send their children to schools, as they are considered extra helping hands. The formal schools do not hold any special interest for the children. Most of the tribes are located in interior and remote areas where teachers would not like to go from outside.

#### **5. Cultural Problems**

Due to contact with other cultures, the tribal culture is undergoing a revolutionary change. Due to influence of Christian missionaries the problem of bilingualism has developed which led to indifference towards tribal language. The tribal people are imitating western culture in different aspects of their social life and leaving their own culture. It has led to degeneration of tribal life and tribal arts such as dance, music and different types of craft.

#### **6. Exploitation**

For ages tribes are considered primitive segment of Indian society. They lived in forests and hills without any contact with civilizations. During British rule they consolidated their position and their political aspirations and administrative needs necessitated to open up the entire country. The British introduced the system of landownership and revenue. Annual tax was trebled which was beyond the paying capacity of tribal cultivators. Many non-tribals began to settle in the tribal areas offering credit facilities. Initially it provided relief to

tribals but

gradually the system became exploitative. Over the years the tribal population faced all types of exploitation. This aroused the tribal leaders to mobilize the tribals and start agitations.

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### **3. 7. Tribal Rehabilitation**

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Many of the big development projects have been set up in tribal areas and on the lands owned by tribals. Tribals are by and large very simple people and attached to their life style, customs and tradition. Displacement of these people means disturbance of their way of life, which automatically leads to destruction of their social, cultural, religious and economic traditions.

These are the groups that have traditionally depended on the common property resource basically on forestland for their survival. There are a large number of tribals and other forest dwellers who come under the forest laws that do not give any right of ownership to the cultivators even after several generations of occupancy and cultivation. Most of the tribal land has been transferred to non-tribals-money lenders, traders etc. It has made them alien in their own land and deprived them from their livelihood and other basic needs for survival.

After launching of planned development programs beginning with 1950-51 planning period, the Indian Economy witnessed undertaking of a large number of projects which may be grouped into (i) irrigation and power projects (ii) industries projects (iii) mining projects (iv) forest and wildlife projects and etc. But we do not have much thought over the implication of these projects from the point of view of extensive displacement and turn certain people destitute. The planners are concerned with the growth of GNP and NNP with the hope that benefit of economic growth would trickle down to the poor community. But this has disturbed the traditional resource-utilization pattern and existing mode of production encounters with an advanced mode of production. The interaction of these two processes has given rise to “losers” and “gainers” in development. Displacement of persons from their settlements when their lands are acquired for infrastructure projects is an inevitable process. No infrastructure project has been completed without displacing people. If development is one side of a coin, displacement is the other side. Most of the displacement has been due to irrigation, power and mining projects. These projects are taken up in areas rich in natural resources like water, minerals and ores and forests that are mostly inhabited by tribal people.

The so-called development has brought about the uprooting and dismemberment of socio-economic, moral and cultural webs of indigenous life of the tribes built over generations. It has caused great damage to the indigenous people. It has marginalized the displaced people and pushed them to the sub-human level of society. In view of the problems encountered by

the indigenous people the government of India has taken several initiatives to rehabilitate and resettle them in the right line of their requirement. A close view of the National Rehabilitation



Policy of India formulated in the recent years can give us a deeper insight into the programmes undertaken for the rehabilitation and resettlement of the tribes in India.

### **National Rehabilitation Policy of India**

The preamble of the National Rehabilitation policy reads that compulsory acquisition of land for public purpose including infrastructure projects displaces people, forcing them to give up their home, assets and means of livelihood. Apart from depriving them of their lands, livelihoods and resource-base, displacement has other traumatic psychological and socio-cultural consequences. The Government of India recognizes the need to minimize large scale displacement to the extent possible and, where displacement is inevitable, the need to handle with utmost care and forethought issues relating to Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Project Affected Families. Such an approach is especially necessary in respect of tribals, small & marginal farmers and women.

### **Objectives of the Policy**

The objectives of the Policy are as follows:-

- To minimize displacement and to identify non-displacing or least-displacing alternatives;
- To plan the resettlement and rehabilitation of Project Affected Families, (PAFs) including special needs of Tribals and vulnerable sections;
- To provide better standard of living to PAFs; and
- To facilitate harmonious relationship between the Requiring Body and PAFs through mutual cooperation.

### **Salient features of the Policy**

#### **1. Administrator for Resettlement and Rehabilitation**

Where the appropriate Government is satisfied that acquisition of land for any project involves displacement of 500 families or more enmasse in plain areas and 250 families or more enmasse in hilly areas, DDP blocks, areas mentioned in Schedule V and Schedule VI of the Constitution of India as a result of acquisition of land for any project, it shall, by notification, appoint in respect of that project, an officer not below the rank of District Collector of the State Government to be the Administrator for R&R in respect of that project. If the appropriate Government in respect of the project is the Central Government, such appointment shall be made in consultation with the Central Government.

The overall control and superintendence of the formulation of resettlement and rehabilitation plan and execution of the same shall vest in the Administrator, Resettlement

& Rehabilitation.

**Powers and Functions of Administrator:** Subject to any general or special order of the appropriate Government, the Administrator for Resettlement & Rehabilitation shall perform the following functions/duties:-

- (i) Minimize displacement of persons and identify non-displacing or least displacing alternatives in consultation with the requiring body ;
- (ii) Hold consultation with the project affected families while preparing a resettlement and rehabilitation scheme/ plan;
- (iii) Ensure that interest of the adversely project affected families of Scheduled Tribes and weaker sections are protected.
- (iv) Prepare a draft plan/ scheme of resettlement and rehabilitation as required under Chapter V of this Policy;
- (v) Prepare a budget including estimated expenditure of various components of acquisition of land, resettlement and rehabilitation activities or programmes in consultation with representatives of the project affected families and requiring body for whom the land is acquired;
- (vi) Acquire adequate land for the project and also for settling the project affected families;
- (vii) Allot land and sanction benefits to project affected families;
- (viii) Perform such other functions as the appropriate Government may, from time to time, by order in writing, assign.

The Administrator for Resettlement & Rehabilitation shall be assisted by such officers and employees as the appropriate Government may provide.

## **2. Commissioner for R & R**

The State Government shall appoint an officer of the rank of Commissioner/Secretary of that Government for resettlement and rehabilitation in respect of such projects to which this Policy applies to be called the Commissioner for Resettlement & Rehabilitation.

For the purposes of this Policy, the Administrator for Resettlement & Rehabilitation and other officers and employees appointed for the purposes of resettlement and rehabilitation of PAF shall be subordinate to the Commissioner for Resettlement and Rehabilitation.

**Functions of Commissioner for R & R:** The Commissioner shall be responsible for supervising the formulation of resettlement and rehabilitation plans/schemes, proper

implementation of such plans/schemes and redressal of grievances as mentioned in Chapter VII of this Policy.

### **3. Plan out lines for Resettlement and Rehabilitation:**

1. The concerned authority chalk out a blue print of the whole process of rehabilitation and resettlement with the following steps:
2. Declaration of Affected Zone,
3. Carrying out survey & census of Project Affected Families,
4. Assessment of Government land available and land to be acquired for the purpose of Resettlement and Rehabilitation
5. Preparation of draft scheme/ plan for R&R
6. Its final publication and
7. Execution of the Schemes

### **4. R & R Benefits for Project Affected Families (PAFs)**

The resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) benefits shall be extended to all the Project Affected Families (PAF) whether belonging to below poverty line (BPL) or non-BPL.

- i) Any Project Affected Family (PAF) owning house and whose house has been acquired may be allotted free of cost house site to the extent of actual loss of area of the acquired house but not more than 150 sq.m. of land in rural areas and 75 sq.meter. of land in urban areas.
- ii) Each PAF of BPL category shall get a one-time financial assistance of Rs. 25000/- for house construction. Non-BPL families shall not be entitled to receive this assistance.
- iii) Each PAF owning agricultural land in the affected zone and whose entire land has been acquired may be allotted agricultural land or cultivable waste land to the extent of actual land loss subject to a maximum of one hectare of irrigated land or two hectares of un-irrigated land/cultivable waste land subject to availability of Government land in the districts.
- iv) Stamp duty and other fees payable for registration shall be borne by the requiring body.
- v) The Land allotted under para 6.4 shall be free from all encumbrances. The Land allotted may be in the joint names of wife and husband of PAF.
- vi) In case of allotment of wasteland/degraded land in lieu of acquired land, each PAF shall get financial assistance of Rs. 10000/- per hectare for land development. In

case of allotment of agricultural land, a one-time financial assistance of Rs. 5000/- per PAF for agricultural production shall be given.

vii) Each PAF having cattle shall get financial assistance of Rs. 3000/- for construction of cattle shed.

viii) Each PAF shall get financial assistance of Rs. 5000/- as transportation cost for shifting of building materials, belongings and cattle etc. from the affected zone to the resettlement zone.

ix) Each PAF comprising of rural artisan/small trader and self employed person shall get one-time financial assistance of Rs. 10,000/- for construction of working shed/shop.

x) Each PAF owning agricultural land in the affected zone and whose entire land has been acquired shall get one-time financial assistance equivalent to 750 days minimum agricultural wages for “loss of livelihood” where neither agricultural land nor regular employment to one member of the PAF has been provided.

xi) Each PAF owning agricultural land in the affected zone and whose entire land has not been acquired and consequently he becomes a marginal farmer shall get one time financial assistance equivalent to 500 days minimum agricultural wages.

xii) Each PAF owning agriculture land in the affected zone and who consequently becomes a small farmer shall get one time financial assistance equivalent to 375 days minimum agricultural wages

xiii) Each PAF belonging to the category of „agricultural labourer“, or „non-agricultural labourer“ shall be provided a one time financial assistance equivalent to 625 days of the minimum agricultural wages.

xiv) Each displaced PAF shall get a monthly subsistence allowance equivalent to 20 days of minimum agricultural wages per month for a period of one year upto 250 days of MAW.

xv) In the case of acquisition of land in emergent situation such as under Section 17 of the Land Acquisition Act 1894 or similar provision of other Act in force, each PAF shall be provided with transit accommodation, pending resettlement and rehabilitation scheme. Such families shall also get R&R benefits as mentioned in above paras under the Policy.

xvi) Acquisition of Long Stretches of Land: In case of projects relating to Railway Lines, Highways, Transmission Lines and laying pipelines wherein only a narrow stretch of land extending over several kilometers is being acquired, the Project Affected Families will be offered an ex-gratia amount of Rs. 10,000/- per family, and no other Resettlement & Rehabilitation benefits shall be available to them.

xvii) The Project Affected Families shall be provided necessary training facilities for development of entrepreneurship to take up self-employment projects at the resettlement zone as part of R&R benefits.

The Project Affected Families, who were in possession of forest lands prior to 25th October, 1980 shall get all the benefits of R & R as given in above paras under the Policy.

The PAFs of Scheduled Caste category enjoying reservation benefits in the affected zone shall be entitled to get the reservation benefits at the resettlement zone.

## **5. R & R Benefits for Project Affected Families of Scheduled Tribes.**

Tribal people of the project area are entitled to all the benefits mentioned above. In addition to the above entitlements, there are some tribal specific benefits that are provided for the welfare of the tribal displaced families

- i) Each Project Affected Family of ST category shall be given preference in allotment of land.
- ii) Each tribal PAF shall be entitled to get R&R benefits mentioned in above Paras under the Policy.
- iii) Each Tribal PAF shall get additional financial assistance equivalent to 500 days minimum agriculture wages for loss of customary rights/usages of forest produce.
- iv) Tribal PAFs will be re-settled close to their natural habitat in a compact block so that they can retain their ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity.
- v) Tribal PAFs shall get land free of cost for community & religious gathering.
- vi) Tribal PAFs resettled out of the district/taluka will get 25% higher R&R benefits in monetary terms.
- vii) The Tribal Land Alienated in violation of the laws and regulations in force on the subject would be treated as null and void and the R&R benefits would be available only to the original tribal land owner.
- viii) The Tribals families residing in the Project Affected Areas having fishing rights in the river/pond/dam shall be given fishing rights in the reservoir area.
- ix) Tribal PAFs enjoying reservation benefits in the affected zone shall be entitled to get the reservation benefits at the resettlement zone.

## **6. Basic Amenities at Resettlement zone**

1. While shifting the population of the Affected Zone to the Resettlement Zone, the Administrator for R&R may as far as possible, ensure that :

- a) In case the entire population of the village/area to be shifted belongs to a particular community, such population/families may be resettled enmasse in a compact area so that socio-cultural relations (social harmony) amongst shifted families are not disturbed
- b) In case of resettlement of Scheduled Castes PAFs, it may be ensured that they are resettled in sites close to the villages.

2. The Project Affected Families shall be provided the basic amenities and infrastructural facilities at the resettlement site as per norms specified by the Appropriate Govt. It is desirable that provision of drinking water, electricity, schools, dispensaries and access to the resettlement sites amongst others be included in the resettlement plan formulated by the Administrator for R&R.

## **7. Dispute Redressal Mechanism**

### **R & R Committee at Project level**

1. In respect of every project to which this Policy applies, the State Government shall constitute a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Administrator of that Project to be called the Resettlement and Rehabilitation Committee to monitor and review the progress of implementation of scheme/ plan of resettlement and rehabilitation of the Project Affected Families.

2. The Resettlement & Rehabilitation Committee constituted as above shall inter-alia include as one of its members:-

- i) A representative of women residing in the affected zone;
- ii) A representative each of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
- iii) A representative of a voluntary organization;
- iv) A representative of the lead bank;
- v) Chairman or his nominee of the PRIs located in the affected zone
- vi) An MPs/MLAs of the area included in the affected zone

3. Procedure regulating the business of the Resettlement & Rehabilitation Committee, its meeting and other matters connected thereto shall be prescribed by the Appropriate Government.

## **8. Grievance Redressal cell**

In respect of every project to which this Policy applies, the State Government shall constitute a Grievance Redressal Cell under the Chairmanship of the Commissioner for Resettlement and Rehabilitation for redressal of grievances of the PAFs.

The composition, powers, functions and other matters relating to the functioning of the Grievance Redressal Cell shall be such as may be prescribed by the Appropriate Government.

Any Project Affected Family, if aggrieved, for not being offered the admissible R&R benefits as provided under this Policy, may move an appropriate petition for redressal of his grievances to the Grievance Redressal Cell.

The Grievance Redressal Cell shall have the power to consider and dispose of all complaints relating to resettlement and rehabilitation against the decision of the Administrator/R&R Committee at Project level for Resettlement & Rehabilitation and issue such directions to the Administrator for Resettlement & Rehabilitation as it may deem proper for the Redressal of such grievances.

## **9. Monitoring Mechanism**

### **National Monitoring Committee**

The Central Government, Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources shall constitute a National Monitoring Committee, to be chaired by the Secretary, Department of Land Resources for reviewing and monitoring the progress of implementation of resettlement and rehabilitation scheme/plan relating to all projects to which this Policy applies. The Committee will have the following or his nominee not below the rank of Joint Secretary as its members:

Secretary, Planning Commission

Secretary, M/o Social Justice and

Empowerment Secretary, M/o Water

Resources

Secretary, M/o Tribal

Affairs Secretary, M/o

Railways Secretary, M/o

Power Secretary, M/o

Coal

Besides, the Secretary of the administrative Ministry/Department of the project for which the land is to be acquired shall be invited as one of the Members. The functions and duties of this Committee shall be prescribed by this Ministry.



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## 3. 8. Constitutional Provisions for the Scheduled Tribes

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The noble idea of protective discrimination evoked the framers of the Indian constitution to incorporate some special provisions for the welfare and upliftment of the Scheduled Tribes in India. Some important such provisions can be enumerated here.

xvii) The preamble of Indian constitution speaks about the establishment of equality and social justice- social, economic, political and educational for all the citizens in the country including the Scheduled Tribes.

xviii) Article 15- Provides equal rights and opportunities to all the citizens of India (including STs) without any discrimination.

xix) Article 15(5)-After the 104<sup>th</sup> amendment in 2005 empowers the state government to fix a quota of reservation for the SC/ST children in the schools run or aided by the government.

xx) Article-16 (1) guarantees equality of opportunity for all the citizens including the Scheduled Tribes in the matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.

xxi) Article 16 (2)- says that no citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them be ineligible for or discriminated against in respect of any employment office under the state

xxii) Article 16 (3)- Empowers the parliament to make special provision for some special categories including the STs as demanded by the situation without harming the integrity of the constitution

xxiii) Article 19 (5) Provides that the tribal people can own property and enjoy it in any part of the country

xxiv) Article 23 prohibits bonded labour or labour without proper wage which is prominent among the weaker sections including the STs

xxv) Article 24- prohibits practice of child labour which is also prominent among the weaker section including STs

xxvi) Article 29- Has removed the denial or restriction of admission of any section including the STs to educational institutions maintained by the state or receiving aid out of the state fund

xxvii) Article 46- promises that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of STs and shall protect them from all forms of exploitations.

xxviii) Article 164- Provides for a special ministry for the welfare of the STs in certain states like Bihar, M.P. and Odisha etc.

xxix) Article 224- Gives instructions to the administration to special care to protect tribal interests in the Scheduled Areas.

xxx) Article 243 (D)- Provides for reservation of seats for the STs in the Panchayatraj Institutions.

xxxi) Article 243 (T)- provides for reservation of seats for the STs in the Municipal Organisations.

xxxii) Article 330- reads that seats shall be reserved in the house of the people for the SCs and STs

xxxiii) Article 332- says that seats shall be reserved for the STs in the state Legislative Assemblies of the states specified under the First Schedule

xxxiv) Article 335- Enables the STs to claim for the reservation in services under the government.

xxxv) Article 338- Empowers the president to appoint a commissioner to look after all matters relating to the safeguards provided to the STs and tribal welfare and report to the president who presents all such reports in the parliament for consideration.

xxxvi) Article 339(2)- Provides that the central government can direct the state governments in the formulation and execution of tribal welfare plans and programmes

xxxvii) Article 342- Empowers the president of India to declare on the recommendation of the Governor some groups or communities as "Scheduled Tribes" entitling them for all the constitutional benefits.

### **Provisions for Scheduled Areas**

On the basis of concentration of tribal population in the states, for the proper administration of the welfare programmes for tribal people the scheduled areas are divided into two categories i.e.

1. **Areas under the Fifth Schedule:** Fifth Scheduled areas are those areas notified by the president of India for special administration in view of the special needs of the people residing there. The states or union territories having significant concentration but not majority of scheduled population are covered under this schedule.

### **Provisions**

Under the fifth schedule of the Indian constitution, the scheme of administration of Scheduled areas makes provision of for a division of responsibility between the state and union Governments. The state government is responsible for screening the legislations which are unsuitable for extension to the tribal areas. It is also given with the responsibility to make necessary laws for the protection of the tribal land and for the prevention of

exploitation by the

money-lenders and others. The state government also implements tribal welfare programmes in the scheduled areas. On the other, the general guidelines relating to the administration of the scheduled areas are made by the central government. It also makes provisions for necessary funds to raise the standard of implementation and for improving the life of the tribal life. Article 224 of the constitution empowers the central government to direct the state governments about the matters relating to tribal welfare.

So far seven states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan have been notified to have “Scheduled Areas”. Under the fifth schedule of the constitution, the Governors of these states are empowered with the right to modify central as well as state laws to make them more applicable for the welfare of the tribal areas. They are also empowered to make regulations that are essential for the protection and welfare of the tribals in scheduled areas. Section 4 of the Fifth Schedule also makes provision for setting up of Tribal Advisory Councils in the scheduled states having significant concentration of tribal population. The council advises the Governor on the matters pertaining to planning and implementation of tribal welfare programmes.

**2. Areas under the Sixth Schedule:** The areas under sixth Schedule so far cover only 4 states of India namely Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. These are the states having population of tribal majority. As regards the administration of scheduled areas of these states, considerable degree of social, cultural, political and administrative autonomy is granted under the sixth schedule of the constitution attached to Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1).

### **Provision**

As per the provision of the schedule, District Councils and Regional Councils are formulated in the scheduled areas. These councils are empowered to make laws relating to land allotment, use of forest resources, regulation of shifting cultivation, establishment of village or town committees and determination of their power and functions with regard to local governance. The councils make laws relating to marriage and other social customs as practicable for the local people. The councils are also empowered to administer justice with reference to the legal provisions made under the Indian Civil and Penal Code by modifying as per the social custom of their own community. They enjoy the power of assessment and collection of land revenue, imposition of taxes, issue of licenses for the extraction of minerals etc. The striking feature of the administration of this area is that the District and Regional Councils have the power to even prohibit the application of state laws and the parliamentary laws as well.

## Check Your Progress

### **Section-I (Long type Questions)**

- a) Give the concept, characteristics and classification of tribes in India.
- b) Write an essay on tribal culture and economy
- c) Identify the major problems of tribes in India and account the constitutional provisions to reduce those problems.
- d) Enlist the special provisions for STs under National Rehabilitation Policy.

### **Section-II**

- a) Tribal Culture
- b) Land Alienation
- c) Tribal Economy
- d) R & R Policy
- e) Scheduled Areas

# Problems of Weaker Sections

## Contents

### **4.0. Objectives of the Unit**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

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#### **4.3. Problems of Scheduled Tribes**

#### **4.4. Problems of Other Backward Classes**

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## **4.0. Objectives of the Unit**

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The main objective of this unit is to throw light on the various problems of weaker members of our society and state how those problems plague the life of marginalized sections and the society at large. Since discussion of all the problems suffered by the weaker section is not possible in our context, some socially significant problems have been briefly discussed in this unit in an easy to understand way. It is expected that after studying this unit the readers may acquire basic knowledge about the following topics:

- Problems of Scheduled Castes (Harijans)
- Problems of Scheduled Tribes
- Problems of Other Backward Classes

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## 4.1. Introduction

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The term “Weaker” comes from the word “weak” which itself refers to a problem. The weaker members of the society are so because they have problems and they are encountered with many problems because they are weak economically, socially and educationally. According to Government of India Act, 1935 “weaker section implies to those sections of society who are either because of traditional custom of practice of untouchability or because of tribal origin, tribal way of living or other backwardness have been suffering from educational and economic backwardness and some aspects of social life.”

The term „Weaker Section“ in ordinary sense refers to the section of the population who are socially, economically, politically and educationally backward than the other sections of the population and have been suffering from different kinds of disabilities due to their backwardness. The problem of socio-economic and educational backwardness of the weaker section leads them into several other daunting problems such as poverty, unemployment, health hazards, indebtedness, bonded labour, child labour, illiteracy and so on.

The problems of all the three categories of weaker section are not equal and the same. So, a categorical division of the weaker sections for a closer discussion of the problems specific to each category is necessary.

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## 4.2. Problems of Scheduled Castes

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As it is already stated in the previous units of this paper, the Scheduled Caste people are the most vulnerable group to different social and economic disabilities among the weaker section of the Indian population. They had to encounter severest social rejection, discrimination, social injustice and social exploitation for centuries and perhaps, for couple of millennia. Even today, in most parts of the rural India the obvious tragedy of untouchability is reported not to have cut off from their life. This problem has proved to be fatal in the process of their development. It has pushed them off the process of social, economic, educational and most importantly, psycho-moral development. It is impossible to contain all the details of their problems in a single chapter here. Therefore, some important problems relevant to our study can be stated hereunder:

### **i) Problems in Economic Upliftment (Poverty)**

More than 91 percent of the Scheduled Caste people are falling under the Below Poverty Line in India. Poor economic condition (Poverty) is one of the main features of life of Scheduled Caste people (Harijans) in India. Plethora of welfare programmes have not been able to bring them up to the desired level of living condition. Owing to the large scale social rejection and socio-economic deprivation in the past, people from the Scheduled Caste were left far behind the process of development. A conducive social environment is highly essential for economic upliftment where as these people were deprived of it since invisible past. Even today these people are forced to do some lower kinds of job yielding meagre earnings. They are restricted to practise the occupation of their choice which prevents them from taking a better occupation that could lift their economic status. In the past they were denied to own land that has made them landless labours today. Undergoing all such kinds of discrimination, they have generated internalized sense of inferiority with moral demoralization, lack of motivation for economic development and lack of self-confidence, all of which have made them turn off even the welfare programmes implemented by the government for their upliftment thereby leading to abject poverty.

### **ii) Unemployment**

Unemployment is another major problem of the Scheduled Castes in India. More than 70 percent of the SCs are unemployed or underemployed and illiteracy is found to be the major reason for their unemployment. Earlier they were not allowed to hold a position in government job. At times, it is reported that even after passing of different laws against the discrimination of SCs, they have to face different forms of discrimination in the process of recruitment and promotion in both government and private agencies. Due to illiteracy and ignorance about various government schemes and programmes, they are unable to avail facilities provided for their self-employment and income generation. Moral degradation and lack of awareness also plays a major role for their unemployment.

### **iii) Educational Problem**

Education greatly contributes to all the dividends of development of a person and the society. In the past, the SCs children were denied access to schools and education. That led to mass illiteracy and deviances among the Scheduled Castes in the previous generations which led to lack of zeal and interest for education of their children. Most of the children are first generation learners who are deprived of support and guidance for learning. Even today, the children from SC families are often the victims of rude and unnatural behavior of the teacher and other students. This is an important factor contributing to the large scale drop out among the SC students. That apart, there is lack of conducive environment in their families for studies due to poor standard of living which leads to low



performance and finally drop

out. The existing educational programmes due to various reasons have failed to meet their actual needs for quality education.

#### **iv) Health Problems**

Health is most important asset for the development of a person. Health is the complete physical and mental well being of an individual. SCs are known for their poor health performance. In terms of MMR and IMR they have abysmal status of health. Malaria, TB, Typhoid, malnutrition led Anemia, are the most common diseases they suffer and succumbed to premature deaths. These are curable diseases but due to lack of minimum awareness and lack of minimum finance, they are thrown unto death. Their ignorance about the existing health facilities also is a major cause of their high rate of mortality. The poor standard of living often makes them careless about health and tempts them to go for the consumption of alcohol, tobacco etc that are injurious to health. Poverty driven poor diet at times makes them vulnerable to various physical problems. Financial burden, incapability in family maintenance also put them into mental stress leading to various health problems. The SCs are mostly engaged in scavenging, sweeping, carrying human and animal carcasses those are known as dirty occupations. These occupations also make them more vulnerable to health hazards as they are not conscious of cleaning themselves properly after their work.

#### **v) Housing Problem**

Shelter is one of the three basic needs for life. The SCs live in very poor housing condition neither safe nor conducive for healthy human living. They were prevented from owning land for themselves in the past and so don't have land or money to construct a house for their families. There are instances of destitute SCs spending their nights in public buildings like schools, panchayat buildings etc. in the rural areas and in bus stands, railway platforms and other public places in the cities. The highest percentage people not having toilets are SCs. Many housing schemes like Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Rajiv Awas Yojana etc. are undertaken by the Government for providing basic housing facilities to the poor people in both rural and urban areas including the SCs but, ignorance and innocence prevents them from availing the benefits of housing schemes provided by the Government for their better living. Corruptive nature of the concern agencies deprives the SCs from the facilities provided under those schemes.

#### **vi) Indebtedness**

Indebtedness is a condition of an individual in which he/she is burdened with heavy loan and is not able to recover from the same. Most of the scheduled Caste people are poor people having scarce means to meet the contingencies of life. In times of contingencies like disease, disability,

destitutions,

marriage ceremony of their wards, the poor people borrow money from the informal agencies like landlords, shopkeepers or other money lenders who are easily accessible to them. Very often they are overburdened with the payment of high interest against their loans. At times, due to inability of repaying the loans forces them to resort to an agreement with the money lender to work for the lender towards covering their loans. Even some times, these people have to engage their children and women as bonded labours to recover from the burden of indebtedness. There are also instances of loss of house even loss of wives and children in the hands of the money lenders due to inability of repayment of loan.

#### **v) Bonded Labour**

Bonded labour is a form of labour where the worker is forced to work for unlimited time under the absolute custody of the employer. Generally there is no defined job responsibility in this form of labour. The labour in this system is completely surrendered either at his will born by agreement with the master or by the force of the master against his will. But one thing is clear here that the labour is forced by his situation or by the master to work endlessly. He has no chance of escape and is bound to work at the will of the master. It can be said that it is a form of slavery.

During the feudal period the land Lords used to lend money to the poor people in time of their contingencies like starvation due to crop failure, disease, marriage and dowry, natural calamities etc. with higher rate of interest in cash or kind. When the poor people were not able to return the borrowed money within prescribed time, they were drug to work in the agricultural lands or were forced to serve in other domestic work. Most victims to this kind of situation were the Scheduled Castes because they were the neediest prey nearest to the land Lords. The Lords used to exploit them to the maximum extent. With the end of feudalism in the 18th century this form of exploitation did not end. It was continued by the money lenders then subsequently the contractors and rich people to the present time. Now a days, people are unduly locked in the brick mines, industries, farms and are forced to go on working without adequate food, suitable shelter or adequate payment and when deny, they are tortured physically, mentally or even sexually. In some instances, they have to loose their hands, legs, eyes or even their life in the bloody battle for their basic rights. Bonded labourers in India are mostly migrant workers, which opens them up to more exploitation. Also they mostly come from low caste groups such as dalits or marginalised tribal groups. Bonded child labourers are at very high risk for physical and sexual abuse and neglect often leading to death. They often are psychologically and mentally disturbed and have not learnt many social skills or survival skills.

It is seen as a gross violation of human rights and sheer instance of social injustice. It leads to untold suffering and unbearable agony. It causes moral degradation among the victims. They are traumatized for lifelong. Some times they become revengeful and displace their hatred and anger towards the other members of the society and become prone to anti-social activities. In this regard, the Bonded Labour Prohibition Act, 1976 has been enforced to eliminate the incidence of bonded labour in the country but thanks to our implementation system that it has failed to make any

remarkable change in the situation.

**Factors**

- a) Poverty
- b) Unemployment
- c) Ignorance
- d) Social taboos
- e) Lack of stringent legal action

**vii) Child labour**

Child Labour is a process in which the children below the age of 14 years are engaged in a firm, industry, shops, vendors or any other production house or business centre with meager payment or without payment for the same.

India's Census 2001 office defines child labor as participation of a child less than 17 years of age in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation could be physical or mental or both. This work includes part-time help or unpaid work on the farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity such as cultivation and milk production for sale or domestic consumption. Indian government classifies child laborers into two groups: Main workers are those who work 6 months or more per year. And marginal child workers are those who work at any time during the year but less than 6 months in a year.

It is seen that millions of children all over India are engaged in manual and hazardous works in factories and other establishments with meager payments earning large margins of profit for the entrepreneurs. Various studies reveal that incidence of child labour is highest among the lowest caste i.e. scheduled caste due to their poverty and undesirable condition of life. They are employed with the majority (70%) in agriculture some in low-skilled labour-intensive sectors such as sari weaving or as domestic helpers, which require neither formal education nor training, but some in heavy industry such as coal mining.

Poverty and lack of social security have been found to be the main causes of child labour. The increasing gap between the rich and the poor, privatization of basic services and the neo-liberal economic policies are causes that lead major sections of the population out of employment and without basic needs. This adversely affects children more than any

other

group. Entry of multi-national corporations into industry without proper mechanisms to hold them accountable has led to the use of child labour. Lack of quality universal education has also contributed to children dropping out of school and entering the labour force. A major concern is that the actual number of child labourers goes undetected. Laws that are meant to protect children from hazardous labour are ineffective and not implemented correctly

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## **4.2. Problems of the Scheduled Tribes**

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Scheduled Tribes are known to be the most backward class of the Indian social hierarchy. They are also known as simple and innocent people living in the dense forests, mountain valleys, away from the modern people and modern world. After the Aryan invasion of India, the tribals who were the original inhabitants of India were defeated and driven into the dense forests and hilly areas. Perhaps, since then these people have been living in those areas and have been maintaining their suspicion and dislikeness towards the non-tribal and modern world. There are instances of murder of the non-tribals when they tried to enter the tribal areas in the past. This may be evident to say that they did not like non-tribals to mingle with them. They remained isolated and disconnected from the civilized society for centuries and could not be a part of the process of development. At times, when they came to contact with the non-tribals, they were bitterly exploited. During Britishraj, the exploitation and oppression on the tribes knew no bounds. This bitter experience has still not stopped flowing in their blood and mind. Hence, they turn off from different development programmes leading to failure of the purpose of those programmes. To be specific, there are innumerable problems suffered by the Scheduled tribes in India but few can be picked for the purpose of our learning.

### **i) Problems in Economic Upliftment (Poverty)**

Poor economic condition is one of the most striking features of Scheduled tribes in India. Most of the tribal families are lying below the poverty line. They have very less source of income and are struggling to manage the basic needs of life. Many times, it is found that they eat wild roots, mango seeds, wild mushrooms etc to meet their hunger and are succumbed to death. They are not able to afford the expense of modern health facilities. Hence, they are the victims of premature deaths. They are known to be the most marginalized section of our population. They are deprived of their basic rights making their life worse living. More than six decades of concerted effort from different fronts could not change their deplorable lot. The factors responsible for their long standing economic backwardness are many such as:

- i) Primitive methods of production
- ii) Social Taboos influencing their production



- iii) Substantial economy
- iv) Community based production
- v) Ignorance about Government schemes
- vi) Indifference attitude towards Government programme
- vii) Corruptive nature of development officials
- viii) Lack of effective Planning

## **ii) Educational Problems**

Various studies on tribal education have revealed that tribal people encounter numbers of problems much higher than the non-tribals in India. They are the section people leading a peculiar style of living characterized by segregated from mainstream society, traditional dialects, unique accent of language, different culture, different value system etc. The present formal system of education they are put into has little relevance to their way of living. The prevailing wider gap between the existing education system and their living has posed many problems in the process of their education. Some of those problems can be stated in the following points:

- i) Defective policy
- ii) Ineffective Planning
- iii) Lack of efficient implementation
- iv) Irrelevant school system
- v) Curriculum Problems
- vi) Teacher related Problems
- vii) Cultural Barriers
- viii) Psychological problems of the tribals
- ix) Lack of home environment

## **iii) Health Problems**

Most tribals in India are poor and illiterate people. Due their poor economic condition they are not able to meet the modern health needs that are found to be too expensive to meet from their meager

income.

Most of the tribal people suffer from malnutrition because of their poor quality food habits. They lack knowledge about nutrition and good health. Very often they rely on black magic and other traditional treatment rather than the modern means of treatment of diseases. They turn off the modern health facilities due to certain taboos, lack of finance and due to difficult formal process of accessing the modern treatment process.

Government has taken several initiatives to enhance their health condition but the success is insignificant because tribal are socially, economically, educationally and emotionally not ready enough to avail the facilities in the general health system.

#### **iv) Housing Problems**

Housing problem is another acute problem of the tribal people in India. They live in poor housing condition inadequate to protect from heavy rain, heat, cold and other natural calamities. A large of the tribal population in India lives in huts and straw-thatched house with single rooms that have sub-human condition for living and lack safety during natural calamities. Their children do not have space to study. At times, those huts are in wrecked condition and the poor tribals are not able to repair them for their sound living.

The Government has initiated many housing schemes for the tribes as well but the benefits of those schemes hardly reach to the beneficiaries due to lack of proper implementation and monitoring of government machineries in the tribal areas.

#### **v) Employment Problems:**

More than 90% of the tribal population in India is depended on agriculture and forest product and their main field of occupation is land and forest. But due to large scale transfer of land (specially during the British period) from the tribes to the non-tribes and mass displacements in the name of development projects even after independence have left them almost landless. They have lost their occupation and livelihood in this process. At present the unemployment rate is significantly higher among the tribes in comparison to the non tribal people in the country. Also lack of effective regulation of market system, economic exploitation and very low income from agriculture has made them hopeless and disinterested in engaging themselves in hard work and toiling for agricultural and forest products. Illiteracy accompanied by lethargy also has made them more unproductive in

employment aspects.

Most of the tribal areas have remained unreached by the employment programmes by the government because most tribal areas are inaccessible due to lack of communication facilities. The programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Rural Livelihood Mission etc could not bring desirable change in the employment scenario of the tribals due to defects in implementation and monitoring. Also in the neo-liberalization period, due to privatization they have been marginalized by the better off people in the sphere of cottage industries and other employment generation programme which were supposed to be the main source for tribal employment. Further, many programmes of the Government aimed at providing employment to the tribal people are found to be irrelevant to their life situation and fail to gain their willful participation and consequently fail to fix the problem of unemployment.

#### **vi) Indebtedness**

Studies reveal that the incidence of indebtedness is very high among the tribes in India. Due to poverty and substantial economy they often are not able to meet the contingencies of life and go for borrowing money from others. Lack of formal system of financing mechanism in the tribal areas the tribal people have to depend on the exploitative informal system of financing. During marriage, sickness, death, starvation etc they borrow money from the local money lenders like traditional money lenders, contractors, shopkeepers, owners of brick kilns etc to meet their urgent needs. Most tribals often prefer the informal source borrowing money because getting money from such sources is very simple for the tribal as no written agreement is required for the same and there is no need of the formal process like that of the formal institution. The local money lenders attract the tribal people with their sweet words and amicable behaviour to trap them in the cage of indebtedness. They make just an oral agreement on lending money so that they can easily cheat the tribals. Later, when the borrowers are not able to repay the loans, the money lenders acquire their land, animals or even house against their debt. This process contributes to the impoverishment of the tribes.

#### **vii) Bonded Labour**

According to the Annual survey of NSSO the incidence of bonded labour is highest among the tribal population. More than 3.5% of the total tribal population are the victims of bonded labour. The large scale land alienation and displacement of tribal people have impoverished them and made them unable to have any surplus income or saving. In many instances, during contingencies like disease, loss of job, starvation, deaths, marriage etc the tribes borrow money from the money lender and sell themselves and their children as bonded labor in the hand of money lenders for years until they have not repaid their loans with higher rate of interest.

There is an increasing trend of tribal people migrating to the cities and towns in search of work. The migrant workers often are held in bricks kilns, factories and other informal sectors as bonded labours and undergo lot of exploitation and suffering under the contractors.

#### **viii) Child Labour**

It is a known fact that tribal people in India are mostly dependant on agriculture and forest for their livelihood. From the very early days of life they start working in the agricultural field, animal rearing, collecting forest products etc and help their family. Until very recent years they never thought about life beyond such primitive activities. So, most tribal parents prefer to train their children on all those life supportive activities that are conducive to their own culture and their own way of life than to send their children to school.

It is found that child labour among tribes in India is very high in comparison to the other social groups in India. Lack of effective schooling system, poverty, lack of awareness on education of children etc. are said to be the main reasons for child labour among the tribes. Prevalence of child labour among the Indian tribes deprives the tribal children from the basic right of education. It also leads to illiteracy, poverty, non-participation in the development process, criminal behaviour among the tribes.

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### **4.3. Problems of Other Backward Classes**

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There are more than 52 percent of people belonging to Other Backward Classes in India. They are third vulnerable section of Indian population to various socio-economic and educational backwardness and suffer from many problems driven by those backward nesses. Some of those problems can be discussed hereunder:

**i) Problems of Economic Upliftment**

As mentioned earlier, the NSSO surveys reveal that the incidence of poverty among

OBCs is intermediate to that among SCs/STs on the one hand and the so called „higher castes“, on the other. Poverty is the central factor of their socio-economic and educational backwardness among the OBCs. They are backward because they are poor, and they are poor because they are backward. Main reasons of the said backwardness among the OBCs are illiteracy, lack of employment, poor representation in politics and services and lack of basic amenities of life. In the task of identifying the OBCs, the Mandal Commission had suggested some tangible indicators those included their lower position in the class hierarchy, lower age at marriage within the group, higher female work participation, higher school drop out rate, inaccessibility to drinking water, lower average value of family assets, higher existence of Kutchha houses and so on. Due to all these problems the OBCs could not potentially participate in the process of development and were marginalized and deprived of the basic standard of living.

Another serious problem that prevented them from development was lack of any planned programme for OBCs as that of STs and SCs. Due to the sporadic and wide spread presence of OBCs across the mainstream population, no strict line of demarcation has yet been drawn to identify these people. This leads to failure of the Government to formulate any comprehensive plan which could specially meant for the welfare of the OBCs. Except for the reservation policy no significant effort has been made for the economic upliftment of the OBCs. There has been a great deal of resentment among people belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) that they have not been given the benefit of comprehensive amelioration packages as has been done in the case of SCs and STs. This has often toled to conflicts culminating in violence.

## **ii) Educational Problems**

Educational problem has a very strong historical footing contributing to the backwardness of the Other Backward Classes in India. These people always were the proximate of the so called fortunate people (Brahmins and others) but were in economic disadvantage. They were from all the castes and were not confined to any caste. Hence, did not have to undergo any caste-based social disabilities. The only problem they suffered was economic problem. During the Britishraj, new education system was introduced in India with English as the medium of instruction. Few aristocratic people who were economically well off went for the English Education and were absorbed well-paid jobs or prospered in other ways. But it was highly expensive for the economically disadvantaged people who could afford for the new education and lagged behind the economic and educational prosperity. With the passage of time, the gap between these two groups was widen. The rich became more rich and enjoyed power and position in the society. On the other hand, the poor became poorer and were deprived of even the basic needs of life.



In the current days, the OBCs as economically backward are not able to afford for the best education for their children. The representation of OBCs in higher and professional education is very low. There are many other factors like lack of awareness, lack of suitable family environment, lack of effective support and guidance, lack of inspiration responsible for the educational backwardness of the Other Backward Classes in India.

### **iii) Health Problems**

As we have already discussed that good health is the total well being- physical, psychological and social of an individual. All these aspects of good health are grounded on the economic, social and educational status of an individual. Most of the people from OBC category are economically poor and so are unable to have adequate nutrition since the very childhood that leads to malnutrition driven anemia and other health problems such as TB, sickle cell etc. at the later stage. They live in poor housing condition and lack safe drinking water that lead to their health deterioration. Due to poor economic condition they are not able to afford for the expensive modern treatment facilities. Poverty driven mental depression makes them more vulnerable to various health problems. Lack of education makes them less aware about the health practices, proper and timely treatment of common diseases leading to disabilities or premature deaths. Most of the people from this category are engaged in manual labour and other hazardous works and are unable to go for health insurance facilities. It has been revealed from various studies on health that OBCs are the worse sufferers of health problems next to SCs and STs.

### **iv) Housing Problems**

Poor housing condition is another major problem of OBCs in the country. These people do not have proper house to live. Their houses do not have the minimum facilities like urinals, latrines, kitchens, windows or drains in them. They have to live in a single room with their domestic animals like cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep which leads to the infection of many animal born diseases in them. They use Open Street for their urination and defecation and wash their utensils outside inviting many kinds of germs and other micro-organisms into their foods. All these unhygienic housing conditions adversely affect their health. Due to their poor economic condition they are unable to think beyond their bellies. They lack awareness and motivation to build a house that can be conducive to live in. The Government through various programmes like Indira Awas Yojana, Total Sanitation Programme, and other housing schemes attempts to meet the housing needs of these people but the result is very low because of incapability of the people, corruptive practices in the implementing mechanism and so on.

#### **v) Employment Problems**

Unemployment is one of the major problems of Other Backward Classes in India. It has often been the crux of discourse on the problems of the OBCs at all level. In the subsequent socio-economic Surveys by NSSO and other agencies we have also seen how open unemployment is consistently higher among OBCs than among „Others“. This is because they have very low representation in higher professional and technical education. Due to lack of strict line of demarcation of OBCs many of the OBCs are deprived of the facilities provided under the reservation facilities in education and employment. There is perpetuation of confusion in respect to decision as regard to special facilities for the other backward people in the country. No comprehensive programme like that of SCs and STs have been developed specially for the other backward classes so as to enhance their employment status in the society. In employment generation programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS), Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana(SGSY), National Rural Livelihood Mission(NRLM), Jawahar Rojagar Yojana(JRY) etc. there no special provision made for the OBCs so that they could improve their employment. Another serious problem that obvious in the life of the OBCs is that the very method that is adopted to identify the OBCs across the country has not passed the question of authenticity as yet. This is big challenge in process to grant justice to these people.

#### **vi) Indebtedness**

Indebtedness is one of the striking features of socio-economic life of Other Backward Classes in India. The OBCs who are found at the bottom of economic ladder economic hierarchy feed and cloth themselves and their family members from the meager income from wage labour, rickshaw pulling, stone-cutting, petty-trading and from agriculture in the small land they own. Their income often is hardly adequate to make it happen even the life of hand to mouth. Naturally, they are not in a position to meet the various needs in time of contingencies from their small income. So they go out to borrow money from land owners and money lenders. Generally, they take loan for the purpose of marriage, religious festivals, treatment of diseases, death rituals and for the repayment of previous loan. It is found that OBCs borrow a lower proportion of their debt from institutional sources like banks and other credit societies and have higher dependence on informal sources like land owner, money lenders as compared to all the other social groups. It so happens because the informal source is more accessible to them and does not follow any formal procedure to the convenience of the illiterate people. They pay heavy interest for their loan from informal sources. When they fail to pay the loan they sell themselves or their children as bonded labour in the hand of the money lender give and themselves to exploitation.

## **vii) Bonded Labour**

High prevalence of Bonded labour goes back to the feudal period when the practice of slavery was at its peak. Though bonded labour is no more a legalized activity in our society, it is still prevalent behind the screen of our society. It is said that OBCs are the worst victims of bonded labour among all social groups in India. The reasons may be their accessibility to the money lenders and other exploiters, their presence across the higher caste people due to the absence of practice of untouchability, their indebtedness, illiteracy, lack of employment opportunity for the OBCs etc. Indebtedness is a major reason of bonded labour. The OBCs take loans to meet various needs in the time of marriage, festivals, treatment of illness, death rituals from the land owners and money lenders. They have to pay heavy interest against these loans. They are overburdened with loans and their interest when the repayments are delayed. Being unable to pay the heavy amount they often give themselves for bonded labour till the loan on them is recovered. At times, in order to meet their basic needs they borrow money from the land owners or local contractors to provide service to the lender as a bonded labour and work as bonded labour.

Now a days, there is appearance of another form of bonded labour in our society. Many young girls from the poor families move to the metros of India in search of job with the support of some dalals (brokers). The brokers place these girls in different houses for domestic works or in some firms and receive some amount of money against each head. These girls are bound to serve in the firm till they pay the money given to the dalals. They have to work day and night as house maid or firm labours and undergo lot of suffering in those places. In all forms of bonded labour the victims have to work ceaselessly without any limit of time or choice of work with no payment or meager pay that is undue to their work. It is found from the studies that the incidence of bonded labour is highest among the other backward people in India.

## **viii) Child Labour**

Child labour has appeared as a serious problem in our society. Millions of children in their school going age due to various reasons are prevented from going to school and are engaged in agricultural fields, rag picking, begging, tea shops, hotels, factories, and other establishments and are exploited by others. The highest percentage of these child labours are from OBC population. Many children from poor families are sent to the agricultural fields by their parents to help them in agricultural activities. A significant number of children are engaged in different establishments to earn bread and butter for themselves, their disabled parents or their siblings. This is an inevitable situation where children cannot be prevented from working. However child labour is a social problem and the incidence is highest among the OBCs making it imperative to look into the matter and work towards curbing child labour. The various factors responsible for child labour are: lack of awareness among

the parents on the value of education, lack of attractive environment in the schools, parental poverty, negligence in

implementation of child labour laws etc. Due to child labour the lives of millions of children are thrown into perpetual darkness leading towards different social problems in our society

CHECK YOUR



## Check Your Progress

### Section-I (Long type Questions)

- a) Critically analyse the major problems encountered by the SCs in India.
- b) Enumerate the major problems of STs and their factors.
- c) “OBCs in India have inherited their socio-economic problems from their educational disabilities in the past.” Elaborate.

### Section-II (Short Notes)

- a) Child labour and weaker sections
- b) Indebtedness among OBCs
- c) Bonded labour
- d) Poverty and weaker section.

# Unit-V

## Special Welfare Programmes for the Weaker Sections

### Contents

- 5.0. Objectives of the Unit
- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. Needs and Importance of Special welfare programmes for weaker sections.
- 5.2. Special Programmes for the Scheduled Castes in India
- 5.3. Special Programmes for the Scheduled Tribes in India
- 5.4. Special Programmes for the Other Backward Classes in India
- 6. 5. Central and State Administrative Set up for Special welfare programmes

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### **5.0. Objectives of the Unit**

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There are numbers of special welfare programmes planned and implemented for the upliftment of the weaker sections at par with the mainstream population of India. The main objective of this unit is to make the readers familiar with some of the most important special programmes meant for dealing with problems and upliftment of the weaker sections in the country. Besides, an attempt also has been made to make them known about the administrative set ups formulated and entrusted for the implementation of those special programmes at the central and state levels. It is expected that after studying this unit thereaders will be able to increase their familiarity with the following matters:

- Special Programmes for the Scheduled Castes in India
- Special Programmes for the Scheduled Tribes in India
- Special Programmes for the Other Backward Classes in India

- Administrative Set up for Special welfare programmes of the Weaker Sections

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## 5.1. Introduction

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As we have already seen in the previous chapters that „**weaker sections**“ are the groups of people in India who are identified with larger illiteracy and lack of education, poverty, marginalization, exploitation, low representation in service and political participation, low standard of living and over all socio-economic backwardness and undergo lot of suffering as a result of the backwardness .

People who are included in the weaker sections for one or the other reason are far behind the mainstream society and are deprived of the basic rights of life. They need special attention from the government as well as the civil society to change their deplorable lot thereby achieving decent standard of living. People under this category include Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Women, Children, Persons with disabilities, Old age people etc. But, we are to discuss here only about the welfare of SCs, STs and OBCs for our learning context. Conscious attempts have been made to define these people so that some special measures can be undertaken for their welfare. The central and state governments are committed towards the upliftment of the weaker sections through various welfare measures-social economic, legislative, constitutional so that they may with their own capacities be able to meet the basic amenities of life. Since we have already discussed about the constitutional safeguards and legislative measures in the previous units, here we are taking up only special welfare programmes planned and implemented for the welfare of the weaker section. For our better understanding, we may discuss the special programmes of each social group distinctly.

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## 5.2. Needs and Importance of Special Welfare Programmes for the Weaker Sections

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It has been greatly felt by the founding fathers and the conscious members of our society that special programmes are critical for the all round development and welfare of the weaker members of the society. It is the known fact that Indian society consists of a sizeable number of the people who are away from receiving the appropriate amount of the fruit of independence and the progress made through social development. They are deprived of the basic right of enjoying a desirable standard of living. They also are found to have been suffering from various socio-economic disabilities leading to social injustice and violation of human rights.

There are a number of under-privileged communities such as the scheduled tribes, scheduled

castes and other backward classes including criminal tribes. The problems of poverty, ill-health, and lack of opportunities for development affect them to a larger extent than



many other sections of the society. In view of all these problems of the weaker members of the society, different programmes are planned and implemented with the purpose of suppressing these problems thereby bringing about positive change in the living standard of the marginalized people. Some of the specific and most obvious points of significance of those special programmes can be discussed hereunder:

1. Under the special welfare programmes for the SCs, STs and OBCs conscious efforts are made to study the special needs of the said weaker members of the society and special mechanisms are formulated through social legislations and social policies for the effective implementation of the programmes for welfare of these members.
2. Special and time bound development projects are formulated under programmes of social welfare and care is taken to mitigate those problems felt by these people.
3. Through special welfare programmes efforts are made to assist, both directly and through other agencies, the development of social services, the study of social problems, and the creation of trained personnel for social welfare administration,
4. Special welfare programmes are essential to assist specialised and private agencies through guidance, and financially, and to protect the interest of society by a measure of regulation and control,
5. These programmes attempt to initiate pilot projects, or help field organisations to develop such projects, in order to demonstrate the efficacy of programmes, methods, leadership and organisation,
6. They promote initiative in improvement of social services by supplying information, materials, publications, audio-visual aids, etc., and
7. These programmes also emphatically look to take over social services of vital importance initiated and organised by private agencies when these develop beyond their ability to manage.
8. Under the special welfare programmes for the SCs, STs and OBCs conscious efforts are made to study the special needs of the said weaker members of the society and special mechanisms are formulated through social legislations and social policies for the effective implementation of the programmes for welfare of these members.
9. Special and time bound development projects are formulated under programmes of social welfare and care is taken to mitigate those problems felt by these people.
10. Through special welfare programmes efforts are made to assist, both directly and through other agencies, the development of social services, the study of social problems, and the creation of trained personnel for social welfare administration,
11. Special welfare programmes are essential to assist specialised and private agencies through guidance, and financially, and to protect the interest of society by a measure of regulation and control

12. Special welfare programmes are designed with special emphasis to the economic needs of the target groups. Hence critical for the economic welfare of those groups.
13. These are significant as built upon the felt needs of the special categories and are guided by very clear and pragmatic road map envisaged by the planners
14. Planned financial allotments are made for special welfare programmes in every budget session. These systematic allotments of funds help the state and central agencies to develop cost effective action plans for the welfare of the weaker section with defined objectives in consonance to financial availability.
15. The special welfare programmes are planned with strict line of demarcation of roles and responsibilities of different functionaries that helps smooth functioning and successful implementation of the programmes leading to greater achievements in the upliftment of the weaker sections.
16. All the special welfare programmes are designed to operate for a specific period until the development objects are fulfilled. The time bound nature of these programmes guide the functionaries with greater sense of time thereby accelerating the implementation process of welfare programmes and quickening the growth process.
17. Most special welfare programmes operate convergently pooling resources from various departments and ministries. The convergent approach of welfare programmes have proved to be more effective for the holistic development of the weaker members of the society.
18. All the initiatives by the traditional departments for several decades could not achieve the goals to the marked level. There fore intervention through special programme has become imperative for the welfare of the weaker sections of the country.

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## 5.2. Special Programmes for the Scheduled Castes in India

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**The Scheduled Castes (SCs)** occupy the bottommost rung of the Indian social ladder. They constitute the significant part of the weaker sections. They are generally regarded as „untouchables“ and popularly known as „Harijans“. The government India Act, 1935 designated them as Scheduled Castes. According to the census report of 2001, they constitute around 16% of Indian population. They are known to have undergone historical suffering of different disabilities and at present,

identified to be economically backward, socially depressed and educationally neglected section of Indian population.

Since independence, the government India has been taking several measures including the special welfare programmes to uplift the scheduled caste people. The programmes specially designed and implemented under governmental and non-governmental auspices for the welfare of these people can be briefly discussed hereunder:

#### **A) Programmes for Economic Welfare**

**i) Special Component Plan:** The special component plan is intended to augment the efforts of the states for the economic development of the SCs. It is used to fill the critical gaps in the development needs of SCs. The main objective of this plan is to assist the SC families to substantially improve their income by creating a special component under all relevant ministries and departments. This plan envisages identification of schemes of development which would benefit SCs, quantification of funds from all programmes and determination of specific targets as to the number of families to be benefited from these programmes. During the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) Rs. 4,481 crore were earmarked for the SCPs. Till the year 1990 only eight central ministries had formulated the SCPs for the SCs but later, the number has increased.

**ii) Special Central Assistance:** The SCA also is utilized for infrastructure development in villages with 50% or more of SC population where such facilities are lacking. Poor SC farmers are supplied with seeds, agriculture implements, fertilizers, pesticides, interest-free loans, pair of bullocks for ploughing, subsidy for developing dairy farming, poultry farming, piggyery, animal husbandry, handicrafts, spinning and weaving.

**iii) Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations :** The SCDCs act as guarantors and promoters for credit support and provide missing inputs by way of margin money loans and subsidy to the target group. At present SCDCs are functioning in 25 States/UTs with central assistance in the ratio of 49:51 which was introduced in 1979.

**iv) National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers-** Under this scheme, the scavengers and their dependents are imparted training in trades of their aptitude, which can provide them alternate employment. Recently the Ministry has introduced the innovative concept of **Sanitary Marts** in this regard, under which scavengers will be organized into groups/cooperatives which will run the Marts as a commercial establishment capable of sustaining the alternative occupation of the scavengers.

**v) Loan-Mela Programme:** The “loan-mela” programme of Rajiv Gandhi Government since the year 1984-89 also provides small loans for the poorer section to help them to earn money through some secondary sources such as toy-making, basket-making, agarbatti and beedi-rolling, tailoring, shoe-making, etc.

**vi) Land Reforms:** Landless SC labourers are allotted land. Land reforms have been undertaken to bring benefits of land ownership for them.

#### **B) Programmes for Educational Promotion**

Due attention is paid to extend the educational opportunities of SCs and hence numbers of special provisions have been made in this regard.

i) **Special Educational Development Programme for SC Girls belonging to Very Low Literacy Level:** This scheme provides a package of educational inputs through residential schools for SCs girls in areas of very low SC female literacy. Under the scheme grant is directly given to Zila Parishads of the concerned districts for running the school.

ii) **Pre-Matric Scholarship to Children of those engaged in unclean Occupations:** Under this scheme Central assistance is provided to the State Governments on 50:50 basis and 100% to UT Administration considering their committed liability to financially assist the children of scavengers, sweepers having traditional link with scavenging, flayers and tanners to pursue education up to matriculation level.

iii) **Post-Matric Scholarship to Students belonging to SCs/STs:** Under this scheme, 100% Central assistance is provided to States/UTs over and above their respective committed liability. Under this scheme financial assistance is extended to SC/ST students for pursuing post matriculation courses in recognized institutions.

iv) **National Overseas Scholarship for SC, ST Students for Higher Studies Abroad:** Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to meritorious selected students for pursuing higher study abroad in specific fields of masters level courses, Ph.D. and Post Doctoral Research programme in Engineering, Technology and Science only.

v) **Girls and Boys Hostels for SCs:** Under this scheme financial assistance is provided to the State Governments on 50:50 matching share basis (100% to UTs) for construction of hostel building for up to 100 inmates. SC Boys and Girls studying in middle schools, higher secondary schools, colleges and universities can avail of these hostel facilities.

vi) **Book Bank for SC and ST students:** This scheme is intended to provide SC/ST students access to the latest textbooks on medicine, veterinary, engineering, agriculture and polytechnic courses which require expensive books. A group of two students are provided one set of textbooks.

vii) **Upgradation of Merit of SC/ST students:** This scheme aims at upgrading the merit of SC/ST students by providing them with facilities for all round development through education in residential schools. 100% Central assistance is released to States/UTs for arranging remedial and special coaching for SC/ST students studying in classes IX to XII.

viii) **Coaching and Allied scheme for SC/ST student:** Under this scheme, free coaching facilities are provided to SC/ST candidates through pre-examination training Centres to enable them to compete in various competitive examinations.

ix) **Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship:** Scheme This Scheme was introduced in the year 2005-06. Under the Scheme, fellowship is provided to ST students for pursuing higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph. D. The maximum duration of a fellowship is 5 years. Every year 667 fellowships are to be provided to ST students. The scheme is being implemented by University Grant Commission (UGC) on behalf of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Any ST student who has passed post-graduation from a UGC recognized University can apply under the scheme.

### C) Other special Programmes

- i) **Implementation of protection of Civil Right Act, 1955:** The Ministry provides Central assistance to State Governments on 50:50 basis and 100% to UTs for supporting measures to be taken for effective implementation of PCR Act 1955 and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (POA) Act, 1989.
- ii) **Monitoring of point 11(A) of 20 Point Programme:** Point 11(A) of 20 Point Programme relates to "Justice to Scheduled Castes". The Ministry of Empowerment and Social Justice closely monitors implementation of various developmental schemes as well as statutory provisions for safeguarding the interest of scheduled caste families.
- iii) **Research and Training:** The Ministry assists Government and Non-Governmental Organisations as well as research institutes/universities for conducting evaluation studies to assess impact of various plans and programmes under implementation for welfare of Scheduled Castes.
- iv) **Drinking Water Facility:** In SCs colonies and in the areas where they are found in large number, drinking water facility is provided through the construction of wells and borewells.
- v) **Medical Facility:** Free medical check-up facility is provided for the SCs. Those who undergo family planning operations are given financial assistance for purchasing required medicine and energising tonic. They are also provided basic health services through outreaching health programmes such as Mobile Health Units, Health Camps, Free Health Check up etc.
- vi) **Janata Houses:** In various States the SCs are given financial assistance to have their own houses. In States like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu low caste houses having all minimum required facilities, known as "janata" houses are built for them at State expenses.
- vii) **Liberation of Bonded Labourers:** A large number of bonded labourers particularly belonging to the SCs have been liberated. As per the report of the labour Department of the Central Government in 1983 about 1.13 lakh bonded labourers. Out of a total of 1.61 lakh were liberated from their bondage with the Governmental assistance.
- viii) **Sulab Sauchalaya Scheme:** This has been launched in several States for converting dry latrines into water-borne latrines in order to liberate SC scavengers and rehabilitate them in alternative occupations.
- ix) **Assistance to Voluntary Organisation:** Grant in aid is provided to voluntary organisations for taking up schemes for socio-economic and educational development of Scheduled Castes. These schemes include residential/non-residential school for SCs and vocational training Centres in trades like typing and shorthand, cutting and tailoring, computer etc.

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## 5.3. Special Welfare Programmes for the Scheduled Tribes

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As we have seen earlier that one of the most vulnerable groups of weaker sections of India is Scheduled Tribe. This section constitutes 8.8% of the total population of our country. The Scheduled Tribes were the earliest group living in India. They are also known as tribal people. In spite of all the efforts by the government, they are still in primitive stage or far from the impact of modern developed world. They live in forest areas, hilly regions, mountains and deep valleys. They are known by various names such as, Primitive people, Animists, Jungli people, Girijans, Adivasis, Aborigines and original inhabitants of India. Gandhiji with a motive called them „Girijans“. The constitution of India has referred to them as „Scheduled Tribes“.

Independent India has been paying due attention to the problems of the Scheduled Tribes and conscious attempts are made to deal effectively with those problem through planned programmes for

their welfare. Numbers of programmes and policies are being implemented to bring tribals into the mainstream of the society. Some of those important special programmes can be stated as under.

Most of the Schemes and Programmes undertaken for the welfare of the SCs and STs are common for both of them (**Please see welfare programmes for SCs already discussed in the previous pages**). Several social welfare programmes with special emphasis for STs are being implemented for the socio-economic and economic upliftment of the ST people under governmental and non-governmental auspices such as:

### **Special programmes for Economic Welfare.**

#### **Integrated Tribal Development Projects**

##### **(ITDP)**

This umbrella scheme is entrusted with the responsibility to plan and implement programmes in the district and block level for the economic wellbeing of the STs. It provides supports to all the sub-plans in terms of finance and technical know how to carry out various activities for the welfare of the STs.

##### **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)**

This scheme was launched under ITDP in 1974-75 to look after tribal development affairs at the block level. Some scheduled blocks were selected for conducting special tribal development programmes. This plan worked on the following objectives:

- i) Rising production in agriculture, small industries, horticulture and animal husbandry
- ii) Elimination of exploitation of tribals
- iii) Development of special education and training programmes for tribal people
- iv) Upgradation of environment of tribal areas etc.

##### **TRIFED**

The **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited** (TRIFED) was set up by the government of India in 1987 with the prime objective of providing marketing assistance and remunerative prices to ST communities for their minor forest produce and surplus agricultural produce and to wean them away from the exploitative private traders and middlemen. The federation is a national level cooperative apex body functioning under the Multi-state Cooperative societies Act, 1984. TRIFED now function as a „market developer“ for tribal products and the service provider to its member federations. It is now striving to provide economic benefits to a large number of this unorganized section of the society. It is now engaged in the marketing development of tribal



products (natural and organic products, handicrafts, ratification etc.) through its own shops  
(TRIBES India)

### **Scheme for Development of Primitive Tribal Groups (PGTs)**

In view of pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literacy, declining or stagnant populations, 75 tribal communities across India have been identified and categorized as Primitive Tribal Groups. Considering the vulnerability of these groups, a central sector scheme was introduced in the year 1998-99 for the all round development of PGTs. The scheme covers housing, infrastructure development, education, health, land distribution, agriculture development, social security etc. Recently, a long term „Conservation cum-Development Plan (CCD) for PGTs has been formulated. This plan envisages the synergy between the efforts of state governments and Non-gvernmental Organisation in the PGT areas.

### **Programme for Development of Forest Villages**

Development of forest villages is another thrust area of tribal development. The planning Commission in its planning allocates large amount of money to undertake development activities for the PGTs. This development programme is implemented by the forest department. Special emphasis under this programme is given in converting the forest villages into revenue or earning villages.

### **LAMPS**

The Large-sized Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) were established in tribal areas for providing subsidized loans to the tribal people. Through these societies tribals are supplied with improved seeds, modern agricultural equipments chemical fertilizers, pesticides etc. These societies also strive to relieve tribals from the cruel exploitation of middle men, contractors and money lenders.

**Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations (TDCCs) and Forest Development Corporations (FDCs)** are the initiatives of some state governments including Odisha to facilitate the marketing of tribal produces with a view to ensure remunerative price to the primary producers / collectors. **TDCC facilitates** to sale of these products through it's exclusive outlets, named as "Tribal World" at strategic locations. In Odisha The MFP & SAP products are sold in the brand name of "ÄDISHA" & the handicraft and handloom items are designated as "Tribes Odisha".

### **Modified Area Development Approach (MADA)**

The Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was evolved with a view to bringing the tribal population living outside Tribal Sub Plan areas under the fold of integrated approach to development. It adjusts finance from SCA for implementation of ITDA type income generating and infrastructure development schemes through the Community Development Blocks.

## **Cluster Approach**

The Cluster approach is adopted for contiguous areas outside the Tribal Sub Plan area having a population of 5,000 or more, of which more than 50% are Tribals. Different community benefit oriented schemes and individual benefit oriented schemes on the same pattern as in ITDAs are implemented for the benefit of the tribal households living in the clusters.

## **Dispersed Tribal Development Project (DTDP)**

Tribal population dispersed throughout the country and living in areas outside ITDA, MADA, Cluster and Micro Project areas are covered under the Dispersed Tribal Development Project (DTDP) and assisted with beneficiary oriented schemes. The Programme is being implemented by the State Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribes Development Finance Co-operative Corporation in many states in India.

## **Encouragement of Craft and Cottage Industries**

Tribal people are known for their skill in craft and cottage industries using forest based products. Considering their association in craft and cottage industries, encouragement is given through financial assistance, suitable infrastructure and incentives to improve the existing fields of craft and cottage industries for their development. Silk industries in Bengal, Wax industries in the tribal belts of West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha are some the examples.

## **Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana**

This scheme was launched on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It aims at improving the infrastructure and human development indices of the tribal population in the country. The scheme envisages allotting Rs. 10 crore to each block with a tribal population of more than 33% of the total population of the said block. The scheme is being initiated on a pilot basis in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Telengana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharastra. The Vanabandhu Kalyan Yojana will focus on convergence of different Central and State schemes of development with an outcome approach in the aforementioned states.

## **Programmes for Educational Promotion**

### **i) Girls' Boys' Hostels for Scheduled Tribes**

The scheme of Girls' Hostels, which started in the Third Plan, is a useful instrument of spreading education among ST Girls, whose literacy still stands at 34.76% as per 2001

census as against the general female literacy of 54.28%. Under the scheme, Central assistance is

given to States/UTs for construction of new hostel buildings and/or extension of existing hostels. In this scheme the cost of the construction of the hostel building is equally shared between the Centre and the State in ratio of 50:50. In case of UTs, the Central Government bears the entire cost of the building. The cost of construction is based on the State PWD schedule of rates or local CPWD schedule of rates, whichever is lower. Maintenance of the hostel is the responsibility of the concerned States/UTs. The number of seats in a hostel is upto 100. The hostels are for ST girls primary, middle, secondary, college and university. In the same line of Girls' Hostels, boys' hostels are also constructed for the educational promotion of scheduled caste boys. The objectives, terms and conditions as well as the pattern of assistance of this Scheme are same as that of the scheme for Girls' Hostels. The scheme is in operation since 1989-90. The scheme of Boys' hostels has been merged with scheme of girls' hostels in the Xth plan

## **ii) Establishment of Ashram School in Tribal Sub-Plan Area**

The scheme of Ashram Schools was launched in 1990-91 with the objective to extend facilities like establishment of residential schools for STs in an environment conducive to learning to increase the literacy rates among the tribal students and to bring them at par with other population of the country. The funding for the scheme to the State is done on matching (50:50) basis, while cent percent assistance is given to UTs.

## **iii) Strengthening Education among Scheduled Tribe girls in low Literacy Districts**

It is a gender scheme of the Ministry. The scheme aims to bridge the gap in literacy levels between the general female population and tribal women, through facilitating 100% enrolment of tribal girls in the identified Districts or Blocks, more particularly in naxal affected areas and in areas inhabited by Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs), and reducing drop-outs at the elementary level by creating the required ambience for education. The scheme recognises the fact that improvement of the literacy rate of tribal girls is essential to enable them to participate effectively in and benefit from, socio-economic development.

The scheme covers 54 identified districts in 12 States and 1 Union Territory where the ST population is 25% or more, and ST female literacy rate is below 35% or its fractions, as per 2001 census. In addition, any other tribal block in a district, other than aforesaid 54 identified districts, which has scheduled tribal populations 25% or above, and tribal female literacy rate below 35% or its fractions, as per 2001 census, are also covered. The scheme also covers PTG areas and gives priority to areas affected by naxalism. The scheme is implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and autonomous societies of the State Governments/Union Territory.

The scheme primarily envisages the running and maintenance of hostels linked with schools running under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or other schemes of Education Department. Where such schooling facilities are not available, the scheme has provision for establishing a complete educational complex with residential and schooling facility. The scheme has provision for tuitions, incentives and periodical awards to encourage the ST girls. The

scheme does not

provide and construction cost. The scheme prescribes fixed financial norms. The scheme also envisages the establishment of District Education Support Agency (DESA), which would be a non-government organization or a federation of non-governmental organizations, for varied functions like ensuring 100% enrolment, reducing drops outs, arrangement of preventive health education, monitoring the performance of NGOs, etc.

#### **iv) Free Coaching for Scheduled Tribe Candidates**

The scheduled tribe candidates coming from deprived families and disadvantaged environment find it difficult to compete with those coming from a socially and economically advantageous background. To promote a more level playing field, and give ST candidates a better chance to succeed in competitive examinations, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs supports a scheme for coaching for disadvantaged ST candidates in quality coaching institutions to enable them to successfully compete in examinations for jobs/admission to professional courses.

The scheme supports free coaching to scheduled tribe students for various competitive examinations viz. Civil Services/State Civil Services/Other Exams conducted by UPSE like CDS, NDA, etc./professional courses like Medical, Engg., Business Administration/Banking/Staff selection Commission/Railway Recruitment Boards/insurance companies, etc. The financial norms of the scheme have been revised during 2007-08. The scheme covers coaching fees, monthly stipend @ Rs.1000/- per ST student per month and boarding/lodging charges for outstation students @ Rs.2000/- per ST student per month for the period of coaching.

#### **v) Post-Matric Scholarship to Students belonging to SCs/STs**

The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to students belonging to Scheduled Tribes pursuing Post-Matriculation recognized courses in recognized institutions. The scheme covers professional, technical as well as non-professional and non-technical courses at various levels and the scheme also includes correspondence courses including distance and continuing education. The scheme is implemented by the State Government and UT Administrations, which receive 100% Central Assistance over and above the committed liability which is required to be borne by them from their own budgetary provisions. The Scheme is in operation since 1944-45.

The value of the existing scholarship includes maintenance allowance, reader charges of blind students, study tour charges, thesis typing/printing charges, book allowance to students pursuing correspondence course and compulsory non-refundable fees charges by the educational institutions. The maintenance allowance for hostlers is between Rs. 235/- p.m. to 740/- and for day scholars from Rs. 140/- p.m. to Rs. 330/- p.m., depending upon the level of courses. The prescribed annual income ceiling of both the parents/guardians, under the scheme is up to Rs. 1,08,000/-, as applicable w.e.f. 1-4- 2007. The income ceiling has been linked with the consumer price index for industrial workers.

#### **vi) Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme**

This Scheme was introduced in the year 2005-06. Under the Scheme, fellowship is provided to ST students for pursuing higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph. D. The maximum duration of



a fellowship is 5 years. Every year 667 fellowships are to be provided to ST students. The scheme is being implemented by University Grant Commission (UGC) on behalf of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Any ST student who has passed post-graduation from a UGC recognized University can apply under the scheme.

#### **vii) Scheme of Top Class Education for ST Students**

Ministry of Tribal Affairs has introduced a new Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of Top Class Education for ST Students from the academic year 2007-08 with the objective of encouraging meritorious ST students for pursuing studies at degree and post degree level in any of the identified institutes. There are 127 institutes identified under the scheme in both the Government and private sectors covering the field of management, medicine, engineering, law and commercial courses. Each institute has been allocated five awards, with a ceiling of total 635 scholarships per year. The family income of the ST students from all the sources shall not exceed Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum.

The ST students will be awarded scholarship covering full tuition fee and other non-refundable dues in respect of Government/Government-funded institutions. However, there will be a ceiling of Rs.2.00 lakh per annum per student for private sector institutions and Rs.3.72 lakh per annum per student for the private sector flying clubs for Commercial Pilot Training. In addition to the above, the scholarship also provides for (i) living expenses @ Rs.2200/- per month per student subject to actuals, (ii) books and stationery @ Rs.3000/- per annum per student and (iii) cost of a latest computer system along with its accessories limited to Rs.45000/- as one time assistance during the course.

#### **viii) Vocational Training in Tribal Areas**

The main aim of this scheme is to develop the skill of the tribal youth in order to enable them to gain employment/self employment opportunities. This scheme was introduced in 1992-93 and is being implemented through the State Governments/UT Administrations, Institutions or Organizations set up by Government as autonomous bodies, educational and other institutions like local bodies and cooperative societies and Non-Governmental Organizations. The capacity of each vocational training center is 100 with hostel facility for 50. Each center may cater to five vocational courses in traditional or other skills depending upon the employment potential of the area. Each tribal boy/girl is trained in two trades of his/her choice, the course in each trade being for duration of three months. Each trainee is attached at the end of six months to a Master Craftsman in a semi-urban area for a period of six months to learn his skill by practical experience, the practical experience in each trade being of three months duration. There is provision for monthly stipend and for raw material for the trainees.

#### **ix) National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Tribes**

The Scheme provides financial assistance to meritorious students belonging to STs for pursuing higher studies abroad in specified fields of Master level courses, Ph.D. and Post-

Doctoral research programmes, in the field of Engineering, Technology and Science.  
The

selected candidates are given cost of tuition and other educational fees charged by the foreign university etc., maintenance and other grants along with travel expenses. In addition passage grants are also available to candidates belonging to ST who are in receipt of merit scholarship for postgraduate studies, research or training abroad (excluding attending seminars, workshops, conferences) from a foreign government/organization or under any other scheme where cost of passage is not provided. Scheme of NOS has been revised in 2007-08 as Plan scheme. 15 awards would be sanctioned to ST students per year.

**xii) Book Bank for SC and ST students:** This scheme is intended to provide SC/ST students access to the latest textbooks on medicine, veterinary, engineering, agriculture and polytechnic courses which require expensive books. A group of two students are provided one set of textbooks.

**xiii) Upgradation of Merit of ST Students**

The objective of the scheme is to upgrade the merit of ST students by providing them remedial and special coaching in classes IX to XII. While remedial coaching aims at removing deficiencies in various subjects, special coaching is provided with a view to prepare the students for competitive examinations for seeking entry into professional courses like Engineering and Medical disciplines. The scheme provides for 100% central assistance to the States/UT's. A package grant of Rs. 15,000/- per student per year is provided and the State/UTs are not required to bear any financial burden. Besides the amount of scholarship, students with disabilities are also eligible for the following assistance:

- (a) Reader Allowance of Rs. 100 per month for blind students in classes IX to XII.
- (b) Transport allowance of Rs. 50 per month for the disabled student if such a student does not reside in the hostel, which is within the premises of educational institution. The disability as per the said Act is defined as blindness, low-vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation and mental illness.
- (c) Special pay of Rs. 100 per month is admissible to any employee of the hostel willing to extend help to a severely orthopedically handicapped student residing in a hostel managed by the educational or by the State Govt./Union Territory Admn. who may need the assistance of a helper.
- (d) Escort allowance of Rs. 50 per month for severely handicapped day scholar students with lower extremity disability.
- (e) Allowance of Rs. 100 per month towards extra coaching to mentally retarded and mentally ill students in classes IX to XII.

The provisions proposed in (a) to (e) above, also apply to leprosy cured students.

**xiv) Special Medical Facilities**

Tribal people are found to be more faithful to the traditional means of health care like witchcraft, treatment through roots etc. than the modern means of treatment. In view of

this,

various medical facilities are being provided for the tribes. In some places, hospitals are established and mobile hospital services have been provided. Besides, many preventive and curative measures are taken to combat the tribal diseases like Malaria, Leprosy, Forest fever, Monkey fever, Typhoid, Smallpox and skin diseases. Also Medical Camps are organized to enable the tribals to realize the importance of modern medical facilities.

**xv).Programmes under Fifth and Sixth Schedules:**

The Fifth Schedule applies to an overwhelming majority of India's tribes in nine States, while the Sixth Schedule covers areas that are settled in the northeastern States bordering China and Myanmar. Bastar district in Chhattisgarh is governed by the Fifth Schedule, but it wants to move into the Sixth Schedule.

The Sixth Schedule gives tribal communities considerable autonomy; The States of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram are autonomous regions under the Sixth Schedule. The role of the Governor and the State are subject to significant limitations, with greater powers devolved locally. The District Council and the Regional Council under the Sixth Schedule have real power to make laws, possibility on the various legislative subjects, receiving grants-in-aids from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the costs of schemes for development, health care, education, roads and regulatory powers to state control. The mandate towards Devolution, deconcentration and divestment determines the protection of their customs, better economic development and most importantly ethnic security.

The Fifth Schedule on the other hand fails because it has never been applied. Recent parliamentary moves to provide greater autonomy within the Fifth Schedule have not had the desired results. The 1996 PESA or Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act should have been a landmark for the tribal communities. It mandates the state to devolve certain political, administrative and fiscal powers to local governments elected by the communities. This became exclusive to the Fifth Schedule areas, to promote tribal self-government. PESA was meant to benefit not only the majority of tribals but also extended to cover minority non-tribal communities. It guarantees tribes half of the seats in the elected local governments and the seat of the chairperson at all hierarchical levels of the Panchayat system.

Thus, numbers of well thought programmes are operative in the task of tribal development in our country.

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## **5.4. Special Programmes of Other Backward Classes**

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Other Backward Class (OBC) is a term generally used in India to refer to groups which are educationally and socially disadvantaged. It is one of several official classifications of the population of India, along with SCs and STs. The OBCs were found to comprise 52% of the country's population as per the Commission report of 1980.

In the Indian Constitution, OBCs are described as “socially educationally backward classes”, and the Government of India is committed to ensure their social and educational development through various welfare measures. The list of OBCs maintained by National Commission for Backward Classes under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is dynamic, with castes and communities being added or removed depending on social, educational and economic factors.

Prior to 1985, the affairs of the Backward Classes were looked after by the Backward Classes Cell in the Ministry of Home Affairs. A separate Ministry of Welfare was established in 1985 and was renamed in 1998 as the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** which is responsible to attend to matters relating to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs. The Backward Classes Division of the Ministry looks after the policy, planning and implementation of programmes relating to social and economic empowerment of OBCs. It also looks after matters relating to two institutions set up for the welfare of OBCs namely, the **National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC)** and the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**.

### **Constitutional Mandate**

Under **Article 340** of the Indian Constitution, it is obligatory for the government to promote the welfare of the OBCs.

The president may by order appoint a commission, consisting of such persons as he thinks, fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the union or any state to remove such difficulties and as to improve „their condition.

Regarding the legislative measure, The National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 is the only popular Act that has been brought into effect so far for the welfare of OBCs.

**Special Welfare  
Measures/Programmes**

The difficulties in proper identification and demarcation of the Other Backward Classes in India has led to confusion among the development planners and the government in grafting special comprehensive and appropriate welfare programmes for the OBCs. Adequate special programmes have not been made for the welfare of the major population. Some sporadic measures have been made for the upliftment of the OBCs that can briefly discussed under the following lines:

### **Appointment of Kalelkar Commission**

The First Backward Classes Commission was established by a presidential order on 29 January 1953 under the chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar, and submitted its report on 30 March 1955. It had prepared a list of 2,399 backward castes or communities for the entire country, of which 837 had been classified as the “most backward”. Some of the most notable recommendations of the commission were: 1. Undertaking caste-wise enumeration of population in the census of 1961; 2. Relating social backwardness of a class to its low position in the traditional caste hierarchy of Indian society; 3. Treating all women as a class as “backward”; 4. Reservation of 70 per cent seats in all technical and professional institutions for qualified students of backward classes; 5. Reservation of vacancies in all government services and local bodies for other backward classes.

The commission in its final report recommended “caste as the criteria” to determine backwardness. However, the report was not accepted by the government, which feared that the backward classes excluded from the caste and communities selected by the commission might not be considered, and those in most need would be swamped by the multitudes, thus receiving insufficient attention.

### **Appointment of Mandal Commission**

A commission was set up to conduct a study on OBCs in January 1979. The commission popularly known as the Mandal Commission, its chairman being B. P. Mandal, submitted a report in December 1980 that stated that the population of OBCs, which includes both Hindus and non-Hindus, was around 52 per cent of the total population according to the Mandal Commission.

However, this finding was criticized based on the ground of fictitiousness of data. There is substantial debate over the exact number of OBCs in India but it is taken for granted that the OBCs constitute a sizeable portion of Indian population. But only 27 percent of reservation was recommended for OBCs owing to the legal constraint by the order of the Supreme Court that the total quantum of reservation should not exceed 50 percent. States which have already introduced reservation for OBC



exceeding 27 per cent will not be affected by this recommendation. With this general recommendation the commission proposed the following overall scheme of reservation for OBC:

- ❖ Candidates belonging to OBC recruited on the basis of merit in an open competition should not be adjusted against their reservation quota of 27 per cent.
- ❖ The above reservation should also be made applicable to promotion quota at all levels.
- ❖ Reserved quota remaining unfilled should be carried forward for a period of three years and de-reserved thereafter.
- ❖ Relaxation in the upper age limit for direct recruitment should be extended to the candidates of OBC in the same manner as done in the case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
- ❖ A roster system for each category of posts should be adopted by the concerned authorities in the same manner as presently done in respect of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe candidates.

These recommendations in total are applicable to all recruitment to public sector undertakings, both under the central and state governments as well as to nationalised banks. All private sector undertakings which have received financial assistance from the government in one form or other should also be obliged to recruit personnel on the aforesaid basis. All universities and affiliated colleges should also be covered by the above scheme of reservation. To promote literacy the following measures were suggested:

- An intensive time-bound programme for adult education should be launched in selected pockets with high concentration of OBC population.
- Residential schools should be set up in these areas for backward class students to provide a climate especially conducive to serious studies. All facilities in these schools including board and lodging should be provided free of cost to attract students from poor and backward class homes.
- Separate hostels for OBC students with above facilities will have to be provided.
- Vocational training was considered imperative.
- It was recommended that seats should be reserved for OBC students in all scientific, technical and professional institutions run by the central as well as state governments. The quantum of reservation should be the same as in the government services, i.e. 27 per cent.

### **Supreme Court verdict**

On 10 April 2008 the Supreme Court of India upheld the government's initiative of 27% OBC quotas in government-funded institutions. The Court has categorically reiterated its prior stand that those considered part of the "Creamy layer" should be excluded by government-funded institutions and by private institutions from the scope of the reservation policy. The verdict produced mixed reactions from supporting and opposing quarters.

### **Special Programmes for OBCs**

**i) Pre-matric scholarships**

Experience shows that children of OBCs cannot go to schools as they often fail to afford the minimum cost of study and also have to provide a helping hand to their parents in traditional occupation or otherwise supplement the family income. It is considered that a scheme of Pre-matric Scholarship would be helpful in spreading education amongst such children especially amongst the girl child of weaker sections. A scheme of Pre-matric Scholarship for the benefit of children belonging to OBCs has been formulated with the object in view.

**ii) Post-matric scholarships**

The Government of India has been implementing the Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship to students belonging to OBCs since 1998. It aims to provide financial assistance to students belonging to OBCs for pursuing post-matriculation courses through recognized institutions.

**iii) Construction of hostel for OBC boys and girls**

The Centrally-sponsored Scheme for the Construction of Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls is being implemented since 1998-99 to address the problem of educational backwardness of OBCs. Very often, students from rural areas, especially those belonging to the weaker sections, discontinue their studies because of lack of secondary schools and colleges nearby, non-availability of adequate hostel facilities at a reasonable cost. Therefore, the Scheme was initiated with a view to facilitate continuation of education by students belonging to OBCs, especially those hailing from rural and remote areas and from poor families. The funding pattern for construction of hostels under the scheme provided for cost sharing between the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 50:50, with 100% funding to state and UTs and Central Government Institutions like Central Universities.

**National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC)**

NBCFDC is an Apex Corporation, under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment which provides financial assistance to the members of Backward Classes through State Channelizing Agencies. People living below double the poverty line can obtain loan assistance for their self employment ventures in the following sectors:-

- Agriculture & Allied Activities
- Small Business/Artisan & Traditional Occupation
- Transport Sector & Service Sector
- Technical and Professional Trades/Courses
- The NBCFDC schemes are implemented in all the States having population of Backward Classes as notified by Central/State Govt. from time to time.

### **Assistance to Voluntary Organizations**

The programme of giving grant-in-aid to Voluntary Organizations for the Backward Classes welfare has been taken up by the Govt. of India during the Ninth Five Year Plan. The main purpose behind the scheme is to improve the educational and socio-economic conditions of these communities through voluntary efforts.

The quantum of assistance shall be determined in each case on merit. The Government of India may, however, meet 90% of the approved expenditure on selected matters. The remaining expenditure is to be met by the concerned voluntary organisation from its own sources.

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## **5.5. Administrative Set Up at the Central and State Level**

### **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is the nodal Ministry to oversee the interests of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes including other members of the society. Though the primary responsibility for promotion of interests of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward classes rests with all the Central Ministries in the area of their

operations and the State Governments, the Ministry complements their efforts by way of interventions in critical

sectors through specifically tailored schemes. Efforts made by State Governments and Central Ministries for protecting and promoting the interests of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes are also monitored.

In the beginning, the responsibility of welfare of the Scheduled Caste and Other backward classes including other needy people was vested to the welfare Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs named. Then a separate ministry was created in 1985, named Ministry of Welfare from. Since September 1999 it has been renamed as Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Since then this ministry has been acting as the nodal ministry for decision making, planning and implementing various special programmes relating to the welfare of the weaker sections in the country.

The Ministry is comprised of several divisions with special responsibilities in different fields. Along with other machineries, some special machineries are created under various divisions to undertake welfare measures for the SCs and OBCs.

### **1. Scheduled Caste Welfare Division**

Under this division, there many machineries have been constituted to look after the welfare of the Scheduled Caste people in India such as:

#### **i) National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC)**

National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC) is an Indian constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. Earlier, there was a single commission for looking after the welfare needs of both scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people. But Consequent upon the Constitution (Eighty-Ninth Amendment) Act, 2003 the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes has been replaced by (1) National Commission for Scheduled Castes and (2) National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.

The first National Commission for Scheduled Castes was constituted on 2004 with Suraj Bhan as the Chairperson.

The Second National Commission for Scheduled Castes in series was constituted on May 2007 with Buta Singh as the Chairperson.

The Third National Commission for Scheduled Castes has been constituted on October 2010 with P.L.Punia as the Chairperson.

#### **Organisation:**

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes functions from headquarters located at New Delhi and from 12 State offices of the Commission located in Agartala, Thiruvananthapuram, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Guwahati, Chennai, Hyderabad, Patna and Pune.

There are four wings at Headquarters:-

- (a) Administration and Coordination Wing;
- (b) Service Safeguards Wing;
- (c) Atrocities and Protection of Civil Rights Wing; and
- (d) Economic and Social development Wing.

### **Functions**

The following are the functions of the commission:

- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes under this Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Castes;
- To participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State;
- To present to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
- To make in such reports recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for the effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes; and
- To discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Scheduled Castes as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

### **NCSC at the state Level**

The State Offices of the Commission work as „eyes and ears“ of the Commission. They keep a watch on the formulation of policy and issue of guidelines relating to the welfare of Scheduled Castes in the respective States/UTs under their jurisdiction and keep the Commission Headquarters informed about the developments periodically. Policy decisions taken by any State Government/UT Administration affecting the interest of the Scheduled

Castes are brought to the

notice of the concerned authorities for necessary modifications. The State officers are required to liaise with the State/UT Administration for taking up evaluation and 20 other studies to assess the working of various development programmes implemented for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and their impact on ameliorating the socio-economic condition of the target groups. The findings of the studies are brought to the notice of the concerned State Government for taking remedial measures. The main observations are highlighted in the Commission's Report. When asked whether offices of NCSC in different States are sufficient enough to cater to the needs of the SC population of the whole country and whether the staff provided in these offices is adequate, it has been stated that keeping in view the Scheduled Castes population of the country a proposal for creating eight new Regional Offices and upgradation of four Regional Offices of the Commission is under consideration. The staff in the Regional Offices seems to be adequate.

## **ii). Babu Jagjivan Ram National Foundation**

Babu Jagjivan Ram National Foundation was established on 14th March, 2008 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, in the memory of Babu Jagjivan Ramji, to propagate his ideology and philosophy of life and missions, his vision to create a casteless and classless society, eradication of untouchability and continuous struggle for achieving social justice for the dalit, downtrodden and weaker sections who do not get ample opportunities to stand up and lead a dignified life in the society. It is a Registered Society under the Societies Registration Act 1860 with one time corpus grant of Rs. 50 crores. It is located at Jeevan Prakash Building, 9th Floor, K.G. Marg, New Delhi-110001. The main Aims and Objects of the Foundation are as under:-

- To propagate the ideology and philosophy of life and mission of Babu Jagjivan Ram.
- To collect, acquire, maintain and preserve the personal papers and other historical material pertaining to Babu Jagjivan Ram.
- To encourage and promote study and research on his life and work.
- To publish, sell and distribute books, papers, pamphlets and information in pursuance of the objectives of the Foundation.
- To acquire, preserve and protect places connected with him and raise memorials.
- To propagate his ideals and memory through print and electronic media by promoting artists belonging to dalit community who are not getting ample opportunity to come up.
- To encourage and promote dalit artists through specially designed development schemes for their social, cultural, educational and economic development.
- To implement special schemes for removal of untouchability and caste based prejudices in the society.
- To undertake and implement various, schemes and programmes assigned from time to time by the Central and State Govts.



- To organize birth and death anniversaries and other commemorative events of the life of Babu Jagjivan Ram.

### **iii). Ambedkar Foundation**

The Centenary Celebration Committee of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar headed by the then Prime Minister of India decided to set up Dr. Ambedkar Foundation to carry out the programmes and activities for furthering of Dr Ambedkar's ideology and spread his message of social justice to the masses not only in the country but also abroad. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation was established by the Government of India under the aegis of the Ministry of Welfare (now Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) on March 24, 1992 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Foundation has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing administering and carrying on the important and long-term schemes and programmes identified during the Centenary Celebrations of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The main objectives of the Foundation inter alia include implementation of programmes and activities for furthering the ideology and message of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar among the masses in India as well as abroad. The Foundation has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing, administering and carrying on the important and long term schemes and programmes identified during the Centenary Celebrations of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

### **Organization**

The foundation is basically composed of the following functionaries at the national level:

1. Chairman (Generally the Union Minister (SJ & E))
2. Secretary
3. Director
4. Other sub-ordinates at the national and state levels

### **Functions:**

The activities and programmes currently pursued by the Foundation are as

below:-i). Setting up of Dr. Ambedkar National Public Library at Janpath.

ii). Arranging Dr. Ambedkar National Award for Social Understanding and Upliftment of Weaker Sections.

iii). Institutionalizing Dr. Ambedkar International Award for Social Change.

**v) National Safai Karmacharis Finance and Development Corporation**

National Safai Karmacharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) provides concessional financial assistance to Safai Karmacharis and their dependents for establishment of income generating and viable projects, as an alternate means of vocation.

The main objective of the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis is to study, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programmes and schemes relating to the social and economic rehabilitation of safai karmacharis and make recommendations to the Central Government for better coordination and implementation of schemes/programmes particularly meant for the welfare of the scavengers in our society.

**vi) National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC):**

It extends concessional financial assistance to the State SC/ST Finance and Development Corporation (which are its agencies) to SCs/STs for income generating activities. It also provides grants to channeling agencies for imparting skill and entrepreneurial oriented training for SC/ST youth through reputed training institutions. The main function of the corporation includes

1. Financing income generating schemes for the SCs through the State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) and other recognized institutions nominated by the respective State /UT Governments.
2. Providing Micro-Credit Finance to the target group through the SCAs.
3. Providing Educational Loan to the eligible scheduled caste students for pursuing full-time professional/technical educational courses in India or abroad.
4. Providing grants for skill development programmes through the SCAs.
5. Providing advisory services to target group and SCAs.
6. Upgrading the skill levels of the SCAs.

**2. Backward class Division**

Under the Backward Classes Bureau, the Ministry is mandated to look after the welfare of Backward Classes, by implementing the schemes for Backward Classes. The Ministry also deals with the National Backward Classes Commission (NCBC) which was set up in 1993. The Commission tenders advice to the Ministry in respect of castes, sub-castes, synonyms and communities for inclusion in/from the central list of Other Backward Classes.

Backward Classes means such backward classes of citizens other than the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as may be specified by the Central Government in the lists prepared by the Government of India from time to time for purposes of making provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of backward classes of citizens which, in the opinion of that Government, are not adequately represented in the services under the Government of India and any local or other authority within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India.

The affairs of Backward Classes were looked after by the Backward Classes Cell (BCC) in the Ministry of Home Affairs prior to 1985. With the creation of a separate Ministry of Welfare in 1985

(renamed as

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 25.5.1998), the matters relating to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Minorities were transferred to the new Ministry. Consequent upon the creation of two separate ministries for Scheduled Tribes and Minorities, the subject matter pertaining to these two categories were transferred to the respective Ministries. The Backward Classes Division in the Ministry looks after the policy, planning and implementation of programmes relating to social and economic empowerment of OBCs. It also looks after matters relating to two institutions set up for the welfare of OBCs namely, the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

#### **i). National Commission for Backward Classes**

The National Commission for Backward Classes in India was set up by the government of the country on 14 August 1993, as per the recommendation of the Supreme Court under the provisions of National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 (Act No. 27 of 1993). In the Mandal case judgment, the Supreme Court passed the orders for the establishment of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. This led to the setting up of the Commission as a permanent body at the Center, in India. In the years 1997 and 2000, the National Commission for Backward Classes has undergone reconstruction twice. It is responsible of administering the special welfare programmes of the Other Backward Classes in the country.

#### **Organisation**

The commission has five members: a Chairperson who is or has been a judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court; a social scientist; two persons, who have special knowledge in matters relating to backward classes; and a Member-Secretary, who is or has been an officer of the Central Government in the rank of a Secretary to the Government of India. Their term is of Three years.

The National Commission for Backward Classes, India follows a specific organizational structure. This structure includes 8 departments under the Chairman of the Commission. These departments are listed below:

- The Administrative Division
- The Research Division
- The Directorate
- The Research Officers
- The Under Secretary
- The Section Officer
- The Research Wing.

**Functions and Powers of the Commission:**

The Commission during its tenure is entrusted to perform the following functions:

- (1) The Commission shall examine requests for inclusion of any class of citizens as a backward class in the lists and hear complaints of over-inclusion or under-inclusion of any backward class in such lists and tender such advice to the Central Government as it deems appropriate.
- (2) The advice of the Commission shall ordinarily be binding upon the Central Government.
- 3) Trying a suit and in particular, in respect of the following matters, namely:-- (a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath; (b) requiring the discovery and production of any document; (c) receiving evidence on affidavits; (d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court of office; (e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents; and (f) any other matter which may be prescribed.
- 4) Periodic revision of lists by the Central Government-- (1) The Central Government may at any time, and shall, at the expiration of ten years from the coming into force of this Act and every succeeding period of ten years thereafter, undertake revision of the lists with a view to excluding from such lists those classes who have ceased to be backward classes or for including in such lists new backward classes. (2) The Central Government shall, while undertaking any revision referred to in subsection (1), consult the Commission.
- 5) Consideration of inclusions in and exclusions from the lists of communities notified as backward for the purpose of job reservations and tenders the needful advice to the Central Government as per Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993.

#### **State level**

Similarly, the states have also constituted commissions for BC's. As of 24 July 2014 over two thousand groups have been listed as OBCs. Both the National Commission for Backward Classes and National Commission for Scheduled Castes have the same powers as a Civil Court.

#### **ii). National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)**

**National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)** is a Govt. of India Undertaking under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. NBCFDC was incorporated under Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956 on 13th January 1992 as a Company not for profit with an objective to promote economic and developmental activities for the benefit of Backward Classes and to assist the poorer section of these classes in skill development and self employment ventures. NBCFDC provides financial assistance through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) nominated by the State Governments/UTs. NBCFDC also provides Micro Financing through SCAs/ Self Help Groups (SHGs) . The Corporation can assist a wide range of income generating activities to assist the poorer section of these classes in skill development and self-employment ventures under following broad sectors :

1. Agriculture and Allied Activities
2. Small Business
3. Artisan and Traditional Occupation
4. Technical and Professional Trades/Courses
5. Transport and Service Sector etc.

### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**

The Ministry was set up in 1999 after the bifurcation of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with the objective of providing more focused approach on the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the most underprivileged of the Indian Society, in a coordinated and planned manner. Before the formation of the Ministry, tribal affairs were handled by different Ministries as formulated by the subsequent governments.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal Ministry for overall policy, planning and coordination of programmes for development of ST's. To this end, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has undertaken activities that follow from the subjects allocated under the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961. These include:

- 1) Social security and social insurance to the Scheduled Tribes;
  - 2) Tribal Welfare: Tribal welfare planning, project formulation, research, evaluation, statistics and training;
  - 3) Promotion and development of voluntary efforts on tribal welfare;
  - 4) Scheduled Tribes, including scholarship to students belonging to such tribes;
  - 5) Development of Scheduled Tribes
- 5A) All matters including legislation relating to the rights of forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes on forest lands.

### **The Role**



The programmes and schemes of the Ministry are intended to support and supplement, through financial assistance, the efforts of other Central Ministries, the State Governments and voluntary organizations, and to fill critical gaps taking into account the situation of STs. The Primary responsibility for promoting the interests of Scheduled Tribes thus rests with all the Central Ministries. The Ministry supplements their efforts by way of various developmental interventions in critical sectors through specially tailored schemes. These, comprising schemes for economic, educational and social development, are administered by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and implemented through the State Government/Union Territory Administrations and voluntary organizations.

## **Organization**

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is functioning under the overall guidance of the Union Minister Tribal Affairs. The Union minister is assisted by the Minister of State for Tribal Affairs. The Ministry is headed by Secretary and assisted by two Joint Secretaries, one Deputy Director General (State) and one Economic Adviser. Joint Secretary and Financial Adviser have been assisting Ministry in the financial matters. The Chief Controller of Accounts is controlling the accounts matters. The Ministry is organized into Divisions/Branches and Sections/Units. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has a sanctioned strength of 135 employees including 5 posts of (P&AO) and a working strength of 103. There are 41 Group „A“ posts, 58 Group „B“ posts, 36 Group „C“ posts which includes 16 formerly Group „D“ posts which have now become Group C posts as per Sixth Central Pay Commissions recommendations. The organizational chart of the Ministry seen in this website

## **Administration**

The establishment and general administration matters of the Ministry and that of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) requiring Ministry's approval are handled in the Administration Division. In addition, establishment matters of officers appointed under Central Staffing Schemes for the Department and against ex-cadre posts of this Ministry and also posts belonging to other Central Services i.e. Indian Economic Service cadre, various Statistical cadres, etc. are being administered in this Division.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs had been facing severe crunch of space since its inception. Some divisions viz., Research & Media, Plan and Miscellaneous, Statistics and Cooperative Marketing & Regulation Divisions have been located in August Kranti Bhawan at Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi. Hon'ble MOS (TA)'s office is located at Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi.

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes functions from its Headquarters at New Delhi and from the Regional Offices of the Commission located in six States.

There are following six Units at the Hqrs.:

1. Administration
2. Coordination Unit
3. Research Unit-I
4. Research Unit - II
5. Research Unit-III
6. Research Unit-IV

The main functional units are Research Unit-I, Research Unit-II, Research Unit-III, Research Unit-IV, which deal with all matters pertaining to socio-economic and educational development, service safeguards and atrocities in relation to STs as per distribution of the Ministries/ Departments (including CPSEs and other Organisation/ Offices under their administrative control) and the States and UTs among these four Research Units.

Several National and state level machineries have been constituted for under the aegis of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for undertaking welfare activities for the STs. Some of those machineries are worth mentioning here.

**i) National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)**

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes is an Indian constitutional body was established through Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003. On the 89th Amendment of the Constitution coming into force on 19 February 2004, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has been set up under Article 338A on bifurcation of erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution. By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely- (i) the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), and (ii) the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

The First commission constituted on 2004 with Kunwar Singh as the

chairperson. The second commission constituted on 2007 with Urmila Singh as the Chairperson.

The third Commission constituted on 2010 with Rameshwar Oraon as the Chairperson.

### **Organization**

The Commission comprises a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three full-time Members (including one lady Member). The term of all the Members of the Commission is three years from the date of assumption of charge.

### **Function**

The following are the functions of the commission:

- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Tribes;
- To participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State;
- To present to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
- To make in such reports, recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes, and
- To discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

### **State Level**

There are 6 Regional offices of the National Commission for Scheduled tribes which work as „eyes and ears“ of the Commission. They keep a watch on the formulation of policy and issue of guidelines relating to the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in the States/UTs and keep the Commission's Headquarters informed about the developments periodically. Policy decisions taken by any State Government/UT Administration affecting the interests of the Scheduled Tribes are brought to the notice of the concerned authorities for necessary action.

### **ii) National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC):**

NSCFDC extends concessional financial assistance to the State ST Finance and Development Corporation (which are its agencies) to STs for income generating activities. It also provides grants to

channeling agencies for imparting skill and entrepreneurial oriented training for SC/ST youth through reputed training institutions. The main function of the corporation includes:

- Financing income generating schemes for the STs through the State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) and other recognized institutions nominated by the respective State /UT Governments.
- Providing Micro-Credit Finance to the target group through the SCAs.
- Providing Educational Loan to the eligible scheduled caste students for pursuing full-time professional/technical educational courses in India or abroad.
- Providing grants for skill development programmes through the SCAs.
- Providing advisory services to target group and SCAs.
- Upgrading the skill levels of the SCAs.

All the programmes were designed with a special view to meet the unmet needs of the weaker members of our society. These programmes have contributed towards bringing positive changes in lives of the marginalized people to a certain extent. But it is still felt that a lot more still remains to be done to give them a life at par with the other members of the society. Problems in planning, administration, implementation still looms large. So it has become imperative to revamp the programmes and gear them with more pragmatic approach for the welfare development of the weaker sections.

## **SUMMARY**

Social inequality in India is the byproduct of Hindu caste-ridden society in India. Almost 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Indian population is socially and educationally backward. Since time immemorial, Indian social system has been maintaining social and economic inequality among the people. Because of this practice some people (so called higher castes) who are advanced socially, economically and educationally exploited the so called weaker sections (backward people) that suffered from historical exploitation and went on becoming more backward and weaker with the passage of time. This section of the population is known as weaker section. Amelioration of their living condition, protection of the rights of the weaker section and provisions for their social justice has been a serious concern for all of us.

As of now, the scenario has changed. Due to spread of the idea of democracy, equality, social justice and human rights people to a large extent have come out from the nasty idea of inequality, oppression, injustice and violation of human rights. Under the auspices of the

government and non-governmental initiatives efforts are being made to reduce the gap between the stronger sections and the weaker sections. But the long established effects of the disparity are still ruling in our society. Therefore, there is a need for more intensive and organized efforts for mitigating such gaps between the weaker and the stronger. After India's achievement of independence several attempts were made to remove socio-economic imbalances existed between the backward and forward classes and to stamp out the unjust social order through various protective discrimination measures and other promotional measures. Social work in this regard is doing a tremendous job. The whole gamut of practice of social work is centered around and established on the philosophy of egalitarian society with justice and happiness for all. The weaker and deprived members of the society are the prime target of social work intervention. As a problem solving profession, Social work shares its values, principles, methods, tools and techniques for the removal of major problems of the weaker sections.

## Check Your Progress

### Section-I (Long type Questions)

a) State the need and importance of Special welfare programmes for the weaker sections in India.

Or

“Special welfare Programmes are the special needs of weaker sections in India.” Elaborate.

b) Give the detail account of special welfare programmes for the weaker members in India.

c) Write about the role and functions of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

d) Give details of the structure and function of the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

### Section-II (Short Notes)

a) NCST

b) NCSFDC

c) TRIFED

d) LAMP

## Suggested Readings

### Books and Journals:

- **Dalit in the Past and Present** G.S. Rawat
- **Untouchables in India: Raigar Movement** by Syamlal Rawat
- **“Race awareness in young children”** by Goodman N, 2nd edition. New York: Crowell Collier; 1964
- **Scheduled Tribes** by G.S. Ghurye Popular Press, Bombay
- **Administration of Social Welfare Programmes in India** by S.N. Dubey
- **Social Welfare Administration in India** by Dr. D.R. Sachdev
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes- A Socioeconomic Survey** by C. Pavatama
- **Elaya Personal Committee Report** by Government of India
- **Fair Deal for Backward Classes** by Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- **Report of the National Commission for Scheduled caste for the year 2013**
- **Report of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes for the year 2011**
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