

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

During 1931 this department was reportedly running 1,784 schools for 63,604 Depressed Class pupils. In Bengal (where the Depressed Class students found no difficulty in securing admission to the common schools) there existed 569 special schools for the backward classes in the Presidency Division, 246 special schools for the Santhals in the Burdwan Division. By 'Swaraj' Gandhi did not simply mean the liberation from foreign rule. To him it was a state of society free from injustice and exploitation. He regarded removal of untouchability as an integral part of the social, psychological and political preparation necessary for launching the struggle against the British. The most important of the above demands was the reservation of seats in the legislatures on the basis of the recognition of the minority character of the Depressed Classes. B.R. Ambedkar gave an advice to the Scheduled Castes that they should not make any compromise over the issue of their reserved seats, because adequate seats in legislatures were a further guarantee of other safeguards.

Keeping such instances happening all over India in view, Government took some steps towards removing intimidating forces at the time of elections from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh especially western Uttar Pradesh.

The Chief Election Commissioner sent letters to the Chief Ministers and Governors to make adequate "bondobust" at the sensitive areas. Instructions to the police Department were also

given the State Government acknowledged the receipt of instructions and assured to do the needful.

Another injustice was done to the Scheduled Castes by refusing them a promotion in the Class I category. When this question had come up, it was referred to the cabinet. Secretariate Department of personnel and Administrative Reforms. The situation of Scheduled Castes in Railway employment is improving. But here also the important particularly in Class I and Class II was not very hopeful. The University Grants Commission of India strongly recommended that seats in the institutions and particularly in the institutions of higher learning should be reserved for them.

Also the Government is facing the constitutional challenges, modifying the details of policy, displeasing some interests and inviting minance which is putting more stress and strain on its capability to maintain law and order.

The Seventh Five Year Plan strategy of this corporation has been centered round the beneficiary oriented schemes with focus on family as a unit. The entire strategy has been evolved for the purpose of building up a strong economic base for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families living below the poverty line. The evaluation report commands the efficiency of the method followed by the Corporation for selecting beneficiari- es for poverty alleviation programme at the grass root level. The present system of selection of beneficiaries will be continued during 1992-93. The present method followed in selection of beneficiaries will also help the financial institutions and

Government officials to weed out ineligible beneficiaries as well as unsuitable schemes and help the financial institutions to sanction schemes as soon as the schemes are sponsored to them.

The Corporation has arranged for necessary training programme for the entrepreneurs to strengthen their technical skill and develop their entrepreneurial quality like National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, Cultural Research Organisation and Directorate of evaluation, Monitoring the Man Power from time to time and reports submitted by them offer scope to the Corporation to plug the loopholes and remove the shortcomings.

As tentatively decided by the State Government, the State Plan outlays during the 8th Five Year Plan period are proposed to be stepped up over the State Plan outlay of 1991-92 and compounded 10%, 10.5%, 1.1%, 11.5% and 12% respectively. The State Plan outlay during 1991-92 has been fixed at Rs.148600.00 lakhs.

In consonance with the general guiding principles of the Seventh Plan the proximate objective of the T.S.P. are growth equity and social justice self reliance efficiency and productivity raising the socio-economic condition of the tribal population and strengthening of infrastructure of tribal areas. Special Central Assistance to Tribal sub-plan (T.S.P.) is an additive and mainly utilised for implementation of various family oriented economic benefit schemes linked with Margin Money and Institut-

ional Finance during the 7th Year Plan and onwards. Government of India also sanctioned grants under provision to Art.275(1) of the Constitution for implementation of various development scheme for the Scheduled Tribes which are not covered under special Central Assistance. The objective during the 8th Plan period is to cover 1,27,597 S.T. families below the poverty line with a total investment of Rs.100.80 crores. During 7th Five Year Plan it was proposed to assist 2,50,000 S.T. families under point 11(B) of the 20 point programme to cross the poverty line which actually came to 2,97,525 families (including IRDP) at the end of 7th Plan. In the year 1992-97 total physical target is Rs.142.00 lakhs and Financially is Rs.477.90 lakhs.

Inspite of the constitutional directives and a number of legislative and executive measures taken by the Government, the conditions of the Scheduled Castes did not improve much during the period prior to the Sixth Five Year Plan. The strategy of development of Scheduled Castes was, however, given a workable shape from the begging of the Sixth Plan. The new strategy of Special Component Plan during the Sixth Plan Period which was also adhered to the intensified during the Seventh Five Year Plan, was a combination of three important instruments viz. 1) The Special Component Plan of the States and Central Ministers; 2) The Special Central Assistance to Special Component Plan of States, and 3) The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development and Finance Corporation.

The recommendations of the Commission for the upliftment of the Backward Classes are extremely wide-ranging and comprehensive. They cover such diverse fields as Extensive Land Reforms, Reorganisation of Village Economy, Bhoodan Movement, Development of Livestock, Diary Farming, Cattle Insurance, Bee keeping, Piggery, Fisheries, Development of Rural and Cottage Industries, Rural Housing, Public Health and Rural Water Supply, Adult Literacy, University Education, Representation of Backward Classes in Government service etc. etc.

It is pertinent to note that the Commission could not present an unanimous report. In fact five of its Members recorded minutes of dissent. Dr. Anup Singh, Shri Arunangshu De and Shri P.G. Shah were opposed to the view of linking caste with backwardness. They were also opposed to the reservation of posts on the basis of caste. On the other hand, Shri S.D.S. Chaurasia strongly advocated the acceptance of caste as the criterion for backwardness in his 67 page minutes of dissent. Shri T. Mariappa's minute of dissent was concerned only with the inclusion of a couple of castes in the list of other Backward Classes. One serious defect noticed by the Government in the report of first Backward Classes Commission was that it had not formulated any objective criteria, for classifying Other Backward Classes. The need for field surveys and formulation of objective tests has also been repeatedly emphasised by the Supreme Court in several cases.

Taking spot-shots at the Mandal Report recommending

exclusive reservation for SEBCs, the belligerent anti-reservationist denigrate the report by making scathing criticism and indiscriminately trigger off a volley of bullets against the Report. The first attack against the Report is that it is perpetuating the evils of caste system and accentuating caste consciousness besides impeding the doctrine of secularism, the net effect of which would be dangerous and disastrous for the rapid development of the Indian society as a whole marching towards the goal of the welfare state. According to them, the identification of SEBCs by the Commission on the basis of caste system is bizzare and barren of force, muchless exposing hollowness. Therefore, the OMs issued on the strength of the Mandal Report which is solely based on the caste criterion are violative of Article 16(2). This attack is based on the misconception. A perusal of the Report would indicate that the 1931 census does not have been a remote connection with the identification of OBCs. But on the other hand, they are identified only on the basis of the country-wide socio-educational field survey and the census report of 1961 particularly for the identification of primitive tribes, aboriginal tribes, hill tribes, forest tribes and indigenous tribes and personal knowledge gained through extensive touring the receipt of voluminous public evidence and lists of OBCs notified by various States. It was only after the identification of OBCs, the Commission was faced with the task of determining their population percentage and at that stage 1931 census became relevant.

The caste-based policy of reservation, with all its criticism, has enough to commend in its favour. It is common knowledge that these castes are, by and large, yet to catch up with other castes notwithstanding all that the Government has done for them. Not very long ago, Mr. Eduardo Felerio, Minister of State for Finance, said that the banking sector was a notorious defaulter in the matter of filling the reserved posts for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Similar complaints have come from most public sector undertakings. Most of jobs coming under the purview of the Union Public Service Commission for recruitment remain out of bounds for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. And the UPSC's annual report has pointed out that the Ministeries of the Government are the worst offenders in the matter of properly notifying the vacancies and reporting to the UPSC the action taken to fill them. But, in view of the rising expectations of the common people and the Government's failure to meet them, and the consequent outburst of anti-reservation movements from time to time in the states, there is a need of national consensus on this issue. To look for parameters for a possible national policy on reservations, the Prime Minister should convene a conference of Chief Minister and party leaders. An indepth discussion of the various aspects of the problem can help evolving the outlines of a national policy.

So far the central government has had conflucting advice on this. The first high-powered commission headed by Kaka

Kalelkar went to the extent of lamenting that the "remedies (it sought to suggest) were worse than the evils." Nor has the experience in the states been of any help. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have managed to live peacefully with more than 65 per cent of the seats in professional colleges and the jobs in government offices earmarked for the deprived segments of the population. But bloody riots rocked Bihar in the mid-seventies and later Gujrat after their Governments decided to increase the reservation quota albeit on a much lower scale than in the two sought States. A national consensus cannot emerge given this uneven social response in the country as a whole.

The upper castes have an advantage because of their economic position and their traditions of learning, if the same conditions are given to children of the backward castes, there is absolutely no reason why the product should not equal that of the best of privileged classes. If we had vision enough originally to foresee this situation, we could have solved this problem, that still bothers us and divides us for all time to come in the course of one generation. There would probably have been more members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and backward classes in the government services than there are at present with all the reservations to back them up and they would undoubtedly have been of greater competence.

Now we have lived with reservations for the four decades and saw the entire controversy in the light of

experience, Reservations should no longer be based on the criteria of caste alone, it should be linked to the factor of economic backwardness. It is also proposed that the children of those who have benefited by reservation should be disqualified, so as to spread the benefits to a larger state amongst SCs/STs.
