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SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND PUBLIC POLICY: CONSTRAINTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

University of Hawaii

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Ph.D. 1982
SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND PUBLIC POLICY:
CONSTRAINTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
DECEMBER 1982

By
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Research in rural development had been of great interest to me for some time. As a government official I had the experience of being directly exposed to the rural development policy process. And in that capacity I came face to face with the multitude of problems confronting the people in the villages. Therefore when the opportunity of taking time off to do some research into this area came by, I gratefully accepted it. I am grateful to the government of Maharashtra for helping me throughout this period of study. I would also like to thank the East-West Communication Institute for providing support in the latter half of the study period.

The Political Science Department of the University of Hawaii opened up interesting and fulfilling avenues of enquiry. I gained a lot from the interactions with the professors and fellow graduate students. They have been instrumental in formulating ideas better through their criticism and constructive suggestions. My committee members helped me at every step of the way and I am thankful to all of them, particularly Professor Harry Friedman.

Apart from my dissertation committee members, Dr. Sripad Raju of the East-West Culture Learning Institute took a great deal of interest in my work, and gave me the benefit of his wide research interests.

Last, but not the least, I would like to thank all the persons of the Nagpur Zilla Parishad and of the Hingna, Kalmeshwar and Vasai panchayat samitis who helped me during my field work. In particular I am grateful to Mr. K. J. Dudhane and Mr. M. R. Kulkarni.
It would have been difficult without the help of all these individuals, however, the responsibility for the contents is entirely mine.
ABSTRACT

This study demonstrates the necessity for a holistic approach to understand the problems of poverty and inequality. The reason that public policies do not come up to expectations can be found in the setting, or the background, or the context, within which they are formulated and implemented. This setting is interpreted as the social structure, particularly of class and caste in the Indian society in general, and the Maharashtra social scene in particular. This social structure determines the power structures, and therefore the development trends within the different groups in society. Such tendencies are strengthened by the nature of the political leadership and administrative organization as well as the belief systems of the lower classes that are, in turn, a product of the social structure. In this tight network of class, power and development, some elements of mobility are introduced by virtue of the nature of the political system, a mobility that has helped various individuals, at least, overcome the constraints that prevent the poor, generally, from taking advantage of the benefits available to them.

Field research was conducted in three villages. The empirical evidence from two of the villages was used to substantiate the above conclusions, while the third village provided information about development of the rural poor. The data were collected at the village level through a questionnaire, supplemented by interviews and observation and just talking to the people to elicit opinions and perceptions; through interviewing a broad cross section of political leaders and
bureaucrats; and secondary data from governmental and private sources and published material.

The basic thrust in the study was to find out the relationship between class and caste factors and the flow of benefits; the connection between the politico-administrative system and development as it affects the individual; and the underlying link with belief systems, shedding light on responses and behavior patterns.

It became clear that if government is to attack poverty, the quickest way, taking the social, economic, and political realities into consideration, is to frame policies that encourage and accelerate elements of mobility in order to reduce disparities and alleviate inequalities.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

- Introduction ........................................ 1
- The Context ........................................ 6
- Methodology ........................................ 20

## CHAPTER II
CLASSES IN THE CASTE IDIOM .......................... 31

- Origins of Caste and Class in India ............. 31
- The Colonial Period ................................ 37
- Post-independence .................................. 45
- Progressive Discrimination ....................... 50
- Class/Caste in Maharashtra ....................... 56
- Concluding Note .................................... 61

## CHAPTER III
POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT IN THE POLICY PROCESS .................................. 69

- The State and Development: The Context ........ 69
- Rural Development: A Brief Overview .......... 83
- Political Development in Maharashtra ......... 87
- Cooperatives and Power ........................... 90
- Panchayati Raj and Power ........................ 92
- Development and the Administration .......... 94
- Grassroots: Politics and Development .......... 97

## CHAPTER IV
BELIEF-SYSTEMS, THEIR NATURE AND IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT ................................ 114

- Nature and Structure of Belief Systems ....... 115
- Belief System as a Factor in Development ..... 123
  - Some Indian Illustrations ..................... 124
- Belief Systems and the Political Process ..... 134
  - Language and Politics ......................... 137
  - Elections and Politics ....................... 139
  - Participation and Politics .................. 142
- Belief Systems and the Policy Process ....... 145
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Panchayati Raj Structure</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Zilla Parishad Membership Composition</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sectoral Outlays in the State and the District Plans</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Constitution of the District Planning and Development Council</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Composition of the Executive Committee of the D.P.D.C.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Expenditure on Various Heads of Development</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pattern of Landholding and Irrigation Facilities</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Occupational Pattern: Prathama</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pattern of Landholding: Prathama</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Occupational Pattern: Dwitiya</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pattern of Landholding: Dwitiya</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Class-Caste Equation: Prathama</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Class-Caste Equation: Dwitiya</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Availability of Irrigation Facilities: Prathama</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Availability of Irrigation Facilities: Dwitiya</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Distribution of Agricultural Credit: Prathama</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Distribution of Agricultural Credit: Dwitiya</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Benefits Received by the Various Classes in Five Years</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sample Breakdown by Strata</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Perceptions of Who Can Fulfill their Needs</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Perception of the Importance of Voting</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>218</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>244</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Map of Maharashtra State</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detailed Plan of Village Prathama</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Detailed Plan of Village Dwitiya</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1
Map of Maharashtra State
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study is concerned with the social forces that aid or hinder the policy process in bringing about change on behalf of the underprivileged. Poverty and underdevelopment are inextricably bound in a complex network of socio-economic relationships that have defied codification and eluded pragmatic and effective policy solutions. These two states of the human condition demand attention due to the large numbers of people in developing countries whose plight has not changed despite massive governmental effort and resources. 'Poverty' and 'underdevelopment' are caught up in a vicious circle, each contributing to the persistence of the other and restraining the individual from striking out of his conditions towards a better life.

The solutions suggested for the poor are legion, and some even excellent when taken by themselves. But placed within the societal constraints, the best of plans seem to go awry, further exacerbating the suffering of the poor. The first decade and a half after gaining independence, the nationalist fervor in India for nation-building and integration induced policies and institutions that were to bring in a 'socialistic pattern of society.' These policies were aimed at not only economic growth but also social and political development. Experience showed that though economic growth was possible within the existing system, social and economic distribution was getting worse.
A closer examination will show that cultural, social, and political factors, in addition to the economic ones, are ranged against the poor. Therefore the best intentions have problems when translated into action. That the study of the poor is essential is clear from the magnitude of the problem. In India, according to the 1981 Census, the population has reached 684 million with nearly 76 percent in the rural areas.\(^1\) According to the Sixth Five Year Plan the percentage of people below the poverty line in rural and urban areas is 50.40 and 40.31 respectively, together accounting for almost 320 million people.\(^2\) With different yardsticks these figures may vary a little this way or that, but still be around the same magnitude.\(^3\) The numbers are still substantial enough to require immediate attention in the interest of social justice and equity. That any improvement in their living condition will reflect on national development itself is of secondary importance. Increases in production and productivity, whether in a green revolution or a white revolution or any other, have no meaning if they involve better returns only to a fraction of the society, without touching millions who become mere statistics that are offered only the leavings of the economic pie as a salve to the conscience of the policy makers. The poor have been the victims of an economic system that has alienated them from the property structure and the mode of production, with the result that the fruits of production fail to reach them. The urban poor are a part of the manifestation of rural poverty and are not discussed separately. They are the rural poor forced into the urban centers, hence focusing on the rural poor would describe the conditions that contributed to the immiserization of the urban poor as well. The
center of attention in this study is the rural economy and rural development.

Analyzing government policies in rural development is important for two reasons. First, in developing countries, a dearth of private initiative and resources to develop backward areas and groups of people makes it imperative for the government to step in. Secondly, all the government's policies profess the objectives of social equity, and therefore it is only fair to assess their success by their own targets.

Let us take a brief look at the objectives of the various Five Year Plans in India which set the direction and tone of development for the whole country. A recent government publication\(^4\) gives a historical review of the Plans. The First Five Year Plan presented in 1951 emphasized the need for change in "the prevailing conditions of inequality, economic stagnation and poverty" by changing the socio-economic framework "progressively through democratic methods."\(^5\) The Second Five Year Plan took up the establishment of a 'socialistic pattern of society', a concept adopted by the Parliament in 1954. It stressed the need for "greater equality in income and wealth. Economic policy and institutional changes have to be planned in a manner that would secure economic advance along democratic and egalitarian lines."\(^6\) The major focus of the Third Five Year Plan was poverty and unemployment and policies to eliminate both these evils. The Fourth Five Year Plan aimed at development with social justice. It adopted a new strategy to improve the capacities of small and marginal farmers and agricultural laborers.\(^7\) The theme of social justice continued into the Fifth Five Year Plan, which stated the removal of poverty and attainment of self-reliance as the two main objectives.\(^8\) The Sixth Five Year Plan
(1980-85) aims at reduction of the incidence of poverty and unemployment through increased production and redistribution. Thus "poverty alleviation programs during the planning period reveal an increasing recognition of the need to place poverty eradication as the central focus of all attempts at rural development. Over the years, there has been a progressive realization of the fact that the operation of the trickle down effect cannot lead to a complete eradication of absolute poverty. There have to be special programs which make a direct attack on poverty by catering to the specific needs of each category of the rural poor . . . The objective of removing poverty, it was realized, could not be achieved without structural change."^9

It will be seen from the above that removal of poverty and unemployment has engaged the attention of the planners and policy makers right from the beginning. And yet, the percentage or numbers of persons below the poverty line have not decreased. In 1959-60 and 1960-61 the respective percentages were 48.7 and 42. In 1979-80 the percentage of persons below the poverty line was 48.44.\textsuperscript{10} This is in spite of increasing production and productivity. In agriculture as well as industry, the country has made tremendous progress, agriculture contributing about 45 percent of the national income and attracting substantial expenditure. Government investment in agriculture and irrigation alone account for approximately $50 billion since the inception of planning, i.e., nearly 35 percent of the total plan outlay.

Where has all this progress, advancement, and expenditure outcome gone? As we shall see throughout this study, to a great extent, the benefits from most policies have gone to the minority who are in a position to draw the advantages to themselves for a variety of reasons.
This has left a majority outside the process, thus increasing the number of poor despite large human and material resources employed in rural development. Social inequity in India and the reasons for its perpetuation, despite public policies aimed at its removal, will form the main focus of my study. It is not claimed that no benefits of government policies have reached the poorer sections of the rural population, but rather that policies of rural development have brought greater gains to those already well off, creating a greater cleavage in an already inequitable relationship. There is often an "imperfect correspondence between policies adopted and services actually delivered," an imperfection often blamed on implementers not being able to or not wanting to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the policy decisions. Most studies looking at this miscarriage of the objectives restrict themselves to the organizational or behavioral obstacles to policies being adopted and services rendered, or to the impact or effects these policies may have, intended or otherwise. Though essential, such a viewpoint can but give only a partial understanding. It does not explore the causes of which these are the results. It is my contention that it is not so much the policy content that makes the difference, but the setting or context within which it is carried out. It is the background against which policies are formulated and implemented. These environmental factors impinging on the policy process need a closer examination. These are the socio-politico-cultural aspects that affect the socio-economic well-being of the individual. These aspects can be viewed as three systems within which an individual has to live and can be represented thus:
At the center are the belief systems of the individual and symbolic environment affecting him; this is subsumed within the structures of the political system and the administrative system, which in turn are part of the social structures of the society. These three form the scope of the analysis: structural analysis of the caste and class in the Indian society, the political and administrative context of the policy process, and the symbolism employed by and toward the individual.

The Context

The social structure is the overriding framework that envelops every other aspect of social intercourse. As every individual as part of the social system is subject to the influence exerted by the structure, its pervasiveness has to be kept in mind while considering
the politico-administrative and symbolic contexts. These two are superimposed over the social structure and their patterns are also the results of it. Together, the structural, contextual and symbolic analysis—at times at the macro, and at times at the micro levels—will endeavor to describe the setting in which rural development policies are formulated and implemented, a setting that makes the difference whether one gains from the policies or not and by how much. The word structure is used to refer to the structure of the Indian society. Besides discussing the general class characteristics which the Indian social structure shares with other capitalist societies, I will deal with the caste system as well, without which it will be an inadequate description. I will show the class origins of caste which later receded into the background with the emergence of ascribed caste characteristics that made it into a rigid hierarchy allowing almost no mobility till the last few decades when governmental intervention reintroduced the class element to caste.

Caste can be defined as a system of stratification based on a strict religious hierarchy, endogamy, rules of religious pollution, occupational identity and commensal prohibitions. Though the usual categorization is in terms of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras and the Untouchables (the last category being changed to Scheduled Castes after their being granted a special status in the Indian Constitution), in actuality there are hundreds of 'jatis' or kinship groups. These jatis have occupied different social levels in different parts of the country, in some dominant, in others not so dominant, but generally staying near a particular level everywhere. It is therefore convenient to refer to them in terms of Upper, Middle and Lower castes,
and when special reference is called for, the Scheduled castes, which are otherwise included in the Lower castes. Even though the rise of the Middle castes to dominance has become a fact almost all over the country, they still remain Middle castes as caste ranking cannot be changed.

Chapter II will provide a historical description in terms of Brahmins, etc., but later references will be to Upper castes, Middle castes, etc. Caste membership is birth ascribed and cannot be changed. In contrast, class membership undergoes any number of changes with the personal fortunes of the individual. Class can be conceived of as constituting higher and lower differentiated strata, in terms of some characteristic or set of characteristics. Marx in *Capital* differentiated his three main classes of capitalists, workers, and landowners, according to means of production. While Marx placed almost exclusive emphasis on economic factors as determinants of social class, Max Weber, the other luminary affecting present-day thought on this subject, sought to differentiate among various sources of hierarchical differentiation and potential cleavage. The two most important hierarchies for Weber were class and status; status being defined as the positive or negative estimation of honor or prestige received by individuals or positions. As status is not an essential requirement for the removal of poverty and unemployment, I have defined class in economic terms—in terms of income and wealth. In the presence of cast prejudices and biases, the subject of status vis-à-vis class is beyond the scope of my present topic and will not be included here.

The concepts of income and social change require further elaboration. The concept of income by itself indicates the shift of emphasis from caste stratification to class differentiation. Though class
membership was determined to a large extent in the beginning, by caste membership, there has been some amount of upward mobility for the middle and lower castes and downward mobility for the upper castes. Thus class has cut across caste boundaries, though it cannot be said that caste has no connection to levels of class membership. Therefore in Chapter II, I have given a historical development of class and caste. Because of its impact on politics and economic life, it is essential to keep caste factors in mind. A number of studies have indicated that these movements within castes bring some flexibility and change into the system. K. N. Raj in a study on "Regional and Caste Factors in India's Development" has analyzed the figures of the National Sample Survey on caste and occupation. Though the figures are old, the findings are interesting. He finds,

That there is a correspondence between 'caste' and 'class' at the two extremes appears to be thus borne out by the figures. But it is also clear--particularly in the intermediate categories--that class cuts across caste divisions. Thus nearly 7 percent lower caste households in the rural areas are 'farmer' households, and the number of lower caste households among the total number of 'farmer' households works out to well over 40 percent . . .

Similarly, more than 18 percent of the middle caste households, it would appear, were 'agricultural laborers' and 'share-croppers'. The number of rural Hindu households belonging to these two categories was 13.3 millions of which the middle caste accounted for 2.2 million. Approximately one out of every six households occupied as agricultural laborers and share-croppers in the rural areas belong to the middle caste group.14

In another study, Andre Beteille observes the increasing divergence of class from caste.

In traditional society, and even fifty years ago, there was much greater consistency between the class system and
the caste structure. One can even say, with some risk of over-simplification, that the class system was largely subsumed under the caste structure . . .

Over a large area of the agrarian economy, the traditional arrangement seems to have been thus: the Brahmin Mirasdars owned land which they leased out to non-Brahmin tenants who had it cultivated by engaging Adi Dravida laborers. This of course is a highly simplified picture, and even in the traditional economy there were exceptions to the simple correspondence between Brahmin and landowner, non-Brahmin and tenant, and Adi Dravida and agricultural laborer. These exceptions have increased considerably over the last fifty years. This class system can no longer be seen simply as an aspect of the caste structure.15

Even such anthropologists as M. N. Srinivas, whose earlier works mentioned only caste conflicts, have taken cognizance of the class forces at work in the Indian society. In his latest book, The Remembered Village, with regard to the government's efforts at development, Srinivas finds that, "The richer, influential and better-informed households were the first to take advantage of the new opportunities, and their interests frequently clashed with those of the poor . . . Worse, frequently, the enhanced power and resources of the wealthy made possible the more effective exploitation of the poor."16

Kathleen Gough, in "Caste in a Tanjore Village," has similar findings to report. "The caste community is no longer homogeneous in occupation and wealth . . . Caste is today a limiting rather than a determining factor in the choice of occupation."17

It is therefore felt necessary to take both caste and class into consideration in the newly forming class configuration. Thus the concept of income taken in conjunction with occupation and education, affects the process of removing the existing inequalities. By education I do not refer to mere literacy, but the capacity to utilize knowledge
and information. With increasing competition for scarce resources, the persons who are able to understand the written language are aware enough to read the political signals, and in turn are able to participate and make their thoughts, needs, and opinions known, can turn the ideal of development into reality. The odds of gaining from the development process are increased manifold. These three—income, occupation, and education—reinforce each other. A person with a good steady income will provide better educational facilities for himself and his family, has greater opportunities to take on 'better' occupations, and can increase his income. Similarly, a well-educated poor man has better chances of getting a job or of being a good farmer, in turn improving his income. The connection between occupation, income, and education is self-evident. In all these cases the likelihood of upward mobility exists. On the other hand, the reverse is also, unfortunately, true. An illiterate worker will find it difficult if not impossible to move into a higher occupation or augment his income or afford education for himself or his children, even if it is free, as it will cost him that much less time on the job. Without belaboring the point, I will repeat that there is strong interconnection between income, occupation and education. Strengthening any one of these will amount to strengthening the chances of upward mobility in the long run. Therefore later in the study these three factors will be used as being indicative of social mobility for the lower strata. To lend support to this contention, I will take the help of the findings of P. K. Bose reported in "Social Mobility and Caste Violence: A Study of the Gujarat Riots." Bose finds that literacy, education and employment are the three factors determining the social mobility of the Scheduled castes. In regions
where this mobility was better, a threat has been felt by the others leading to violence. "The fact that the main centers of the riots are located in the urban areas of the four districts (which have higher levels of social mobility among a section of the Scheduled castes due to higher literacy rates and urbanization) clearly indicates that the riots were mainly over the scarce resources and employment opportunities. Hence it was directed against the mobile section of the SCs and flared up in regions where they are concentrated." 18 Besides regions, even within the different Scheduled castes, only those who were more mobile participated and were affected by the riots. The rest stayed away. The same conclusion is drawn by Dipankar Gupta in his analysis of the Marathwada riots in Maharashtra. 19 In both instances the poorest castes among the SCs did not participate. They felt that they received the same treatment and were held at the same distance by the mobile caste as by the caste Hindus.

One factor coming in the way of social change is the symbolic environment surrounding the individual and the symbolism to which he is subjected by the policy makers through language and action—or actually the lack of it. It becomes a part of his socio-cultural background. From birth an individual becomes subject to a communication network that affects his personality and way of thinking. It creates an atmosphere conducive to the continuation of and even increasing class differences. This culture of inequality, which I will be discussing in Chapter IV explains the tolerance for and acquiescence to the power of the few by the many. The culturally evolved body of proscription and prescription, permission and prohibition, defines actual as well as expected behavior. Unless one
gets beyond these beliefs, he is unable to realize the causes of the exploitation to which he is subjected. Cultural belief and superstition come in the way of his development. The experience of an educated upper caste youth returning to his village to bring about a change in the thinking about caste is worth recounting. On one of his rounds to meet the lower caste people, he was about to enter the dwelling of a Scheduled caste. An angry old man almost threw him out. It was his belief that if the upper caste person entered his house, not only would he defile himself (i.e., the upper caste youth) but would damage the old man's religious integrity as well. Such beliefs and perceptions are present within the individual himself, though they have been 'learnt' from the messages received from his environment. In addition, his condition in life is exploited by the ones in power. Political symbols, for example, are chosen after careful attention to their significance for the masses. So is the case with slogans. Such perceptions and prejudices are so insidious that even education does not seem able to eliminate them. The repeated messages of poverty and the disabilities of the poor, and in contrast the role of the government to help cope with this poverty, paralyzes the thought processes and initiative of the poor who look upon the government as their only savior. There is increasing understanding of their manipulation by a few, but they are prevented from influencing others by the suspicion that meets such efforts. The spread of this awareness is an essential ingredient for any change to benefit society at large. These belief systems are discussed in Chapter IV.

Increasingly, development is being seen as not only an economic process, employed to remove poverty and unemployment and raise the
standard of living of the people, but an integrating process, developing the individual by providing avenues to participate in the economic, political and socio-economic fields. Since political and social power generally follow economic power, I am convinced that an improvement in the latter, while removing the economic disabilities, will increase the odds in favor of the former. The refusal to see the interconnection between these has resulted in the failure of policy innovation and organizational designs introduced for rural development. The Community Development Program failed due to the lack of mass participation, excessive bureaucratization and unequal distribution of benefits. 20

The response of the policy makers to this failure was to create local elected structures—panchayats—to decentralize democratic institutions and involve the people in decision making while putting the bureaucracy under popular control. By this time the vested interests had consolidated their position and they captured the new institutions as well. The same fate befell the cooperatives.

Implementation of cooperative programs resulted in further strengthening of the service cooperatives, which acted as conduits to channel resources to the larger farmers. Thus, new strategies and approaches have contributed little to bridging the gap between the rural poor and the richer classes. This tendency of favoring the rich required limiting the chances of others to replace them or join them. Although growth and social justice find simultaneous expression in the plans and policy statements, the two seem more competitive than complementary within the Indian polity.

Within the development effort, one can see, on the one hand, government policies such as welfare policies, protective discrimination,
and establishing of new organizations, as intended to include all sections of the population in decision making, thereby improving the lot of the underprivileged; on the other, the class and caste interests of the policy makers and implementers of the same government alienate large sections of the people. The ruling elite employs its status and economic resources to control political instrumentalities and in turn manipulate political power to spread its control over other resources. Referring to the 'rural-based politicians' of Maharashtra, Donald Rosenthal perceives them as having "learned how to employ their private economic resources and the institutional infrastructure which has developed in rural Maharashtra to enhance their multifaceted political careers. They are oriented towards the personal rewards (both symbolic and material) of politics, though to gain those rewards they engage in political organizations and policy actions which do provide some benefits to their constituents." It is in times of political stress that this concern for the people gains urgency, resulting in the success of some policies, generally those needed to establish the credentials of the government in a short time, while the rest of the time they are dealt with routinely, subject to normal strains and delays. The spectacular success of the crash program of providing houses for landless agricultural laborers during the period of Emergency in Maharashtra, as elsewhere, stands in sharp contrast to similar schemes that have very tardy results. This dualism can be traced to the politicization of the issue of poverty without politicization of the poor. Addressing this issue, P. C. Joshi observes, "The contradictions of contemporary politics . . . [are] reflected in the concern of the ruling elite for poverty and its
distance from the poor. As a result the issue of poverty is put into the center of politics but the poor are not put at the center of the political stage."23 This explains the vast hiatus between the mobilizing potential of poverty and the absence of this potential for social and political change. It explains the emergence of the politics of poverty at the center of the power struggle without touching the conditions of the poor themselves. It explains the continuation of inequity and 'acceptance' of the increasing benefit and opportunity gaps between the better-off classes and the poor.

This 'acceptance' or ineffectiveness, depending on how it is interpreted, in the face of increasing inequities, can be blamed on the process of pauperization--the appearance of 'artificial poverty' in the midst of 'natural poverty'. In the words of Marx, "it is not the naturally arising poor, but the artificially impoverished . . ."24 For the elucidation of this concept I have relied on the explanation of P. C. Joshi.25 To him, while natural poverty "is associated with a low level of development of production forces . . . [artificial poverty] is the product of economic change and development itself." Secondly, under a regime of natural poverty, the conflict between the rich and the poor does not assume a naked form because of the mystification of this conflict by the institutions of caste, village, community, etc. . . . The emergence of 'artificial poverty' is the process of transformation of the petty property owners into a propertyless mass. For a long time, however, the growth of propertylessness runs much ahead of the growth of wage labor, thus indicating pauperization without proletarianization . . . [thereby] blunting the revolutionary potential of poverty.

And due to the different causes for their origin, "the intertwining of two qualitatively different types of poverty acts as a mystifying force,
keeping the poor in darkness about the social genesis of poverty and thus thwarting their emergence as a socially conscious force." The rural scene in India can be said to be at this stage of consciousness.

The political structure as well as the political process helps in perpetuating the socioeconomic basis of poverty. Class interests have contracted the avenues available for the lower classes to rise higher. One such avenue for upward mobility most widely used is the one provided by the Constitution for certain categories of the lower castes, protective discrimination for the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. Successive governments have pledged their support for it. The reservations made under this protective discrimination have made it possible to enter coveted economic positions, to rise higher in the political hierarchies. Another avenue is that of universal adult franchise which has made it incumbent on political contestants to go beyond their caste boundaries if they aspire for power. It has shifted the locus of power from the ritually higher to the numerically stronger castes. Again caste organizations of the lower class castes have helped in organizing their members and mobilizing them for economic and political purposes. The Mahars of Maharashtra have been exceptionally successful in this regard.

But this very system tends to stress caste identities thereby retarding class consciousness. Thus the reservations for the Scheduled castes in political, economic and social fields have made them suspect in the eyes of other lower class castes who have the wrong notion that these Scheduled castes are depriving them of chances that would otherwise have been theirs. And election rhetoric turns the numerical dominance
into casteism. More than the other qualifications of the candidate, his caste becomes the guiding factor for receiving votes. The political parties, aware of these propensities, choose candidates according to their caste.\textsuperscript{26} It can be argued that at least this way the lower classes are able to participate in the governmental process. However these candidates may have little class 'commonness' with their caste-mates of the lower classes, limiting their utility as change agents. Similarly, the caste organizations tend to stress the caste factors more than class ones. Like the electoral candidates, the caste organization leadership has little in common with its members except caste membership, if not before at least soon after joining the respective organizations. Solidarity along caste lines prevents the organization of the economically depressed castes on a class basis. As organization is strengthened along caste lines, it tends to look after its own interests, thus weakening contacts with, and at times rousing antagonisms in other same class castes. This disorganization of the economically weak but numerically strong classes helps to organize the numerically weak but economically dominant classes to further their class interests.\textsuperscript{27}

A reversal of this situation, a structural reorganization by itself does not root out poverty. Structural transformation only eradicates artificial poverty alluded to earlier, which is the product of the capitalist class system, but not natural poverty which is rooted in the low level of development of productive forces. "Structural change is in Marxian conception, not a culmination of the struggle against poverty, but only its beginning."\textsuperscript{27} It is a crucial step in the struggle against poverty only if it is used as an instrument of economic growth. Or we
may have a situation of the population being reduced into a single low class. According to Paul Baran,

> The rate and direction of economic development in a country at a given time, . . . depend on both the size and the mode of utilization of the economic surplus. These in turn are determined by (and themselves determine) the degree of development of productive forces, the corresponding structure of socioeconomic relations, and the system of appropriation of the economic surplus that those relations entail.28

Thus production and redistribution have to go hand in hand if poverty is to be eliminated. This perspective has led me to approach development holistically in the following chapters while dealing with the situation in Maharashtra.

In pursuance of the framework described above, I will analyze the class and caste nexus in Chapter II. The resulting political and administrative set-up and behavior is covered in Chapter III, while the belief systems of the individual which is the outcome of the previous two is the subject matter of Chapter IV. This theoretical section is followed by village studies in Chapter V, which will be used to illustrate the theoretical framework. Chapter VI will describe what I call a transitional village, one that is not completely rural in the sense that its economy shows many influences of an urban center. In the Conclusion, Chapter VII, I would like to suggest certain alternatives, long term and short term, that are practicable and workable. It would hark back to the three interconnected essentials of income, education and occupation to achieve economic growth plus structural change.
Methodology

The theoretical discussion may seem very descriptive and macro, without immediate relevance to the local level analysis of social change and inequity in the following chapters. The large canvas of these chapters is deliberate so as to capture the complexities of the Indian scene, which may not be replicated in its entirety at a particular district or village level, but which will influence the polity and policy process nevertheless. Even if caste animosities are absent in a village and harmony reigns supreme in the community, it would be erroneous to conclude that there is no caste conflict. Hence the villages are presented here as following the general trends even if some aspects are not witnessed. They are a part of the Indian scene of development and represent the level at which the three systems come in contact with the individual. They are to give as complete an understanding of the development ethos as possible. Seen in this light they are the specifics of the generalities presented earlier.

With this in mind my research basically involved a study of the different sections of the village communities and the changes in their levels of living and development on account of government policies. Most studies of this nature take up a particular policy and follow it up from its formulation, through implementation, to its impact. I started from two ends of the policy process to understand the people, the institutions and the organizations involved. At the district and block levels I have tried to understand the political and administrative contexts within which policies are formulated and implemented for the concerned villages.
The village is no longer a self-sufficient unit. Its development is influenced as much by what happens outside the village as inside it. The centers of power are situated generally at the block and more at the district headquarters. Therefore to understand what and why an event occurs I examined the factors that made it occur, that is the political organization, the bureaucratic machinery and other institutions and forces that have a bearing on the village. Therefore the setting in and beyond the village was explored. I also examined the policy process at the district level, the decision makers, their composition and how they view rural development. At the village level besides trying to classify the people into various classes, their awareness of politics, and the policy process, I studied the interactions between the masses and the elite, the people and the bureaucracy, and their abilities to exploit the available framework.

Closely associated with the holistic view is the interpretation of success or failure of a policy. It is clear by now that social equity is my main concern. Therefore, it is not the financial or physical achievement that will decide the outcome of a policy, but who benefited from it. A policy fulfilling its physical and financial targets may still be considered a failure. In the long run all policies are assessed in this manner. Therefore we have policy makers admitting the miscarriage of policies which at the time of execution were called success stories.

For this study I chose the State of Maharashtra, on the Indian west coast. Maharashtra can be developmentally called an 'average' state in the sense that it is not subjected to extreme drawbacks as is the State of Bihar with its backwardness, nor to the political changes seen by
West Bengal where an active political cadre has gone into the villages and changed the rural scene; nor the spurt of productivity witnessed in the Punjab. One can call it a 'normal', 'stable' state which has abided by and carried out the changes recommended by the Center, has had very little change in the political rulers make-up, and has done reasonably well in other fields of development. It has been held up as a model for the development of cooperatives and the panchayati raj system. It is also the State with which I am most familiar, in terms of political development, the administration, the people and their language. Again my familiarity was strongest with the district of Nagpur and hence most of my research was done there. The role of education, information, social awareness has been emphasized earlier, therefore to collect data that would provide a contrast in these respects to the Nagpur villages, I chose a village in Thane district, which feels the direct impact of the city of Bombay. The Nagpur villages have not been selected according to any set criteria which would have made them different from other Indian or even Maharashtra villages. The only guiding factor was the presence of a sizable number of Scheduled caste persons in the village population. The village in Thane was selected because it showed a high degree of social and developmental awareness with a well-educated population.

To study the beneficiaries of government programs in the villages, those policies were studied which affected the people in general. Specific programs such as those meant for the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes accounted for a very small allotment and were therefore not emphasized. Agriculture which is more in the form of infrastructural development, was examined. So were other development programs bringing
direct benefits. These indicated the sort of benefits going to the various classes. In this exercise an attempt was made to understand how the setting was affecting the policy process thereby determining the type of individuals who would benefit.

Thus while one part of the research involved finding out the class membership of the individuals and the gains from governmental programs in the village, the other meant unraveling the intricate power relations at the block and district levels. Such being the nature of the research, it meant more of a qualitative than a quantitative approach. Therefore the methods employed were (1) a preliminary questionnaire or schedule for household survey in an attempt to determine the per capita income; (2) a set of tentative questions to find out the opinions of the people, their perceptions, sources of information and behavior patterns; (3) a series of interviews with a broad cross section of the village population, concentrating heavily on the Scheduled caste persons in the village, and the political leadership and heads of administration outside; (4) secondary data from government records, published materials, books, reports and papers of governmental and other research organizations and individuals; and (5) observation.

Household survey: Ownership or control of land is one of the most important indicators of level of living in most Third World countries, as it is the primary source of subsistence, employment and income. Therefore distribution of land is taken as the major determinant of inequality. The 1977 study by the International Labor Organisation focuses on this distribution to find out the degree of differentiation
and pauperization. However mere ownership of land may prove insufficient or even misleading; it was felt necessary to describe such factors as cropping pattern, availability of irrigation and institutional assistance. Besides land, access to other means of production will define class. Hence, other factors were included to arrive at the entire earnings of the household. These were the capital equipment owned, agricultural and otherwise; income from other sources such as rent; livestock ownership; non-agricultural income, as from a shop, flour mill, etc.; housing; personal belongings; fuel used; household composition; accessibility to information; use of the political system; education; and, of course, labor. I am aware that many of these indicators have been used singly in various studies, but I considered them all indispensable to be able to classify the population into classes and understand their disabilities and strengths. Some of this information may not be very reliable for two reasons. First, the villagers are reluctant to give information, as they are not sure what its repercussions may be, and second, they are themselves not clear about all the items included. There are many hidden costs. The value of many items cannot be determined, as in the case of self-consumed goods. The cost of labor cannot be fixed when family members are included in the labor force. However, despite these drawbacks, the differences will not be so wide as to change their class standing to a great extent. This household survey covering the whole village was done with the help of investigators who were acquainted with the village. But mostly the replies of the respondents were taken without their interpretation. As these investigators where known to the villagers they were able to elicit answers
more easily. Many of these surveys were cross-checked. Improbabilities were weighted, opinions given due preference. This survey was used to fix the category of the household and give a rough estimation of the per capita income.

In addition to the above I had prepared an open-ended, tentative list of questions that were aimed at getting them to respond in such a way as to expose their opinions, perceptions, and behavior patterns. For example, it became clear in a majority of cases that the individuals have come to accept the village council and the headman as the leader of the village who would give guidance and information. He was the channel connecting them to the outside development world; but direct contact with political leaders was considered as important. These questions were meant as points of reference to get the maximum information, especially when seen in the light of the household survey. It was one way of making the people judge the policy makers and the policies.

Interviews played an equally vital role. They can be distinguished from the above for being even less formalistic. This seemed to encourage the interviewees to talk more freely. Though at the village level, interviews began with one person, others joined in with such ease that it was difficult to stop them. In a way it helped. Numbers gave them courage to speak quite openly and frankly, and gave me a wider cross section of opinions. At the district level, I was able to tap most of the institutions and the concerned persons. Though this part of the research turned out to be the most unrewarding, since they were prone to speak in the party's language, it provided insight into rural development policy makers. In some ways they may be more short-sighted than the
people they set out to help, as they are thinking of short-term measures and providing unimaginative solutions.

The basic secondary material was the block office records of policies and programs implemented for the block in general and the village of study in particular. It showed the relations between power and policy implementation more starkly. Other materials were the statistical abstracts and administrative reports of the district and the Zilla Parishad. The national Plan documents, the evaluation studies of the Program Evaluation Organization, Planning commission, reports and studies by institutes like the National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad, the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, and others having any connection with my study were another source of information. Various in-house reports and letters were also made available to me, and they allowed a look beyond the official documentation.

The benefits of observation cannot be overstated. I regarded observation as a good source of information, as it could convey even those types of information that people were reluctant to give. Cold facts may paint a picture in bold colors, but observation adds the shades, highlighting one thing, downplaying another, putting things into perspective. The nuances of speech, facial expressions, body posture, reactions, reflexes, are as enlightening as factual information. There are various constraints working on an individual which may inhibit frank expression, or what is articulated may not be true. This may be the result of an effort to say something the interviewer wants to hear or the respondent thinks is expected by the interviewer, or what the
dominant person of the village would want said. And finally, the attitudes between different sections are better understood when facts and figures are combined with observation.

With the help of these methods two processes were going on simultaneously, one at the level of the individual and the other at the societal level. On the one hand, I attempted to discern the class standing of the individual and his household— if possible with changes over a time period— along with an analysis of the governmental policies affecting the rural population, and on the other, I engaged in the structural, contextual and symbolic analysis, in order to find out the hiatus between the intended beneficiary group and the public policies.
NOTES


3. Some of the studies employ the yardstick of calories. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations recommends a minimum of 2100 calories per person per day. (Review and Analysis of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in the Developing Countries since mid-1960s. Rome, 1979). The Indian Planning Commission's level is between 2400 to 2700 calories. V. M. Dandekar and N. Rath in Poverty in India (Bombay, Indian School of Political Economy, 1971) estimated the poverty line at Rs 15.00 and Rs 22.50 per capita per month for rural and urban areas respectively, which worked out to 40 and 50 percent of the population below poverty line in rural and urban areas resp. B. S. Minhas in Planning and the Poor calculated according to the per capita consumption levels which showed 60 percent of the rural population below poverty line. Thus whatever the measure employed the percentage seems to vary between 40 and 60 percent.

4. S. C. Varma, India's Attack on Rural Poverty, Ministry of Rural Reconstruction, Government of India, New Delhi, 1981. This publication is worth pursuing if only for the reason that it shows that even the government is aware of the failure, though not complete, of various strategies and the need for some structural change.

5. Ibid., p. 31. As these are quotes from the Plans themselves, they have been taken directly from the book which is also a government publication.

6. Ibid., p. 33.

7. Ibid., p. 34.

8. Ibid., p. 35.


22. P. C. Joshi in a short article, "Perspectives on Poverty and Social Change: The Emergence of the Poor as a Class" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, Feb. 1979) has touched upon the potential of the rural poor to band together for effective mobilization and has discussed how caste vs. caste and urban vs. rural have been used to obscure the real problem of rich vs. poor.

23. Ibid., p. 353.


CHAPTER II
CLASSES IN THE CASTE IDIOM

Origins of Caste and Class in India

As the economic conditions worsen, larger sections of the Indian population are organizing themselves against the deterioration of living conditions and a lack of an adequate means of livelihood. At times it seems that these groups are coming together on a caste basis, while at others, this organization appears plainly as a class conflict. It is even possible that some protests will seem a perfect congruence of caste and class. Are class and caste the same? Does a higher caste necessarily signify high class as well? And vice versa? Or are the two unconnected? An alignment along caste lines encourages the notion of 'caste' division in addition to 'class' division of the Indian society. Its continuous use in the conduct of politics has only confirmed this belief. If caste is accepted as outside the pale of class division, it will be to the advantage of those in power, those who own land and capital, employ labor of others directly or indirectly, and extract the surplus and the advantage under the prevailing conditions.

To get a clear understanding of the caste-class nexus, it is essential to understand its history. Such historicism "involves a genetic model of explanation and an attempt to base all evaluation upon the nature of the historical process itself." Such a perspective in understanding the class-caste phenomenon involves issues of origin of caste, the functions it has fulfilled, the roles it has played and
its development through time. This need for historicism has been felt by many scholars of the Indian caste-class system. Kosambi explains this system in very succinct terms.

The main feature of the Indian society, seen at its strongest in the rural parts, is caste. This means the division of society into many groups which live side by side, but often do not seem to live together. Most peasants will not take cooked food or water from the hands of a lower caste. That is, caste has a rough hierarchy. In practice, the number of such caste groups goes into thousands. In theory there are only four castes: the brahmin or priest caste; the kshatriya—the warrior; vaisya—trader or husbandman; and sudra, the lowest caste which corresponds to the working class. This theoretical system is roughly that of classes, whereas the observed castes and subcastes derive clearly from tribal groups of different ethnic origin. Their very names show this. The relative status of the small local castes depends always upon the extent of, and the castes' economic position in the common market. The same caste may have different positions in the hierarchy for two different regions. If this differentiation persists for some time, the separate branches may often regard themselves as different castes, no longer intermarrying. The lower one goes in the economic scale, the lower the caste in the social scale as a whole. At the lowest end we still have purely tribal groups, many of whom are in a food-gathering stage. The surrounding general society is now food producing. Caste is class on a primitive level of production.

Before the advent of the Aryans, society was basically classless, casteless, and agricultural. Caste based on varna or color finds its first mention in the Rig Veda, the ancient Aryan scripture, distinguishing the arya varna from the dasa varna and "it was in this sense that the [varna] seems to have been employed in contrasting the arya and the dasa referring to their colors respectively." Ghurye bases his claim on the Rig Veda, which in the beginning mentions only three strata among
the Aryans, viz. the brahmin, the kshatriya and the vaisya. In the later hymns the veda mentions the four orders of society ... Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra.

Though other scholars have objected to this exact nature and time of the formation of the four-fold division of society, they agree that while the conquering Aryans comprised the higher castes, the conquered local people, dark in complexion, came to be absorbed into the social order as the servile class, expected to labor for the other three castes. Scholars have emphasized the manner in which the ancient tribes were taken over, ensuring their stunted growth. Kosambi remarks:

Disruption of the tribal people and their merger into general agrarian society would not have been possible merely by winning over the chief and a few leading members. The way people satisfied their daily needs had also to be changed for the caste-class structure to work. The tribe as a whole turned into a new peasant jati, caste group, generally ranked as Sudras, with as many as possible of the previous institutions (including endogamy) brought over ... This enabled Indian society to be formed out of many diverse and often discordant elements with the minimum use of violence. But the very manner in which the development took place inhibited the growth of commodity production and hence of culture beyond a certain level.

Before the admission of the sudras, the original three varnas signified a division of labor representing the division of the social product, "because the division of labor implies the possibility, nay the fact that intellectual and material activity--enjoyment and labor, production and consumption--devolve on different individuals ... With the division of labor ... is given simultaneously the distribution both quantitative and qualitative, of labor and its products, hence property ... " Thus, the Vaisyas formed the base of the structure providing manual labor to
create and yield surplus for the benefit of the other varnas, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The ruling class evolved a division of mental and material labor "so that within this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the other's attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves." Though two distinct functional groups emerged within the ruling classes, horizontal mobility occurred in the early phases. This is evident from the following narrative:

Many members of the ruling families, finding court life unpleasant, due to succession disputes, intrigues and revolutions, adopted the lucrative and influential occupation of priesthood. Ikshaku Mandhatri's fourth and fifth descendants, Vishnu Vriddhas and Haritas, adopted priesthood . . . When Nagava's kingdom was destroyed, his fourth descendant, Rathithara became . . . [a] priest. Haihaya Vitihavya being defeated by Pratarthana of Kasi became a . . . priest. We owe the second Mandala of Rigveda to his son . . . Kaushika Gathina Visvaratha became a priest when his Kanyakubja kingdom was devastated by Haihaya inroads, and he assumed the name of Vishvamitra and founded a priestly gotra of his own. The third Mandala is mostly the composition of the Visvamitras . . . Bhargava Jamadagni (a Brahmana) became a warrior. His son, Parasu Ram, was a renowned fighter. Drona, an Angirasa (one of the four original Brahamana clans) was a teacher of the Pandavas in archery and he by his prowess acquired the South Panchala kingdom. Not only there were intermarriages between the Kshatriyas and the Brahananas, but professions were adopted and interchanged as circumstances demanded. The social organisation was in a fluidic condition.

Such instances were found even during the days of the Buddha and Mahavira, who were essentially rebels against the already oppressive Hindu social system.
How then did this somewhat fluid system of functional differentiation come to be the immutable, hierarchical, stratification of society into castes? An acceptable explanation is that as the Aryans began settling down, they found it necessary to defend their lands against the original settlers and the incursion of other competing groups. Once settled the military and political activities of the Aryans were concentrated in a group within the community, the aristocracy, or the Kshatriya caste. As power accumulated, they jealously guarded it against inroads by the lower castes. The Brahmans provided them the ideological framework to make their dominance in the society acceptable to all. As priests and philosophers of the society, they were able to think and meditate on the strength of the rest of the society. Though this provided the opportunity to create the rich ancient literature, praised in such glowing terms by Max Mueller, it also made them repositories of all knowledge of customs, rituals and traditions, thus making them regulators of family life, village life and state life as founded on religious tradition and contract. Starting out as a functional distribution of occupation and social roles, with possibilities of mobility, the "system developed its own pedagogy and mystique, created vested interests and hardened with the passage of time."

The development of finer skills in the crafts and agricultural practices brought in gradations within the castes themselves, ending with a proliferation of hundreds of sub-castes that have become the drawback of the Indian social fabric even though they have held smaller groups together giving them some degree of solidarity, identity, and caring. The stratification into classes was not merely an economic but
also a social process. The social status of a person was determined by the caste into which he was born. Caste regulated his food habits, the clothes he would wear, the people he could mingle with, the person he was to marry. It also dictated, to a great extent, his occupation in life. Whether he could attain higher education was again a matter of his standing in the caste hierarchy. The Brahmins who stood at the top of this hierarchy held the overall mandate in religious affairs with each jati administering its own ethical, social and economic conduct. As was the case with the Church in the Western world, this not only gave them immense power to dictate terms to the lower castes in matters of religion and day-to-day life, but brought in material benefits in the form of land grants and other worldly goods. Except for the royal houses, these advantages made them the richest caste. As members of the ruling class, education was the prerogative of the Brahmins and the higher castes. When the British brought in English secular education, these very castes were in a position to take advantage of it and as a result occupy most of the lucrative high positions open to the local population then. The lower castes were encouraged, and at times forced, to stay within the limits set down for them by the higher castes despite the fact that these castes provided the labor in the fields as well as the houses of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya castes, belonging to the higher and middle classes. The lower class or the lowest castes, the untouchables, were not allowed to hold land; were made to live in hamlets outside the village in tumbledown houses and do the menial jobs, like scavenging; and not mingle with the general population. Thus psychologically and academically they were at a disadvantage when competing with other
economically higher members of the society. Recruitment and membership to another order of society for education, economic opportunities, political power and alternative religious persuasion, opened up for all the four castes. But there was unequal acceptance, accessibility and reward. There thus arose a close congruence between class and caste. Every member had his role in society, his limits and his ambitions, even his desires for change were circumscribed by the fact of his birth in a particular family.

The Colonial Period

Onto such a scene came the British, upsetting the entire village life. But Marx finds these changes not without their positive effects, for we must not forget that these idyllic communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unrestricting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. [And] we must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances, and that they transformed a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny . . . All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as their successive action on Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface . . . [And therefore] England has to fulfill a double mission in India, one destructive, the other regenerating: the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in India.

England did fulfill the first mission but did not take up the second. From the mid-sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century much of the country was under Moghul rule. They established "a sovereign who ruled, an army
that supported the throne, and a peasantry that paid for both." The
economy was predominantly agricultural and productivity was low. Added
to this were the oppressive caste structure and the heavy taxation of the
Moghuls. Urbanization was promoted, and commerce and handicrafts
flourished. The British eliminated the power of the Moghul elite and in
turn created their own. Surplus exploitation increased and the taxation
burden grew heavier, increasing the squeeze on the peasantry. This was
taken advantage of by the intermediaries, such as moneylenders, who were
able to drive many peasants into indebtedness and themselves became big
landholders. Their hold on the rural economy is felt to this day. The
British introduced into the Indian agrarian society many of the worst
features of capitalism--the commoditization of land and labor, with its
resultant inequality and insecurity--with very few of the better features--
capitalist entrepreneurial initiative and more effective farming tech-
niques. The colonial rulers allied themselves with reactionary landed
elite and encouraged a parasitic form of agricultural economy.12

Indian trade also suffered. The various policies of the British
and the inflow of British goods converted India into an exporter of
manufactured products. Though the new communication facilities, espe-
cially the railways, created a stimulus to the industry which entered
various fields of manufacture, the attitude of the rulers provided
little profit to the indigenous entrepreneurs. Under these conditions
the national bourgeoisie that emerged was concentrated among a few
families. When administrative posts became available a similar con-
centration occurred. It was mainly the upper castes that had the
academic and financial wherewithal to compete. Since it served their
interest this new bourgeoisie aligned itself with the outsiders who drained the country of its wealth.\textsuperscript{13}

It was not in the interest of the colonial rule to transform the Indian society. The process of changing the old society, its stratification and economic base was slow and painful. The British exploitation resulted in a feudalistic society sprinkled with mild capitalist relations. Weiskopf analyzes the impact of the British thus. "With respect to its overall impact, the colonial administration was most significant in what it failed to do. It did not hold on to the large surplus that accrued to the Moghul state; it did not carry out a great deal of investment; it did not give much protection to indigenous industry until the last phase of colonial rule in the twentieth century; and after the initial liquidation of Moghul elites, it did not work for change in rural areas but instead helped to preserve a reactionary precapitalist agrarian structure."\textsuperscript{14}

The spread of British imperialism was also the time of the rise of the nationalist anti-imperialist consciousness along with sporadic attempts at social reform. English education had thrown open a window on the outside world, bringing in an awareness of modern social ideas and values, and of the inequalities of the Hindu society. For some, like Jyotiba Phule in Maharashtra and Ramaswami Naicker in Tamilnadu,\textsuperscript{15} the foreign domination provided an opportune moment to break the shackles of the upper castes, especially the Brahmans, and to organize society on more equalitarian lines. For them freedom from the dominance of the upper castes was more important than national independence, and strove to get the masses behind them. However the nationalist struggle won out in the
end, pushing for the most part, social reform to the background though some changes did take place in peripheral matters such as women's education, and child marriages.\textsuperscript{16}

A number of contradictory processes were therefore in action. On the one hand, the introduction of modern factors—railways, factories, commodity exchange, exports and imports—worked towards undermining the old structure along with its caste system; on the other, the ruling power maintained the very same caste relations by retaining the old land relations in seeking political and economic support from the feudal landlords. And again, the nationalists and social reformers strove to achieve their own ends. That the struggle for freedom from the fetters of a foreign power won out over the caste conflict is history. Besides the former being felt to be of greater import, there were other reasons. The leaders of the fight for freedom mainly from the bourgeois intelligentsia coming from the higher castes, wanted to avoid rousing a hornet's nest and therefore skirted the issue of social reform. Secondly, the nationalists went back to the past to rouse the democratic consciousness. Thus,

from the existing foul welter and decaying and corrupt metaphysics, from the broken relics of the shattered village system, from the dead remains of court splendours of a vanished civilisation (the revivalists), sought to fabricate and build up and reconstitute a golden dream of Hindu culture—a 'purified' Hindu culture—which they could hold up as an ideal and a guiding light. Against the overwhelming flood of British bourgeois culture and ideology, which they saw completely conquering the Indian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, they sought to hold forward the feeble shield of a reconstructed Hindu ideology which had no longer any natural basis for its existence in actual life conditions. All social and scientific development was condemned by the more extreme devotees of this gospel as the conqueror's culture; every form of antiquated tradition, even abuse,
privilege, and obscurantism, was treated with respect and veneration.17

National leaders, Mahatma Gandhi among them, exhorted people to forget their caste background and communal origins. This delinking of the anti-imperialist struggle from the anti-caste struggle was to a great extent responsible for the continuation of the caste discrimination. If the leadership had taken advantage of the pressures working on the people at that time, they could have succeeded in restructuring society itself if they so wished. Under similar stress, the Japanese were able to implement stringent land reforms and do away with their feudalism.

Because the Congress, which included most of the leading figures then, failed to recognize the necessity of changing the old feudal order, the land relations remained the same. By the early 1920s the peasants had started rebelling against the landlords and withholding taxes. The Congress did not associate itself with this movement.18 In February 1922, the Congress Working Committee issued the following decision: "The Congress Committee advises Congress workers and organisations to inform the ryots that withholding of rent payments to zamindars is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country. The Working Committee assures the zamindars that the Congress movement is in no way interested to attack their legal rights, and that even when the ryots have grievances, the Committee decides that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration."19 This decision was not struck out even in the later years when tenants' rights and the plight of the landless became an issue. Changes were sought to be made without disturbing the existing structure. Except for a few
social reformers, the link between casteism and communalism, and the then prevalent economic system was overlooked. Even today new strategies are imposed on this system every few years and then surprise expressed at their failure.

It was the blatant practice of untouchability that roused the national leadership, especially Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, to exhort people to change their beliefs. Mahatma Gandhi was moved to declare,

To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us, superior Hindus, to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our down-trodden brethren whom we have suppressed and keep under suppression. And I would be content to be torn to pieces rather than disown the suppressed classes. Hindus will certainly never deserve freedom, nor get it if they allow their noble religion to be disfigured by the retention of the taint of untouchability. As I love Hinduism dearer than life itself the taint has become for me an intolerable burden. Let us not deny God by denying to a fifth of our race the right of association on an equal footing.20

And to him they were no longer Untouchables but Harijans—the children of God. To encourage people to change age-old beliefs, he adopted social reforms such as education, social intermingling and inter-caste dining in an attempt to bring in all the diverse castes and communities into the national struggle. For the first time a leader of such stature was openly espousing their cause. It endeared him and his party to the lower caste classes to such an extent that later when their caste organizations emerged, a large section still remained loyal to the Congress party.
The British, in the meantime, could not stand by quietly while the various fissiparous elements in the Indian society got together. They took advantage of the sharp cleavages between the different groups, especially between the Hindus and the Muslims and between the caste Hindus and the Untouchables. They emphasized their separate identities, and promised separate electorates, reservations in jobs and better educational facilities. "Their aim was to raise hopes of advancement in backward communities, to wean them away from the common struggle, split popular resistance and perpetuate separate caste and communal consciousness."

The prevalent relationship between the castes and between communities was in their favor. However the leadership amongst the lower classes soon realized that the British were offering only chicken-feed. They had no intention of bringing in structural changes. B. R. Ambedkar, a barrister and a member and foremost leader of the lower castes, realized that if his caste and class fellows waited for a messiah from outside their own group, they would be waiting forever. It was essential for them to gain power--political power--and claim their rights.

I am afraid that the British chose to advocate unfortunate conditions not with the objective of removing them, but only because such a concern serves well as an excuse for retarding the political progress of India. So far as you are concerned, the British government has accepted the arrangement as it found them, and has preserved them faithfully in the manner of the Chinese tailor who, when given an old coat as a pattern, produced with pride an exact replica, rents, patches and all . . . Nobody can remove your grievance as well as you can and you cannot remove them unless you get political power in your hands. No share of this political power can come to you so long as the British government remains as it is. It is only in a Swaraj Constitution that you stand a chance of getting any political power into your own hands, without which you cannot bring salvation to your people.
A considerable number took advantage of the concessions offered and were able to set themselves loose of the bind of ages.

World War II brought a spurt of activity, industrial and agricultural, realigning the old class structure. It brought in a fairly strong industrial and trading class in the urban areas; a strong group of rich peasants arising out of the spread of irrigation and cash crop economy; and the moneylenders common to both the urban and rural areas. The rising nouveaux riche came into conflict for economic dominance with the existing feudal class and for social and political superiority with upper castes in the system. As a result of the spread of education and employment opportunities, a growing middle class came to hold enormous power and influence over the social, economic and political conditions. And finally, a small industrial working class grew up which could not be ignored in the urban centers.

As mentioned earlier, the coming of the British shook the entire structure of the Indian society. The old structure had moulded the division of labor (production relations) and social hierarchy (caste system) into a composite whole. Though the imperial powers found it convenient, especially in the later phases of their rule, to maintain the existing economic and social relations, it became possible to think of the two independently. The new industry and trade and the spread of English education created many jobs and opportunities, bringing in some flexibility into the social structure. "These, together with the bourgeois rule of law (which at least in theory conceded equality and freedom of the individual), and the corresponding legal, political and administrative institutions which were planted here,
appreciably eroded the rigidity and rigor of the old social structure—the hierarchical structure of caste society. A new social stratification based on education, income, and occupation, was gradually taking shape, not so much in complete replacement of as in superimposition on the old stratification, that is, within and across the caste structure. By 1947, this change was clearly visible in the urban sector and has started to make its incipient impact on the rural areas.23 At this same time, due to the facilities provided by the British—reservations in jobs and education opportunity—a very small section of the lowest castes, Muslims and Christians, were entering the professions. The armed forces also provided a good opportunity as did the nationalist movement. It brought forth a number of leaders like B. R. Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram, who not only helped in forming the new state after gaining independence, but played a vital role in policy making in later years. The increasing consciousness among this leadership and their large following, reinforced by the sense of social obligation among the freedom fighters, rather than the simple numerical dominance of the lower castes determined the stipulation of compensatory discrimination in the Constitution. However, though the two, production relations and social relations, could be separated, they still went hand-in-hand. But considering the conditions existing for hundreds of years, these initial steps were of great value.

Post-independence

Since it was a peaceful handing over of power in 1947, the state machinery and the class configuration remained almost intact. Therefore the policies that were adopted thereafter reflected this
Those who shared power and wielded it represented the vested interests in the Indian socio-economic and political power structure: the Indian bourgeoisie (led by the monopolists), other upper and middle classes including its influential educated complement from the urban sector, and the feudal landed interests and the emerging class of rich peasantry from the rural sector. Simplistic explanations or broad generalizations to explain the current caste-class distribution of power are inadequate. They would not explain welfare policies and programs that have been taken up even though they did go against the 'vested interests'. Reality is not necessarily theory in action. It is more complex. In India today no single class can be said to be dominant throughout the country and thus direct policy making. Let us first look at these classes.

Thomas Weiskopf offers a helpful taxonomy of classes divided into three broad strata according to their differing relationships to the process of production. The topmost stratum includes members who share the common characteristic of employing, directing, or in some way controlling large numbers of other people in the course of making their livelihood. There are five dominant classes. (i) The TRADITIONAL ELITE, the big landlords, moneylenders, speculative traders and traditionally privileged classes whose power rests on some form of feudalistic economic exploitation of rural dependent classes, and/or on a socially dominant position in village life; (ii) the AGRICULTURAL ELITE, those landowners with sufficiently large holdings to lease land to tenants or to employ agricultural laborers, but who play an active role in directing or controlling agricultural operations rather than
simply exacting tribute from the dependent classes; (iii) the FOREIGN ELITE, that own or control productive assets within the country, or are seeking to do so; (iv) the BUSINESS ELITE, the indigenous owners and/or directors of large private corporate enterprises; and (v) the EDUCATED ELITE, the indigenous professionals and administrators who direct or control civilian government agencies and enterprises, the military services, the educational institutions, etc.

The Middle stratum is made up of two intermediate classes who are self-employed or self-directed in their economic activity, and who do not employ or control large numbers of other people. These are (i) the PEASANTRY, farmers who own land or hold secure tenurial rights to the land they cultivate. Unlike the agricultural elite their holdings are not big enough to employ others on a large scale; and (ii) the PETTY BOURGEOISIE, owners and operators of small private enterprises and self-employed professional and service workers. Though these two employ mainly family labor, there is a small section which goes close to the agricultural and the business elites.

In the lowest stratum, Weiskopf lists three classes who are dependent on others and have essentially no source of livelihood other than their own labor; either they are employed, directed, or controlled by others or they are altogether lacking in work opportunities. These are (1) the AGRICULTURAL LABORERS, persons engaged in agricultural activities and whose livelihood is derived mainly from working on land owned and controlled by others; (ii) the LUMPENPROLETARIAT, the people who work irregularly in relatively insecure jobs, sometimes engaging in marginal service activities and often simply unemployed. The third
category included in this stratum is that of NON-AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, white and blue collar workers, who hold secure and regular jobs in modern public and private sector enterprises. Weiskopf is led by their being "dependent . . . [with] no source of livelihood other than their own labor . . . employed, directed or controlled by others . . ."\(^{26}\) However such a classification would mean disservice to the others in their company. Their class standing is closer to that of the Intermediate classes than the subordinate class. And that is where I would place them. This classification also ignores the interconnection between these classes through kinship and other sociological ties.

Each of these classes had an independent power base and has made maximum use of it to draw as many benefits to itself as possible. The traditional elite, though weakened, maintains much of its hold in the villages. The business elite controlled the trade and industry and hence the finances, while the educated elite held power due to their role in the struggle for freedom and in the governance of the country after independence. And the agricultural elite held lands and consolidated their power in the policy making. Secondly, the federal nature of the Indian polity and the parliamentary democratic framework helped in distributing power to some extent. The federal structure facilitated political development at the regional level, encouraging local leadership and initiative. This has allowed even the intermediate classes to compete and succeed in reaching seats of power. Since India is a democracy, the numerically stronger castes of the lower class are able to make their presence felt. With those below poverty lines comprising almost 50 percent, the rural population 70
percent, and the lowest castes (the erstwhile Untouchables, now called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) making up 20 percent of the total population, their needs can be ignored by those in power only at their own peril. Thirdly, people are becoming increasingly conscious and politically aware, making it incumbent on the planners and decision makers to formulate policies on their behalf.

As these classes are not necessarily compatible, so is power not highly concentrated. "The conflicting interests of the classes with some degree of power to shape the pattern of economic development prevented the implementation of any consistent and effective strategy of economic growth." It prevented the emergence of a pure socialist or capitalist strategy of economic growth. In spite of the strength of the property owning class, political and economic conditions were not conducive to a capitalist strategy. Such an approach would necessitate the dominant classes coming together and pressurizing the state. But a part of the elite class, the petty bourgeoisie as well as the proletariat opposed such a strategy which would have benefited only those who were already rich. On the other hand, the elite classes prevented a completely socialist strategy which would remove power from their hands. The result has been a potpourri of policies which derive neither from the socialist nor the capitalist ideology, but are drawn with the immediate future in mind, with the coming elections in mind, with retaining power in mind.
"Nowhere else is so large an underprivileged minority granted so much special treatment," says Lelah Dushkin who has done extensive work in this field. To Marc Galanter the Indian effort to secure equality by means of preferential treatment or compensatory discrimination is unique in scope and nature. Yet there is widespread criticism of the state for its tardiness in not doing enough for the uplift of the downtrodden, the erstwhile Untouchables and other lower caste classes. These are now grouped as Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, and Other backward classes. When progressive discrimination in the form of reservation was specified in the Constitution, the names of the beneficiary castes were listed in the schedules of the Constitution and hence the name. The Untouchables were listed as Scheduled castes, the tribes as Scheduled tribes. Most of these were invariably from the lowest classes and this discrimination in their favor was to offer opportunities from which they were earlier kept away for various reasons.

Preferences on behalf of these groups are of different types in an effort to boost their economic, political and social status and advancement. The most important of these is the protected access through reservation. There are reserved seats in the National and State legislatures, right down to the village panchayats; reservations in government agencies at appointment as well as promotion stages; and reservations for admission to educational institutions, even at the professional level. Secondly, there is provision of economic facilities in the form of land allotment--for agriculture and homestead--grants, loans, subsidies, scholarships, etc. And finally, these groups are
provided social protection of their civil rights by legislation. These reservations are offered on the basis of their population. Thus there is 14 percent reservation for the Scheduled castes, 7 percent for the Scheduled tribes (and about 12 percent for the Other Backward classes, in Maharashtra).

The SCs and STs (for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) form one-fifth of the total Indian population, the majority of them falling below the poverty line. Surveys have shown that the poorest of the poor are overwhelmingly from these caste-classes. Similarly Professor Raj Krishna has found a close relationship between the percentage of a state's total poverty population and its percentage of SC/ST population with the assets flowing in the opposite direction. In the rural areas, "the share of the poorest 10 percent households in 1971 was 2 percent (declining from 2.5 percent in 1961) while that of top 10 percent households was 51 percent." Similarly, the lowest 20 percent of the rural population accounted for 9.5 percent of the total consumption in the rural areas while the highest 20 percent accounted for 38 percent. Another survey shows the top 5 percent of the cultivators own 32 percent of the total assets of all rural households. Not only was the quantity of arable land with marginal farmers low, but it was also of the lowest quality. Education, the prime instrument for self-improvement, also has a very unequal distribution. Only 5 percent of the women and 20 percent of the men of the Scheduled Castes are literate; figures for Scheduled Tribes are even lower.

This picture appears very bleak. But seen against the backdrop of the past, some progress will become apparent. This is not to claim that
what has been done to date and the developments after independence are satisfactory. The contention is that the prospect is not all black, but is made up of patches of grey.

The Census of India, General Report 1901, referring to the relationship of education and caste, observes, "The most notable feature... is that everywhere the professional and trading castes take the lead... the degree of education varies directly with the social position of the caste. The Brahmin does not always stand first... [but] nowhere, however, is he surpassed by any caste... which does not claim a twice born origin." Presenting the data from Bengal, the Census Report shows very low literacy rates for the Harijans (then) and the low castes and a high literacy rate for the Kayasthas, Baidyas (higher castes), and the Brahmins, compared to the then literacy rates in general. Anil Bhatt has compared these figures with the literacy figures for the Bengal of 1967, and it reads as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Harijans</th>
<th>Low castes</th>
<th>Mahishya</th>
<th>Kayastha-Baidya</th>
<th>Brahmins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two categories have been helped by special concessions and incentives to attend schools and scholarships to pursue higher education. This rise in educational qualifications is seen in other fields as well. The reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes show a disparity in the educational level of the Members of Parliament belonging to the reserved category and the general category. While in the third Lok Sabha 60 percent of the occupants of
general seats held bachelors or higher degrees, 30 percent of the Scheduled castes and 35 percent of the Scheduled tribe MPs were of a comparable level. In the Fifth Lok Sabha 53 percent of the Scheduled caste and 37 percent of the Scheduled tribe MPs were degree holders, while the general seat MPs remained at the same level.

Again taking the same 1901 Census Report we find figures clearly indicating the control of the higher castes who occupied most of the positions of power and prestige in the government. For instance, in the Bengal of 1901 the higher castes held 90 percent of the positions held by Hindus although they formed one-eleventh of the population. In the United Provinces of the 615 government posts in the possession of Hindus, 584—about 95 percent—were held by the five highest castes. In the Central Provinces the five highest castes that formed 10 percent of the Hindu population, held 97 percent of the posts. And there is a similar trend in the Bombay province, where the middle and lower status caste, including the Marathas, "did not have a single entry in the government officers post." Dr. D. R. Gardil's study of Poona city for the years 1937 and 1954 indicates that the relation between occupation status and caste status was higher in the former than the latter year. In 1937, not a single Scheduled caste member in the sample occupied intermediate professions or posts, while in 1954, 2 percent of those posts were filled by Scheduled castes in Poona. Similarly the percentage of the highest professions and salaried posts increased from zero to five within the same period. Another recent study has shown the distribution of the Scheduled castes in some of the highest administrative positions in the government. The percentage ranges from
8.56 in the Indian Administrative Service through 8.16 in the Indian Police Service to 4.66 in the Indian Economic Service.

Under political participation, reservations are made only on behalf of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes in proportion to their total population. (The Other backward classes do not get this facility.) The candidate belongs to the reserved category but the whole population casts the vote to elect their representative. These reservations were initially envisaged for ten years only, but have been extended from time to time. This reservation of seats does not bar a member of the SC/ST from contesting for a non-reserved seat, though success is not easy as has been the experience of many aspirants.

The reservations prescribed by the Constitution are the minimum necessary, and the individual State governments can provide greater opportunities. This has been done in some of the states. Karnataka and Bihar have exceeded this population percentage, while Tamil Nadu offers as much as 68 percent. This may give the impression that these states are going all out for the betterment of the lowest classes. But an examination of the composition of the castes and classes who gain from these additional reservations will demonstrate that those who are able to extract the maximum from this scheme are those who do not belong to the lowest castes specified in the Constitution. Under the cover of Other Backward classes Tamil Nadu has included almost all the castes except the Brahmins; Bihar has incorporated the middle class castes as well! These are also the two states where some of the worst atrocities against the Scheduled castes are committed. The names of Belchi in Bihar and Kilavenmani in Tamil Nadu will be remembered for a long time for their burning of the hapless Scheduled castes. \(^{43}\)
It is true that reservations are available and the low classes have an avenue for ameliorating their condition, but are these benefits reaching them? Utilization of these opportunities will show a declining curve from the urban centers to the rural areas. Statistics will indicate that reservations in educational institutions, in governmental agencies, housing schemes, and such like, are fulfilled to a greater extent than those providing land and social equality. This is because urbanized groups are more conscious of their rights. As most of them belong to the industrial labor, they have greater bargaining power. In the villages the bias against these castes is still strong, and they are at the mercy of the landholders who are mostly from the upper castes. The more interior a village, the lesser the chances of the fulfillment of government's promises.

This brings us to the question regarding the continuation of reservations on a caste basis and their impact on improving the living condition and employment opportunities of the lowest stratum within these castes. Reservations in appointment and allotments "in favor of any backward class of citizens" is enshrined in the Constitution of India (Article 16[4]) and these 'backward classes' are listed in the schedules by caste names. However, as mentioned above, despite the preponderance of caste and class belonging to the same level in the Indian society, caste is definitely different from class. The economic assumption in reservations is evident and hence a caste classification would deliver goods even to a caste member who may not be economically in the same class, thus robbing another lower class member of his rightful share. That this has happened is a fact, so much so that an
elite has emerged from among the Scheduled castes and tribes who like the dominant caste classes in general are able to draw the benefits to themselves at the cost of their castemates. Therefore to increase distributive justice it is necessary to use an economic classification within these backward castes while assigning reservations. Even though there has been a rash of protest against compensatory or protective discrimination, its continuation has been reaffirmed by the Parliament by a unanimous vote as late as March 1981. It has come to stay, at least for some time.

It is clear that change has set in. How much would be enough to make amends for the treatment meted out to the lower classes is still debated. On the one hand some think that enough has been done; on the other, there are those who contend that unless sufficient weightage is given for their backwardness and its causes, the lowest classes will always lag behind and their status cannot be improved. I am convinced that since the first difficult steps have been taken and the affected groups become more conscious of their situation and their rights, their condition can only improve, but with continued government intervention. How this could be done I will discuss later.

**Class/Caste in Maharashtra**

Maharashtra consists of four different regions, coastal Konkan, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha. Of these Marathwada was a part of the erstwhile state of Hyderabad under the Nizam (as the ruling prince was called), and Vidarbha was with Madhya Pradesh, while the other two were in the State of Bombay. It was only after the reorganization of
the state in 1961 that the four came together. Comparatively, Vidarbha and Marathwada are economically and socially backward, however as a whole the state has considerable homogeneity. Most of what follows refers to the State excluding Bombay city, unless mentioned otherwise.

Two noticeable characteristics of the Maharashtra socio-political scene are, first, the dominance of the Marathas in all fields and, second, the conversion of many Scheduled castes to Buddhism to escape the social stratification of the Hindu religion. For historical reasons, the Marathas are the most powerful group today. They are the largest peasant caste of Maharashtra. During the later Moghul period, the landlords or Deshmukhs as they were called in these parts, were mainly from the Maratha families. Many of them became members of the royal court with considerable powers. Sharing the elite status with the Marathas were the Brahmins and the Kayastha Prabhus (a Kshatriya sub-caste). The Brahmins besides holding the position of priests, were also diplomats and administrative officers, and the Kayastha Prabhus were "recruited as civilian and military officers . . ."44

During the Maratha rule of Shivaji,45 a balance of power between various castes was maintained at the court and in the administration. However, the Brahmin Peshwas following soon after created strong anti-Brahmin feelings with their highly sectarian policies. They favored one particular sub-caste, the Chitpavan Brahmins from the Konkan, alienating the rest of the Brahmins and the other castes. The elite moved to the peripheral regions and established themselves. Back home, the Peshwas appointed Brahmins in the administration, as army officers, granted them lands, reduced their taxes, and distributed considerable sums of
money from the state treasury concentrating religious, economic and political power in one caste. Another handiwork of the Peshwas was the introduction of the non-Maharashtrian traders and moneylenders into the economy. Maharashtra has practically no trading class of its own except a very tiny trading caste in coastal Konkan. This aided the spread of the Gujarati and Marwadi traders into the remotest villages, laying the ground for their acquiring lands of the smaller peasants and turning themselves into landed gentry. As happened in the rest of the country, the changes wrought by the British did not challenge the supremacy of the Brahmins and the other higher classes. It only required them to change their means of livelihood. As elsewhere, they soon occupied the higher posts in administration, in education, and in the professions.

It was only in the early 1930s that the non-Brahmin leadership which had stayed away from the Indian National Congress joined it, bringing along with them the peasant masses of Maharashtra into the freedom struggle. As their participation increased, so did their dissatisfaction with the urban-based Brahmin political leadership. With their astute combination of pragmatism and factionalism, the assertive non-Brahmin section, the Maratha caste, soon dominated the scene at the State level. They took care to cultivate their constituencies building up a sound rural base which has accounted for their continuation in the seats of power from the creation of the State till this day. The shift of power from the urban upper caste—mostly Brahmin—elements to the rural middle castes can be clearly seen from the composition of the ministries from 1937 onwards. The Maratha caste cluster constitutes 40 percent of the population in Maharashtra. The abolition of zamindari and absentee
landlords added to the control of the Marathas over land and drove the Brahmins to the urban centers, making the Marathas the largest landholding class. The enactment of the tenancy laws and land reforms, the proliferation of economic power in the form of credit and other cooperatives and the spread of education accelerated this process. Irrigation and better agricultural practices, especially in the cash crop economy, created greater economic power in this stratum. The decentralization of decision making and devolution of political powers to the Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats, gave them the justification of popular participation in channelizing economic benefits to their class in rural Maharashtra.

At the other end of the social scale were the Scheduled castes and tribes. The Scheduled castes were mainly composed of three castes: the Mahar, Chambhar and Mang, accounting for about nine, 1.3 and 1.8 percent respectively, of the Maharashtra population of 62 million. The Mahar community is the largest and the most intrepid caste. The name of the State is claimed to have been derived from them. They had no traditional occupation and were generally balutedars or petty government servants in the village. In the absence of work they were prepared to move out in search of a job. They were recruited in large numbers in the army of the Peshwas, and later, of the East India Company. This was probably the best thing that happened to them. The East India Company, "in their effort to build a modern army, made education compulsory for its recruits and thus opened an avenue for the Mahars to enter the modern age. The superannuated Mahar officers and their children--living in
separate settlements and liberated from the shackles of the village economy--were the pioneers of the movement for the emancipation of untouchables in Maharashtra."

No account of the Scheduled caste situation would be complete without the mention of B. R. Ambedkar of the Mahar caste. He made his people realize the raw deal they had received and roused them to strive for themselves. He established a number of institutions of higher education and "thus raised a whole new generation of Scheduled caste educated youth imbued with a new political and social awareness." With the assistance of their long military service, the Mahars tried to relate to Hinduism on a higher level as Kshatriyas (being a martial caste) than village status allowed, and ran into predictable resistance. After 1893 with the abolition of the Presidency armies, recruitment of the Mahars stopped. In their effort to get recognition from the British, the Mahars no longer took recourse to the Hindu hierarchy but "dealt with the matter of their condition in political and social, not religious terms." Ambedkar with his Western education realized the importance of education and political power. Thenceforth all the demands of the Untouchables (later SCs) centered around economic and political rather than religious issues. Their movement remained independent of the Congress and made use of the British to bring in changes for greater social equality. Ambedkar was criticized for embarrassing the national leaders to which he replied, "I agree with the Congressmen that no country is good enough to rule over another. But I must also take the liberty to tell them point-blank that the proposition does not end there and that it is equally true that no class is good enough to rule over another class."
Just before his death, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism and exhorted his followers to do the same in an effort to get beyond the Hindu social system, just as so many others had taken refuge in Islam and Christianity. He tried unsuccessfully to start a stable political party. His Republican Party which was to encourage other oppressed classes to join in the common fight against the oppressors, itself split with personality clashes, and is today ridden with factions and rivalry. However, he equipped the Mahars with the ability to take advantage of the benefits being offered. The elite that has risen owes its origin mainly to this caste. Be it economic power or political leverage, the Mahars are in the forefront of the Scheduled castes. In Maharashtra politics they have consistently held some clout. That the ruling party has been able to appease them with minor favors is another matter.

Concluding Note

The situation today in rural Maharashtra, as in most of rural India, is that caste is still a force to be reckoned with, while class is more apparent in the urban areas. One would say it is a continuum with caste consciousness in urban centers much lower than in rural areas and class awareness less acute in the villages. This would be a simplistic observation. In the urban centers, economic activity overshadows the social and the political, and in that sphere caste remains in the background in the urban as well as the rural areas. Even in the villages, the intermingling of the castes is more common in economic activity wherein labor is required by the higher classes of various castes in their homes and fields. This relationship is tacitly understood by all concerned. Right from the Vedic times when even the shadow of the lower castes defiled the
higher castes, these laborers could do all the work to keep him and his family in comfort without troubling his caste status.

The state has helped the numerically weak but economically and politically strong dominant classes in strengthening and furthering their interests. As far as the masses are concerned, though numerically strong, they are economically and politically weak. If at all they come together, their unity is threatened by the capacity of the ruling classes to divide loyalties. The greater propensity to unite along caste lines is preferred to class solidarity. James Petras' remark "The national state . . . ironically resort(s) to communal mystification and regional loyalties to sustain its power . . . thus undermining class divisions" could very well be about India. Caste organizations in the social, political as well as economic fields leave them more vulnerable to manipulation. The Shiv Sena while fighting for 'Maharashtra for the Maharashtrians', ended up antagonizing the very people it planned to help. Similarly political parties and trade unions on caste lines have created hostility in the rest of the class fighting for common causes. Instead of a class war against inequality and maldistribution, such divisions in addition to the policy of reservations, has split the group and set them fighting each other for the few benefits that trickle down. Due to their shortsightedness in fighting for a thin slice of cake they forget that there is the rest of the cake that has disappeared into other avenues.

The caste system has been used to help maintain the power of the dominant classes and to prevent the emergence of a coalition of the poor people. There is considerable truth in the contention of Barrington
Moore who has hypothesized in his study of the origins of democracy and dictatorship that the segmented nature of the Indian social system, especially in the rural areas, and the diffused sanctions employed for the extraction of surplus has made it relatively immune from peasant rebellions or similar uprisings of the poor. Though the recent increase in violence--arising out of the poorer classes demanding and asserting their 'constitutional' rights and the dominant groups interpreting these assertions as challenges and threats to their 'established' rights--seriously challenge the contentions of Moore, it is a fact that but for the factions within themselves, unity of the poor would not have been so slow in coming.
CHAPTER II--NOTES


3. Most of the anti-caste movements fought for a return to the pre-Aryan social system. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and others were anti-Brahmin who were held responsible for establishing and sustaining the caste hierarchy and bringing in inequality and injustice.


5. Ibid., p. 44.


7. Ibid., p. 61.


14. For details regarding the plunder of India see Paul Baran, The Political Economy of Growth (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1957). Baran maintains that but for the riches flowing from India, the industrial revolution in England would not have been such a success.

16. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Ramaswami Naicker, both spearheaded the anti-Brahmin movement in their respective States of Maharashtra and Tamil-Nadu. Phule started the Satya Shodhak Mandal (Truth Seeking Movement) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to educate non-Brahmins and raise their consciousness in the social and political fields. Naicker started a group called Dravida Kazagam (Dravidians organization) with the help of the anti-Brahmin political party, the Justice Party, and they tried the same in Tamil Nadu in the early twentieth century. The two were completely independent movements.


18. There were few exceptions such as N. G. Ranga, who believed in class conflict and worked among the peasantry. His manifesto, Credo of Peasantry, is relevant even today.


24. Ibid.


26. Ibid., p. 33.

27. Ibid., p. 34.


30. According to the 1971 Census the population of Scheduled Castes was 80 million and Scheduled tribes, 38 million out of 548 total population, i.e., 21.4 percent.


34. All India Debt Investment Survey 1971-72, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, reported in Jain, op. cit., p. 325.

35. L. C. Jain has combined two studies; one of a general nature and the other specifically about the SCs/STs regarding population poverty and unemployment, the first from Raj Krishna and the second from "Statistical Abstract of India," 1978.


37. Anil Bhatt, op. cit. He has also studied three other states, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The comparisons and the results are along the same lines.


39. Ibid., p. 220.

40. Ibid., p. 220.


43. Both these villages figured in the media and the Legislatures at the state as well as the National level. In both the villages caste Hindus, meaning higher caste Hindus, burnt the huts of the Scheduled caste people. As most of them live in colonies and in temporary construction, these fires resulted in the death of many. Though they attracted much attention and there was a lot of discussion following the incidents, it was mainly exploited for political purposes and there was no follow-up action. These two villages are only two of many and even today there are such atrocities committed, the latest being in Deori, in the Prime Minister's constituency.

45. Shivaji is today accepted as the patron of Maharashtra. He is the ideal because of his low beginnings and his rise to becoming the leader of the Marathas. Though his father was a courtier of Aurangzeb, Shivaji raised the cry of freedom and created the Maratha empire.


47. A. R. Kamat, op. cit.


49. Nalini Pandit, op. cit.


51. E. Zelliot, op. cit.


54. Poulantzas observes, "The State constitutes the political unity of the dominant classes, thereby establishing them as dominant . . . With regard to the dominant classes and particularly the bourgeoisie, the state's principal role is one of organisation . . . It represents and organizes the dominant class or classes, or more precisely it represents and organizes the long term political interests of a power bloc . . . [composed of] several bourgeois class factions." *State, Power, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1980), p. 127.

56. The Shiv Sena started as a social movement in Bombay against the 'outsiders', i.e., the non-Maharashtrians, but in effect it became mainly anti-South India. This was so because the South Indians held a large number of positions in industrial establish­ments and dominated the trade union movement. Other 'outsiders' like the Gujaratis who were the industrialists, financed the movement and therefore faced no opposition to their stay in the city. After a great deal of violence over many years, the move­ment lost its teeth when it turned more and more towards politics.

57. Moore, op. cit. Moore deals with the untouchables and their plight at great length.
CHAPTER III
POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT IN THE POLICY PROCESS

The State and Development: The Context

The previous chapter described the social forces that shape and affect society, their impact on an individual's development as part of that society and the reactions of the social environment towards him shaping his socio-politico-economic well being. What follows is the examination of a narrower concern. How do politics and administration interact with this individual, who after all should be and is, in name at least, the prime concern of development; for is not all activity undertaken in his name: to alleviate his poverty, to provide him employment, to give him better health facilities, to raise his income level, and we could go on. It is observed that government's role is expanding even in the United States where each successive government professes its intention to reduce it.¹ In developing countries it is all-pervasive in the absence of private capital and effort and the backwardness of the masses. And the importance of the state is therefore multiplied manifold. With increasing devolution of power and decentralization, the politician and the administrator, emerging from the social fabric of Chapter II, have become even more vital in our study of poverty and its eradication.

The context of policy making refers to the roles played by the political decision makers and the administrators independently and
vis-à-vis each other. It is a complex matrix of social forces and power relations. The first determining the basic direction of policies while the second requiring responses that will ensure continuity in power. While the politician and the bureaucrat work out their own roles, the increasing emphasis on the relative importance of the 'representatives' of the people, is bringing the bureaucrat more and more under the control of the political leadership. No less than the Indian Prime Minister asserted this subsidiary role of the civil servants. She remarked in the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of the Parliament), "Civil servants are there to carry out the policies which are accepted by the Parliament and that means those which are represented by the ruling government of the time, the ruling party of the time which forms the government. If the civil servant is not carrying out these policies, obviously, it is difficult to have him there."² This reflects the current thinking on the role of the bureaucracy in policy making. Besides weakening the 'steel frame' as the Indian civil service was called, it has built strong links between the politicians and the bureaucrats who aspire for lucrative positions. It cuts into the scope that the administration enjoyed and brings political influence into greater relief. This could be considered a positive development, as increasing political consideration will bring the bureaucrats closer to the people and their concerns. The politician can no longer remain unresponsive as he has to face an increasingly demanding electorate that requires action, and not just rhetoric. The following sections describe the various forces that operate on the administrative and political decision makers against the political scene described next.
Early writing by political scientists on the political scene of India has been from the pluralist approach. In the fifties pluralism was the ruling paradigm in explaining the political system in the United States. It seemed to best explain the political scene, which was fairly open and in which various groups interacted in a way that the interests of every group were protected. Such a paradigm was automatically transferred and applied to India; the diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious mix of the population and the democratic nature of the polity seemed to suit a pluralist approach to explain the political system. As Harry Blair explains, "Like Adam Smith's economy and the pluralist view of the American polity, the Indian system was viewed as an open one, where access was relatively easy and where, in effect, a political variant of Smith's invisible hand insured that all selfishly motivated interests would balance each other out."\(^3\) Under such an approach the economically and socially weaker classes and castes were able to actively take part in the political process and try to get a 'fair share'. The depressed castes of India's ubiquitous caste system would be able to press their claims and improve their political and economic conditions. The pluralist approach was used to explain the Constitutional protections to the untouchables and the quota system written into the Constitution of India to improve their well-being.

However the persistence and even increase of poverty, especially in the rural areas, in the first two decades of the new independent government's development policies raised serious questions about the acceptability of a pluralist approach to India's political and economic problems. According to aggregate indicators, India slipped from a
country of medium inequalities to one of extreme inequalities in the first two decades of development; the share of the bottom 25 percent of the population to the GNP fell from 17 percent to 12 percent, bringing about this qualitative deterioration. Blair observes, "the pluralist [approach] ... was indeed hard put to explain the persistence and even increase of inequality, for, central to the theory has been the notion that any group of any size can organize and get representation in the decision making process..." and thus improve their social and economic and political conditions. The argument of Theodore Lowi, that over the past two decades the classic pattern of American pluralism has degenerated into a system whereby special interests now exercise effective control over public policy, came to explain the nature of things in India. The increase in the power of the dominant classes and castes and the continuing unequal distribution of income and wealth in favor of those at the top showed a need for a different explanation. This encouraged a number of scholars to turn to a Marxist analysis of the situation.

The central argument in such an analysis is that in a class society, the state is a means of class domination. "It is not a neutral referee arbitrating between competing interests: it is inevitably a deeply engaged partisan. It is not 'above' class struggles but right in them. Its intervention in the affairs of society is crucial, constant and pervasive; and that intervention is closely conditioned by the most fundamental of the state's characteristics, namely that it is a means of class domination..." That its intervention is 'constant' and 'pervasive' is evidenced in the scope of the state's activity in
every field affecting the individual in developing countries like India. Whether viewed at the national or the village level, change, progress, advancement, benefits, all require interaction with the state. However if this state is a means of class domination alone, the reservation on behalf of certain backward groups and the welfare policies taken up by the government would seem contradictory to its interests. Why would dominant castes and classes accept such policies if they are threatening to their position? Because the state is not a mere instrument, it is averred, in the hands of the dominant classes. It has its own independent functions. Skocpol describes it as the independent identity of the state for certain functions, and Ralph Miliband asserts, "The state is indeed a class state, the state of the 'ruling class'. But it enjoys a high degree of autonomy and independence in the manner of its operation as a class state, and indeed must have that high degree of autonomy and independence if it is to act as a class state." A similar sentiment is echoed by Poulantzas.

The state constitutes the political unity of the dominant classes, thereby establishing them as dominant ... The state is able to play this role in organizing and unifying the bourgeoisie and the power bloc insofar as it enjoys relative autonomy of given fractions and components, and of various particular interests. Such autonomy is indeed constitutive of the capitalist state: it refers to the states materiality as an apparatus relatively separated from the relations of production, and to the specificity of classes and class struggle under capitalism that is implicit in that separation.

Thus for the state to function properly, its freedom from representative institutions and pressure groups of dominant as well as subordinate classes is absolutely essential. Such relative independence does not reduce its class nature; in fact it "makes it possible for the state to
play its class role in an appropriately flexible manner." And reform, argues Miliband, is one of the activities undertaken by the state in this capacity to serve the existing social order.

While accepting this as one thread, albeit a major one, making up the nature of the state, it however discounts other factors. Two of these that I would stress would be the sense of nationalism and political necessities affecting the working of the state in relation to its people. It would be wrong to imply that all anti-colonial struggles originated in the attempts of the upper classes to maintain their superiority. Similarly the changes witnessed in India over the past thirty-five years suggest something more than the perpetuation of class primacy of the then ruling elite. The reluctance to implement far-reaching land reforms immediately after independence can be explained by the complex matrix of class interests. But attempting to analyze or interpret the development experience of India solely from the perspective of class interests would be in many ways a one-sided explanation. There are other dominant issues which often shape development policies. James Petras while discussing the development experience of Latin American countries refers to nationalism as an important propellant. According to him, "clearly, the uprisings and conflicts in the twentieth century created a strong nationalist tradition and provided a sense of national identity ... that was consciously taken up by the post-1959 revolutionary leadership ..." This sense of nationalism, which was embodied in Gandhi's leadership of the Independence movement, played an important role in the launching of the Five Year Development Plans. Gandhi constantly referred to the need to devise policies that would lead to the
betterment of all classes. While it is easy to dismiss this as rhetorical attempt to camouflage class interests, it is likely to be shortsighted. The constant exhortation of Gandhi to avoid class conflicts—his concept of trusteeship\textsuperscript{13}—underscored a sense of nationalism of a newly independent country. He did not want class conflicts to further divide a culturally fragmented and economically stratified social structure. Francine Frankel in a political economy analysis of Indian development since 1947 acknowledged that nationalism was the prime mover behind such development schemes as Community Development Program and planned development.\textsuperscript{14}

Another element essential for explaining the working of the government is the pressure of the political system, the political necessities, which considerably influence the adoption of policies by the state. There are certain forces that direct the actions of the state. In a multi-party polity, it becomes necessary to balance promises with political opportunism, to carry out the party's ideology and promises even while ensuring its continuation in power. How far this balancing act is carried out, or perceived to have been carried out, determines the success of the government. The Congress party which during the nationalist struggle emerged as an umbrella party subsuming all the others, had succeeded in mobilizing the Indian public of all classes. During the long fight for freedom, the Congress had issued numerous manifestoes, committee reports and made public announcements emphasizing the need for the country to embark on a course of planned development to benefit all classes.\textsuperscript{15} Time and again eradication of poverty and adverse social conditions were guaranteed. This had helped build up a
climate for the initiation of an all-round development policy. After independence was achieved it was incumbent on the Congress party as the ruling party, to make good on these promises. At the same time, the desire to maintain the supremacy of the party and spread its organization into the villages could be fulfilled only at a price. The result was the "tactical separation between an accommodative party ideology and organization aimed at conciliating the propertied classes on the one hand, and economic plans and institutions designed to accomplish social reform on the other . . ."16 which could not be allowed to continue for long.

The nature of open elections under the new constitution imposed an important constraint on policy making. The new constitution allowed all political parties, including those professing radical ideologies, like the Communist parties, to compete in the elections. This necessitated parties to offer credible development programs and at least some measures of achievement for the subsequent polls. This required the Congress party as the first ruling party to put through some amount of reforms, however limited they were. The abolition of the Zamindari system--or absentee landlords--though it was substituted by cultivating rich peasantry, was in no way an insignificant achievement. It did affect many vested interests. It is doubtful if some of these reform programs would have been implemented if there existed no compelling political necessities. This was an important element in the Indian political scene, which made Rajni Kothari to affirm that one positive side effect of free and open elections, with the participation of political parties of many shades, has been the adoption of some reforms,
though these have tended to hurt some of the vested interests.¹⁷ There are certain forces that direct the actions of the state. Political and social organizations are also a factor to be reckoned with in such a polity. Not recognizing them would antagonize a part of the electorate, a risk few parties can take. Thus, though class interests predominate in the actions taken by the state some other considerations also play an important part.

Therefore reform is undertaken not merely to serve the existing social order, but for all the above reasons, circumstances dictating the relative strengths of each at a given time. Thus the effectiveness of policy depends on which of them was dominant. A policy formulated half-heartedly will either be implemented in the same way or not get off the ground at all. A regime seeking legitimation with the people will bring forth legislation in accordance with its protestations. That it may try to maintain its own interests at the same time is also true. Such reformist activity "is the sine qua non of the perpetuation of [a] capitalist regime."¹⁸ All the more true in a democratic state requiring the representatives to go before an electorate distinguished into heterogeneous caste, language, religious groups. The 'silent masses' are no longer quiescent, more so in urban centers. Since their number is large, they cannot be ignored. On the other hand, being in power--formal power--for limited periods at a time, tempts the politicians to consolidate politically and materially, in the time available, entailing distribution of patronage among followers and members of their own group, be it a caste group or a class one. This pattern holds true in national as well as village politics. At the same time it is not necessary to have formal power to wield control, but it helps.
Among other relationships it helps in connection with the bureaucracy, a bureaucracy which is no longer limited merely to the administration of the state in the traditional sense, but has spread its tentacles over economic, social, cultural and other activities. As most of the administrative apparatus is made up of career bureaucrats who remain constant while governments come and go, their claim to 'neutrality' is strengthened. They insist that their exclusive concern is to advance the business of the state under the direction of the political leadership. But despite protestations to the contrary to view higher civil servants as the mere executants of policies in whose determination they have had little or no share is quite unrealistic. . . . the general pattern must be taken to be one in which these men do play an important part in the process of governmental decision-making, and therefore constitute a considerable force in the configuration of political power in their societies.

There are two main reasons accounting for the setting aside of the notion of neutrality. First is the class background of the bureaucracy, and second, their role in policy making. In most instances, the class background of the bureaucracy is not substantially different from that of its political masters. The system of recruitment has retained the elite nature of the top civil service. In a country where the educational capabilities and employment opportunities of the majority were restricted to a few for historical reasons, it is not surprising that those who have risen to the top in the political as well as administrative fields belong to similar backgrounds. At least in politics there is and has been greater chances of mobility for the not-so-educated and the rural based. Due to the competitive nature of the entrance into the civil service requiring education, especially an English one, this has not been
possible in the administrative ranks. This is more true of the higher levels in the bureaucracy, the ones who participate in decision making. The elite bias is less marked at the middle level, decreasing as it goes to the local level. There is no class incompatibility in the interests and outlook of the two. In the analysis of the Emergency and after, studies have emphasized the identity of views of the political leaders and the top civil servants when it comes to defining 'national objectives,' thus similarity of class background and coalescing ideology provide the 'neutrality' of the bureaucracy. When there is greater congruity between the political entities and the bureaucracy, neutrality can be expected towards different ruling parties, which in a majority of the cases derive from the same social stock.

Of greater consequence is the neutrality in the policy process and in implementing programs. This feature of the bureaucracy affects and is of importance to the general public especially those sections that do not share common caste and class relations. In recent days the focus of rural development has shifted to the lower deciles of the population and yet these programs can be miscarried due to disinterest, indifference and even at times, hostility. The neutrality concept loses its significance in implementing development plans for these sections of the rural people. What is needed is not neutrality, but commitment. A commitment to equity, to justice, to equal opportunity. However much a civil servant desires to remain apolitical, he is so deeply involved in public affairs and state policy, there is a great deal of give and take between the administrative and political participants. While the administration cannot shrug off their own personal and class background which finds its
way into the advice given and decisions made, it cannot stay unaffected by the ruling political ideology with which it is in constant contact, and whose policies it is supposed to execute. And then, administrators are people too, with natural inclinations and dislikes that form their opinions. Even though these opinions are not supposed to affect their actions, they are still present.

Over the years the sway of the political executive over the bureaucracy has increased. The bureaucratic arm of the government has become less independent of the political executive and less politically neutral. In the Indian political system as it emerged in the 1950s, the bureaucracy was to be an 'independent' body advising the political executive on policy making and implementing the policies made. It was to be a non-politicized or politically neutral body, on the model of the British bureaucracy carrying out the policies of the political party in power. It had no major challenge during the first two decades after independence as a monolithic political party remained in power. But election of other parties to power and the frequent changes in ruling parties witnessed during the last decade, has drastically altered the scene. Increasing politicization of the policy-making process has, apart from reducing the power and influence of the bureaucracy, seriously eroded its neutral role. One writer notes, "The softening up of the steel frame with a powerful dose of politicization began early in the '70s, rose to a peak during the Emergency, gathered momentum in the Janata phase and has accelerated after Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in 1980." Members of the bureaucracy giving up neutrality are taking sides politically. Thus many are identified with a particular party or its
ideology. In order to please the political bosses, only one side of the picture is provided while giving information for policy- and decision-making. Thus instead of giving different policy alternatives, such an administration tends to endorse the party line of action. This eliminates new thinking and alternatives in rural development even when the old policies do not yield the results expected of them.

Their continuity in the midst of change and the long experience, makes the advice tendered by the civil servants valuable to any government, and hence their importance in the political process, however 'apolitical' they may be. The relative position of the political leadership vis-à-vis the civil servants is dependent on the relative strength and weakness of each. If a regime is strong, the administration takes on its hue without much protest. In such circumstances capabilities of a strong-willed bureaucrat to pass on independent judgment and advice not agreeable to the regime, are greatly curtailed. In all likelihood he will be bypassed or moved out. On the other hand, a weak government, unable to provide strong leadership and a firm direction, is ideal for the administration to step in and play the dominant role in decision making. When a Communist party was voted into office in the State of West Bengal in 1977 it was feared that the bureaucracy would prove a stumbling block in the party's effort in restructuring the social relations in the rural areas. A few years later the government is working through the same bureaucracy and finds quite a few adherents to its ideology. It was not a case of overnight conversion of the entire West Bengal bureaucracy. The ones closest to the ruling government's way of thinking moved into prominence, as usually
happens, the others occupying the back benches. Such facile adaptation of the bureaucracy to the political environment lends credence to the idea of the bureaucracy being an instrument in the hands of the political power.

This interpretation of the bureaucracy as an instrument in the hands of the political authority is even stronger at the lower levels of the administrative hierarchy where interaction with the people becomes a day-to-day reality. This aspect is of utmost importance when one considers the implementation of policies. It is also a major factor in determining the beneficiaries of government policies. With greater decentralization of decision making and strengthening of the political and representative institutions, power has become more tangible at the local level, reducing bureaucratic power to that extent. With the cooperative institutions and the panchayati raj institutions, they have to contend with not only the formal political leaders, but also the king-makers and the vote-catchers. States with greater decentralization generally have a more responsive administration as is the case in Maharashtra as against perhaps, the State of Bihar.23 While both these States, in fact all the States, started on the path of development together after independence in 1947, they have not kept pace with one another. Most of the institutions and changes introduced by the Central government, or by the State itself, have been accepted in varying degrees, leading to the States being at unequal levels of development. Some contend that most of these institutions "became opportunity structures which local political actors were more than willing to use, in order to build their own stocks of political power and personal prestige,"24 having in mind
the cooperatives and the new system of rural local government in particular. If this was the main reason for allowing these institutions to take root in the rural economy, how does one explain the non-acceptance of these same structures in some other States? Surely all political leaders would like to enhance their power and prestige. However these institutions have brought in changes in relation to the administration, the politicians, and the people, which cannot be denied. The lack of feudal atmosphere, higher political awareness and better organization capacity among people of States like Gujarat and Maharashtra, have resulted from the representative nature of the local government. Though far from the optimum levels, they are much better than in most of the other States. The trend in the direction of a better deal for the masses can be traced through the different innovations in rural development.

Rural Development: A Brief Overview

Rural development from the very beginning has meant much more than economic development. The founding fathers were well aware of the prevailing inequalities and injustices in the Indian society, more acute in the rural areas. Therefore the Constitution of India envisaged the elimination of these through governmental action. It promised Justice, social, political and economic; Equality of status and of opportunity, and expected the state to strive to promote the socio-economic well-being of all the classes, sections and categories of people irrespective of religion, caste, sex, etc., and to build a society completely free of all forms of exploitation. The successive Five Year Plans have been
initiated to ensure a rising national income and an improvement in living standards of the people over a period. But change was to be introduced progressively through democratic means. It was recognized that it would be a quicker process if the country sought mere economic advancement. This would mean leaving the social and political aspects to cope on their own or could be dealt with after satisfactory economic levels were reached. This would have amounted to sacrificing all the ideals held dear during the pre-independence era. Plain economic development would, it was realized, exacerbate the then inequalities. Therefore social and political change was concurrently sought even at the cost of economic progress. The Five Year Plans are not documents of just economic activity but express the government's ideology on societal reconstruction and transformation. The two drafts of the Sixth Five Year Plans prepared by the Janata government and later by the Congress government are good examples of how the Plans communicate the government's thinking on such topics.

In accordance with this ideology necessary changes were made in the organizational set-up to improve people's participation in planning and decision making. The Community Development Program launched in 1952 was an effort "to integrate the technical know-how of science and potential capacities of the masses, the objective being to bring these two forces into effective conjunction."26 The multi-purpose village worker was to be instrumental in bringing change by carrying ideas and innovation in all fields of rural development to the villages making them better equipped not only to be better farmers, artisans and whatever, but to become educated participants in the development process. An
elaborate organization was set up from the village upwards, with the block as the focal point. The leadership expected that "local self help village groups will mobilize their natural and human resources for local improvements of all kinds and all technical agencies of the government will aid them in this undertaking. The widespread machinery and the sense of mission among officials in the initial years evoked much enthusiasm. But in a few years it was realized that people's participation was not forthcoming as expected. Due to heavy bureaucratization reliance on government increased and initiative was found wanting.

The Community Development Program was also not able to spread the benefits of government programs evenly. The economically backward classes gained least of all. In the early years the class bias of the civil service was more apparent. According to Kuldeep Mathur, one of the important reasons for this failure was the inability of the officials to contact the groups that were supposed to be the targets of the program. Due to similarities of caste and class, the officials came into contact with their caste leaders and those of the landowning class. This was a mutually acceptable situation. The extension worker or the Block Development Officer not only identified with these classes but found their targets set by government more easily achieved without too much effort. Their clients were better equipped to understand and act on the messages brought in by them. The better-off cultivators were also interested as this official contact provided them resources and services at a very low cost to themselves. The increase in productivity gave the impression of success of the Program. When it was realized that the goals of the Program were not being fulfilled, a study team was appointed to recommend modifications.
The Balwantrai Mehta Committee appointed in 1957 to go into this problem and suggest a means for getting the involvement of the people in overall development, resulted in the setting up of the Panchayati Raj system. The general set-up of the system is described in Table 1. While stressing the need for a program of rural reconstruction, the study team recommended the transfer of powers, resources and functions for implementation of the Program to elected representatives at the village, block and district levels--i.e., the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad respectively. It was believed that universal suffrage would ensure the participation and welfare of every individual. In practice this idealistic situation never emerged. The new system further strengthened the polarization within the social order. No less person than the Secretary to the Government of India admits, "It has, however, been found that these institutions are dominated by the rural elite and have not given sufficient attention to programs for development of the poverty groups." It would be pertinent to note here that the panchayati system is almost on the same lines as the politico-administrative organization suggested by John Friedmann as the most appropriate spatial set-up for rural development in developing countries.

With increasing population, production of food grain was as vital as people's participation. The intensive agriculture development program (called IADP), specific development of small farmers (SFDA and MFAL), high-yielding varieties program and the resource sustenance given for the success of the Green Revolution, were all aimed at increasing production. These too have "led to increasing income disparities ...

These approaches to rural development have been channelled
through the Panchayati system which has been accepted throughout the country to some extent, but is supposed to have developed best in Maharashtra.

Political Development in Maharashtra

In Maharashtra, as described in the previous chapter, the 1930s saw the rise of the middle castes, the marathas, as the dominant group. Political development became intertwined with the consolidation of this group, especially some of its leaders like Yeshwantrao Chavan. They capitalized every opportunity and endeavored to strengthen their caste standing in the rural areas and politics. As this caste composed nearly 40 percent of the total population of the State, their initiative affected everyone. Therefore though many changes were brought in with ulterior motives, the impact has been felt by the whole society.

The State in its present form symbolizes the wresting of power from the non-Marathas, especially the Gujaratis who were a substantially powerful bloc in the bilingual State of Bombay. Though the Maratha ruler, Shivaji, was used as an inspiration to mobilize people of Maharashtra in the nationalist struggle, the leadership was in the hands of Brahmins like Tilak, Gokhale and Ranade. The rise of Mahatma Gandhi in 1919 was followed by the decline of the Brahmin leadership in this State. The Congress appealed to the non-urban population and the "governmental and party reforms gave greater representation to rural areas and to the less advantaged segments of the population . . . [signalling] the increasing organizational importance of the numerically preponderant non-Brahmans." As they began realizing their political
potential, they pressed for greater recognition in the region. The territorial reorganization on linguistic basis on the recommendation of the State Reorganisation Commission in 1956 resulted in the bilingual Bombay State. The Gujarati trade interests in Bombay and along the coast north of Bombay were reluctant to relinquish the city of Bombay, and as they controlled most of the commerce a compromise of the bilingual State followed. This formation alienated many Congress leaders who withdrew from the Congress and formed their own political party, the Peasants and Workers Party. They continued their campaign for a separate State for the marathi-speaking people. Out of this conflict rose Y. B. Chavan who was to dominate the political scene of Maharashtra, first as Chief Minister and later as the king-maker. As Chief Minister, Chavan "set out to strengthen the position of Maharashtrians in state politics and to build a following for himself..."34 Unlike Bhausaheb Hiray, Minister for Revenue in the bilingual Bombay government and his group, Chavan sought to work for a separate Maharashtra within the party framework. The issue had become topical with support from all sections of the people in the region, irrespective of caste or class. In the 1957 elections, Congress fared very badly strengthening Chavan's position in negotiating with the national Congress leadership. It also provided him with the opportunity to bring in his own men and build the organization afresh laying the foundation of a new rural elite structure. However Chavan wooed capable persons from other parties to augment his own position and that of the Congress. The Marathas in the countryside soon identified with the Congress. As the Marathas formed a considerable portion of the peasantry at all levels, small, middle and big
farmers, this politicization seemed to spread through the whole countryside. And each in his own way capitalized on this new political awareness.

The caste appellation of the Marathas is an interesting example of political opportunism. 'Marathas' it was claimed were only those who held political and economic leadership and were the 'patils' and the 'deshmuks', the rest being 'kunbis'. According to Rosenthal, in the course of the non-Brahmin movement there occurred a political consolidation of the two strata. But he wrongly concludes that "the distinction is no longer significant."35 Along the same lines, Irawati Karve, an Indian anthropologist, observes, "The politically conscious and progressive leaders of the Maratha community have, during the past few decades, striven to diminish and ultimately to abolish the distinction between Marathas and Kunbis . . . The term 'kunbi' has as good as vanished and every kunbi now calls himself a Maratha."36 And yet, today, most are at pains to stress their membership of the kunbi community rather than the Maratha, at least in the Vidarba region. That it should be very different in other regions of the State is very doubtful. The great attraction in belonging to the Kunbi category is that it has been included in the category of "Other Backward Classes" by the government of Maharashtra, and are as such eligible for certain concessions and benefits, not available to the Marathas as being an economically better situated class. As will be seen in the villages later in this study an overwhelming number are Kunbis. It can be surmised that the two came together when they were required to put up a united front against the Brahmins, but found it convenient to stress their separate identities when found beneficial.
So by the time Maharashtra was created in 1961 the Congress had been expropriated by the Marathas. The changing composition of the Congress committees of the State and the representatives at the national level during this period bear sufficient evidence of the take-over by the non-Brahmins, especially the Marathas. The shift in power has not remained concentrated to urban centers or the State capital. The endeavor has been to institutionalize development activities in the villages and provide centers of political power with the help of government resources. The aim has never been simply economic development. The emphasis on politics, people's participation, and local leadership, has led to strengthening the existing institutions and organizations and introducing new ones that would provide the answer to all these needs. The cooperative movement and the panchayati raj system have been efforts in this direction.

**Cooperatives and Power**

In 1961 there was a cooperative organization of sorts for rural credit. This was extended over land development, marketing, milk collection, sugar production, etc. These have acted as tributaries of power spreading from the district to the villages, with the positions offering the State leadership an avenue for rewarding followers in larger numbers. These cooperatives cover most of the agricultural activities within the district. For agricultural credit, there is the District Central Cooperative Bank with primary credit societies at the village level. The District Land Development Bank in turn operates to provide long-term loans for agricultural purposes like land development.
The Agricultural Produce Market Committee operates the organized market system in the rural areas. The Agricultural Cooperative Sale Purchase Union handles marketing of items specified by government like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. In almost all districts there is also a Federation of Milk Producers, serving the needs of the milk producers and collecting the produce and assuring a good price for them. There are also area specific cooperatives like the sugar factories and the spinning mills. The elections to all these bodies are hotly contested, with the outcome generally decided by the ruling political party at the State level and the financial resources utilized. As these cooperatives control economic resources and indirectly the people concerned, they have become centers of political power. Thus it is a reinforcing process, augmenting the influencing capacity of the persons who run the cooperatives. In Western Maharashtra it has given birth to the 'sugar barons' and the 'sugar lobby', whose tangible weight has to be reckoned with in any rural development policy and resource allocation. That they have enjoyed greater attention from the State government has been the sore point with the other regions. In a representation made to the government by the Nagpur District Planning and Development Council on 16th May 1981 it has requested additional funds to wipe out the backlog in communication, irrigation, health and educational facilities. Of the four regions in the State, Western Maharashtra has been shown to have enjoyed the highest patronage.
Panchayati Raj and Power

The cooperatives have close contenders for district power in the panchayati raj institutions. Panchayati raj which literally translates as rule by the village elders was first accepted by the State in 1962. Though most States have drawn up the system on the basis of the recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee, the details have been left to the individual State governments resulting in variants of the original proposal. Devolution of powers, method of representation, role in rural development are therefore different in the States. Of these the Maharashtra system, which has evolved over the years, has been accepted as the best form now available, with the exception of West Bengal where the Communist Party (Marxist) has infused its party members into all levels of the panchayati organization. The Balwantrai Committee had suggested the block or the Panchayat Samiti as the focal point for all decision making and resource utilization, with the Zilla Parishad at the district headquarters as the advisory body with nominated individuals from the block level. The Maharashtra pattern entrusted all the powers to the Zilla Parishad, with the Panchayat Samiti as the subordinate and implementing agency. However every member in the Village Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad was directly elected; the only nomination being for the women and institutional members.

Like the cooperatives the panchayati raj system became a vehicle for expanding opportunities, providing positions of power and fostering local leadership in the rural areas, in that order. There was no radical shift in the character of leadership that emerged through these institutions. "There is very little evidence to show that the
traditional factors of caste or property are no longer associated with power and leadership. 39 But even if the character has not changed very much the process of acquiring leadership or positions of power is not the traditional one. Ascriptive qualities gave way to selection through elections, democratizing local governments. In fact panchayati raj is called democratic decentralization. This leadership forged links with the State leadership to bring in more vitality to their positions, politically and developmentally. The State leadership, in turn, found them a source for obtaining rural votes, reinforcing their relationship. To retain sufficient control and ensure that the local leadership does not fall out of line, the State government restrained their autonomy. This control came in handy if the Zilla Parishad passed into the hands of the opposition party. Zilla Parishad leadership became the stepping stone to higher political office. As the Zilla Parishad members were directly in touch with the people, they were sought by the highest political authorities in direct proportion to the following they could muster. There have been instances when the State has amended the rules if it has thought it necessary to curb the powers of the Zilla Parishad. The timing of the rule limiting the executive period of an individual as President, Zilla Parishad, to two terms, it is said, was prompted by the case of one particular individual whose influence was growing much too fast for the liking of those in the State capital. 40
All these various approaches to rural development have remained administration heavy. Even the panchayati raj policy requiring public participation relies heavily on the administrative machinery for its success. Panchayati raj which was accepted as the answer to the heavy bureaucratization of the Community Development Program had the same institutional framework. The officials instead of working in a purely administrative organization were placed under the direction of the political representatives, without the earlier controls being removed. Instead of a monolithic structure, there were dual controls on the administration—of their political counterparts and of the hierarchically superior official. On the other hand, the government maintained some control on the representatives by keeping some hold over their actions and making them answerable to the government. The Zilla Parishad administration in addition felt the pressures from other political and social entities due to the ever-increasing role of the government in development. As the stakes were high, the competition was keen to influence and cultivate the administration; and as the political leadership had far-reaching dominance, the administration was equally enthusiastic to reciprocate, making it the exclusive domain of a few.

In brief, the Zilla Parishad is organized on the following lines. In an average district of about 1,500 villages, one can expect about 700 Gram Panchayats, depending on the size of the villages. Each Gram Panchayat consists of seven to ten members, according to the population, each member directly elected on the basis of adult franchise. If a woman fails to get elected, one is nominated. It is generally
observed that the women members are passive and do not participate much in the debates. In case of nominations it is the wives of prominent men who get selected. Every Gram Panchayat is assisted by a Gram Sevak (lit. servant of the village), who gives them all the information coming from the district or block office, guides them in the deliberations and once decisions are made, implements them. A group of such Gram Panchayats are organized in a block under a Panchayat Samiti. It again is a directly elected body. It has independent functions as far as its own funds are concerned and a subordinate function as an agent of the district organization. All the Panchayat Samitis, in turn, are under the Zilla Parishad. A combination of election, nomination and cooption, ensures representation of all the interests in the district. Tables 1 and 2 describe the Zilla Parishad structure and the composition of one. Nomination on behalf of the Scheduled castes and tribes has been discontinued because of the establishment of reserved constituencies. While the representatives are the policy makers and decision makers, these policies and decisions are implemented by an army of officials headed by the Chief Executive Officer. There are generalists and specialists to help in administration and supervision of the various departments. At the block level, the Block Development Officer has his extension staff who are in actual touch with the village level workers and the people.

The activities of the cooperatives, the Zilla Parishad and all the other departments and organizations working in the district, converge on the village with their programs and plans affecting all aspects of rural life.
### Table 1. Panchayati Raj Structure

**Panchayati Raj Structure**

- **Zilla Parishad**
  - President, Z. P. & Members of the Z. P.
  - Chief Executive Officer
  - Standing Committee
  - Subject Committee
  - Generalists
  - Subject specialists

- **Panchayat Samiti**
  - Chairman, P. S. & members of P. S.
  - Block Development Officer
  - General staff
  - Extension staff

- **Gram Panchayat**
  - Sarpanch, G. P. & Members of G. P.
  - Gram Sevak

- **Gram Sabha**
  - All adult residents in the Gram Panchayat jurisdiction

---

**Divisional Commissioner**

**Regional departmental Heads**

---

96
Table 2
Zilla Parishad Membership Composition
(Using Nagpur Zilla Parishad as a Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of elected members</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominated women members</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayat Samiti Chairman not directly elected to Z.P.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayat Samiti Chairman also elected to Z.P.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coopted members who are chairmen of government specified cooperatives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus in the political as well as administrative arenas the village becomes the testing ground. It bears testimony to the actual capabilities of each participant and their interaction with the common masses. The flow of resources within the various strata and sections of the village community as also among the different villages cannot be expected to be uniform. The pattern of this flow is most affected by the proximity to centers (persons, not places) of power. It does not imply that only certain persons grab all the advantages but that some are more equal than others. Just as certain villages develop faster and better than their neighbors, some categories of people within the village, as well as some persons are able to enjoy greater gains from
government programs. In a contest between technically equal villages for determining the site of a project, the one with greater political weight would be the likely winner. It may even be chosen if found technically deficient. The same pattern operates within the village community. To speak in caste/class terms, dominance in the village is enjoyed not by the dominant caste or class as a whole, but by a few dominant individuals belonging to these castes/classes. These dominant individuals exploit not only the members of the other castes but also the poorer and vulnerable sections of their own caste. Though in general these vulnerable sections of the dominant caste do better than the others, some of the elite of the other castes are able to join the elite among the dominant castes in exploiting the others.

Some scholars like M. N. Srinivas, Carolyn Elliot, and P. M. Gardner, have stressed the role of the dominant caste in village politics due to their economic and political power, their numerical preponderance, high ritual status and education. This has been criticized by others like S. C. Dube, Yogesh Atal, and T. K. Oomen, who find the concept as used by Srinivas and others to be inadequate and limited in understanding Indian politics. They point out to the class structure within the caste structure affecting politics and politics in turn affecting these structures creating factions in the dominant group reducing their relative strength and providing members of the other castes a scope to assert themselves and demand a share in power. The second interpretation of politics helps elucidate the interconnections between politics on the one hand and caste and class on the other in the village. It explains the power enjoyed by the Marathas on the one hand, and some others of other castes who have risen
within this system; and the factors impinging on this power structure bringing forth a group of individuals in the village who are closely connected with the political and administrative networks. These are the people in frequent contact with the political leadership and officials in urban centers, who are well-informed of the programs and schemes, have better chances of putting forth their case and applying appropriate pressure when necessary.

On their side, the district political and administrative elite have evolved a dual function in development concerned with distributive politics and investment politics. Ilichman and Uphoff use the term 'political investment' to describe the use of elite resources to create political infrastructure so that at some future point in time, support can be mobilized or new support of the regime might be attracted. The creation of a party organization or the wooing of a constituency through social reform would be examples of political investment. Distributive politics is self-explanatory. The two in a sense are interconnected. Investment politics implies distribution of something, tangible or intangible. Setting up a person as political base in the village transfers to him a part of the original person's powers, allowing him to use those powers for distributive purposes in the future. And distributive politics create an investment through the goodwill and gratitude received in return for the benefit received. This mutual dependence to a great extent reinforces the status quo. In fact aggravates the differences which are based on factions in the village.

The combination of investment and distributive politics working with the relationships in the rural areas and discussed in the previous
chapters and here, leads to a vicious circle of politics, class and caste interests working for one another. This in turn is translated into the planning process which is the vehicle accepted for bringing in change and a better deal for all. How it operates can be witnessed in the quantity and quality of the plans and schemes that benefit the different groups: the big cultivators, small farmers, agricultural laborers and artisans. The allocation of resources depends on the representation each group enjoys. The lower class population has few spokespeople in the decision-making circles, be it at the state level or the district level. At the district level, due to the method and nature of the composition of the Zilla Parishad, the scope for persons from lower classes to gain entrance is limited. Admittance to other representative bodies can be even more difficult. Add to this the ever-present pressure for more foodgrains and we have plans skewed in favor of landed peasants.

An examination of two annual plans, 1977-78 and 1978-79 for the district of Nagpur will be a case in point. Out of a rural population of approximately 1,120,000 persons with a working population of 46 percent according to the 1981 Census 48 16 percent are cultivators, 20 percent agricultural laborers and 4 percent are marginal workers. (With a 49 percent non-working population.) It would stand to reason that the non-cultivating population have an equitable share of the plan funds. Addressing the issue of decentralized planning, the Socio-Economic Review and District Statistical Abstract, 1977-78 and 1978-79\(^49\) of Nagpur district has underlined the necessity of this approach. It states:
The basic idea behind this approach is to take into consideration the peculiarities of different areas as regards level of development, physiographical conditions, available resources, quality of economic and social services. The Planning Commission has also observed that involvement of representatives of the people in the process of formulation and implementation of plan at district level is not only essential but becomes a basic need to achieve the objects of planning and to translate the message of the Plan into actual action... Thus the underlying philosophy of District Planning is that not only every district should get certain plan allocation decided on the basis of certain parameters but a broad cross section of the representatives of the people of the district should have a say in how this allocation should be spent in the district.

And with a view to bring a close collaboration and cooperation between the various agencies responsible for development--Zilla Parishad, State sector departments, financing institutions, corporate bodies, etc.--and the local people, a District Planning and Development Council has been set up. Tables 4 and 5 list the members of the D.P.D.C. and its executive committee. The pattern a plan will take in such circumstances is obvious. The Review further claims that the expenditure within the district "would reveal that due importance and maximum justice has been given to the schemes under various sectors... which are mainly responsible for general welfare and upliftment of the people in the district." How this justice is meted out can be seen in Table 3, below, in the sectoral outlays in the state and the district plans. Of the sectoral allocations for the years 1977-78 and 1978-79 shown in Table 3, I and II need no explanation as their target population is obvious. Item III includes three sub-heads: Industry and Mining, Transport and Communication, and Employment Guarantee Scheme. Under Industry and Mining, the major activity was to promote employment to the educated unemployed and financial assistance to small industrial
Table 3. Sectoral Outlays in the State and the District Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage of allocation of the outlay for district level schemes in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Agriculture, Cooperation and C.D. Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Irrigation and Power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Industries, Transport &amp; EGS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unallocated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unallocated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL|                                             | 100     | 100     | 100     | 100     |

Source: Statistical Review, op. cit.
Table 4. Constitution of the District Planning and Development Council

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The designated Minister of the District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Other Minister(s) of the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Commissioner of the concerned division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>All Members of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhan elected from the district. (Lower houses of legislature at the national and state level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All Members of the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishad elected from the district. (These are the Upper houses of the legislatures at the national and state level.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The President of the Zilla Parishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The Mayor of the Municipal Corporation (if there is one within the district).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>One of the Presidents of 'A' Class municipal councils in the district to be nominated by the Chairman of the DPDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>One of the Presidents of the 'B' class municipal councils in the district to be nominated by the Chairman of the DPDC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>One of the Presidents of 'C' class municipal councils in the district to be nominated by the Chairman of the DPDC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The Chairman, District Central Cooperative Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The Director, Maharashtra State Cooperative Land Development Bank, representing the district on the Board of Directors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued) Constitution of the District Planning and Development Council

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>The Regional Manager of the Lead Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>A representative of the Regional Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Seven non-official members to be nominated by government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>The Executive Director of Drought Prone Areas Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>The Chairman of the District Committee of the Maharashtra State Khadi &amp; Villages Industries Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>The Superintendent of Post Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>The Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>The Collector of the district</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Composition of the Executive Committee of the D.P.D.C.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Designated Minister of the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Other Ministers of the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Divisional Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>President, Zilla Parishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>One of the four representatives of urban local bodies, i.e., the Mayor of the Municipal Corporation, and one President of 'A', 'B' or 'C' municipal councils, to be nominated by the Chairman, DPCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Collector of the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Two other representatives of the Council to be nominated by the Council by consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>All Members of the Parliament and State legislatures from the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Chairman, District Central Cooperative Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Manager, Lead Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The Executive Director, Drought Prone Areas Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>District Planning Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
units. The scope of the Transport and Communication is evident. Employment Guarantee Scheme provided employment on productive works like irrigation works, land development and some kinds of roads; in fact any kind of work that was productive and gainful—productive for the economy and gainful to the employed individual. Of these three, only the last would benefit the non-cultivator or those who have no means of livelihood except their own labor. During 1977-78 and 1978-79 Employment Guarantee Scheme comprised 9.5 percent and 1.5 percent respectively of the total outlay. It is this expenditure which directly benefits the lower strata of the rural population. This entire amount, too, did not reach this group alone. In a study conducted by the Programme Evaluation Organisation on Employment Guarantee Scheme of Maharashtra, it was reported that due to various reasons, delayed payment being one of them, agricultural labor formed only a small part of the workforce on the Employment Guarantee Scheme works. In the same way, Social Services making up approximately 35 percent of the total outlay covers the entire population with only a few schemes devoted to this specific social group. A conservative estimate would be between 15 to 20 percent of the total sectoral outlay may ultimately find its way to the lower deciles of the population. This again, does not necessarily reach those in the rural areas. A large chunk of this expenditure is swallowed up by urban dwellers. This is most visible in social services wherein scholarships and freeships are provided for the Scheduled castes and tribes and the economically backward classes. Very few of these are procured by the rural poor. Thus the end result is that a miniscule percentage is spent on a large mass of the rural people who are in actual need of these funds and are entitled to them
according to the professed policy of the state government. As the
district plan is the replication of the state and national allotments,
we can conclude that this represents the aggregate effort at developing
the rural poor.

With the quantity of funds at such a low level, the quality of the
schemes and projects can make the difference. However most of them are
short-sighted and short-term policies, more interested in the immediate
and at times visual impact on the beneficiaries who may not realize the
drawbacks of such schemes. In these cases the investment politics are
sought through distributive politics. The ones who are at the
receiving end of such policies are usually those without any source of
income and who would therefore accept whatever comes their way. This
can have lasting deleterious effects for the beneficiary which is the
opposite of the impact intended.

This is how it can operate. Programs under the Integrated Rural
Development are specifically designed for the lower deciles of the
population who are mainly landless agricultural laborers. The most
common scheme to increase income and provide some employment subsidy is
provided by the purchase of milch cattle, with the cooperative or
nationalized banks furnishing the rest of the cost of the animal as a
loan. In this situation there are three persons involved: the
beneficiary, the departmental representative, and the bank official.
All the three are for different reasons interested in keeping the price
as low as possible. Let us suppose that the beneficiary is to receive
a cow to improve his income from the sale of its milk. They have the
choice of two types of cows: one is a 'local' breed and the other is
the 'crossbred' one; the first yielding a few liters of milk and the
second, substantially more; but the second costing many times the first. The subsidy granted is 50 percent of the cost of the cow or a fixed specified amount, whichever is less. The subsidy covers the local cow well but makes up a very small portion of the cost of the other. All three, especially the officials who know the problems of recovering loans, want to keep the cost low and therefore opt for the local variety. Once the cow is bought, the work of the officials is over and the laborer is left to fend for himself. He has very little money for fodder and probably no training in animal husbandry. In very many cases, the yield of milk is low—there is little fodder—making the animal unprofitable and a financial burden. As there is no personal investment, the individual may have little interest. The experience in many cases is that either the animal is sold at an even lower price, or it may soon die, or may survive as an additional burden. The scheme then does not serve its purpose. As there is little follow-up by the officials this pattern continues with disturbing monotony. Such after-effects leave the beneficiary a defaulter in the eyes of the bank and ineligible for any future financing. The opportunity risk is so high in milch cattle that even those with assured income will hesitate to take it up as a source of income, unless they have land and some background in the field.

Are the drawbacks of the programs which are obvious to a casual observer hidden from the administration that has day-to-day dealings with the rural people and should be knowing the problems facing them? That is neither true nor possible. But the class and political environment makes it possible to accept these program deficiencies. Those who would like to change the course of events would find themselves in a minority and engaged in an uphill task. However, if any from the
targeted population want to break away from the chains of poverty, it is not impossible. It is this alone that accounts for whatever mobility exists in the social system. Those who are aware of the schemes and programs and go forward to apply or demand for them, have bright chances of having their efforts rewarded. Taking advantage of the political or administrative structure will make the outcome more definite. It is even possible to manipulate and exploit the leadership. Such instances are, though, rare. Though more and more are realizing that the status quo is not necessary, their understanding of the alternatives is blurred by their own social and cultural perceptions and the rhetoric to which they are subjected. It keeps them from breaking out of the old relationships, and forming new ones which are not impossible. These stumbling blocks in the way of change are the subject matter of the next chapter.
1. Edward Greenberg, *Understanding Modern Government* (New York: John Wiley and Co., 1978). The experience with the present government makes one doubt whether reduced government is possible or even feasible, especially from the point of the minorities in developed countries and the poorer sections in the developing ones.

2. This remark is reported in *India Today*, in its report on the bureaucracy in "Year of Reckoning," p. 84, January 15, 1982.


13. Mahatma Gandhi regarded the nationalist struggle ahead of social change. But he recognized that the social conflicts in the Indian society were unfair to the lower castes who had received a raw deal from the upper castes. However he did not think that the Hindu system was at fault. To him the lower castes could be looked after by the others as brothers and their conditions improved. A few were trustees of the society and took this trust seriously.

15. This tendency still continues and is evidenced in all the plan documents and Committee reports and the party minutes.


18. Ralph Miliband, op. cit., p. 87.


20. Ibid., p. 119.

21. This has been the finding of most scholars studying the political and administrative system in national policy making. See Blair, op. cit. Also Dilip Hiro, Inside India Today (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979); Matthew Kurian, ed., India, State and Society, A Marxian Approach (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1975).

22. India Today, p. 84.


27. First Five Year Plan (New Delhi: Planning Commission, 1951).


30. John Friedmann, *The Active Community: Towards a Political Territorial Framework for Rural Development in Asia* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979). Friedmann emphasizes the need for representative bodies in the rural areas to encourage the beneficiaries of rural development policies to participate in policy making. He envisages the setting up of elected councils, called Agropolitan Councils, in the rural areas. To prevent these bodies from being monopolized by the rural rich or vested interests, the small farmers and rural poor should be provided their own constituencies for representation. Apart from delinking the influence of urban leaders and elites, the set up would also help the rural poor by enabling them to take charge of development activities.


32. Though the Balwantrai Mehta Committee presented its report in 1958, only two states acted on them in 1959--Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. The rest followed later. Maharashtra and Gujarat started it in 1962. While Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have maintained the center of power at the Panchayat Samiti or block level, Maharashtra and Gujarat moved it to the district level to the Zilla Parishad. Both these states decentralized many functions and devolved greater powers to the Zilla Parishad system than any other state. In the State of Andhra Pradesh the district Collector was also the chief executive of the Zilla Parishad and in certain matters could veto the actions of the Zilla Parishad. Since 1962 in Maharashtra there have been many changes in the powers of the local body giving or retracting powers as experience brought out problems and the respective districts made demands.


34. Rosenthal, op. cit.


38. "Vidarbhacha Backlog," letter sent by the Collector, Nagpur, to government on behalf of the district DPDC.


40. With a change in the Chief Minister of the State, some of the old strongholds had to be whittled down. The President of the Nagpur Zilla Parishad is said to be the reason behind this rule. As a
consequence of this rule he had to resign immediately as he was in his third term, whereas the rule put a limitation after the second.


51. Ibid., p. 39.

CHAPTER IV
BELIEF SYSTEMS, THEIR NATURE AND IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT

The previous two chapters have looked at the continuation of poverty in the midst of promises and opportunities that should have brought in better socio-economic and political equality, a process that had to, however, encounter the social environment of the individual and the political and administrative structures and processes that exist in rural India. We have seen how class and caste operate in almost every aspect of life, and to a great extent are responsible for the extremely slow pace of change. They not only affect the physical experience of the disadvantaged lower class caste but are felt with the same impact at the level of their belief systems. It is this impact that lays them open to manipulation by a few. The existence and operation of these belief systems need to be studied as they contribute to our understanding of the conditions generating poverty and its concomitant drawbacks. They help explain the power process. Seen in its light, the policy process appears skewed against the poor. This is not difficult to understand since the policy makers themselves have little in common with the lower classes. If one waited for a structural reorganization of society initiated by the power-wielders, it could turn out to be a long wait; and if change is expected from the class consciousness of the hungry masses, who have no economic time for anything save working for their daily livelihood, even that may not be an immediate occurrence.
Belief systems are a combination of belief sets signifying the mental acceptance of or assent to something offered as true. When these belief sets are continued over a period of time, they are internalized to such an extent that they form responses to situations and persons without the consciousness of a deliberate choice. Though every individual is exposed to these belief systems, the different classes tend to react to them differently. Thus, while some become the exploiters, others remain at various levels of being exploited. That every poor person is a victim of exploitation would be too simplistic a statement, though it could be said that the likelihood is greater as one goes down the socio-economic scale.

Let us first examine the kinds of belief systems prevalent in a society. The words 'belief systems' are used to downplay the normative meaning that 'value systems', for example, would have. They cover beliefs, aspirations, attitudes and expectations, especially as they concern development and the people's capacity to benefit from it. Sometimes other words such as meaning systems, even value systems, are used synonymously, but they are more normative in connotation. These belief systems are embedded in the socio-political structures and processes. They are communicated to the individual in verbal or non-verbal, specified or implied terms, that 'teach' him his values, give him his insights, determine the way he fits into his social milieu, affect his whole personality. An individual receives 'messages' right from birth that develop his belief systems encompassing the rules of society, customs, and traditions. These may not be conducive to growth
of the lower classes, but are so deep-rooted as to have become a part of the individual. Belief-systems are nurtured in two ways. One, they are imbibed during the growing process from the socio-cultural factors and then built upon in the political process to control, manipulate and achieve political ends. It is the make-up of this belief system and its vulnerability to manipulation (which may not be deliberate, but may have become a natural response of certain classes towards others) that determine the capacity to understand and interpret, to interact and to participate in discourse. It tends to 'fix' a person at a particular level in society and affect his sense of personal effectiveness. As it circumscribes the impact of development in India, the creation of this symbolic universe by the operation of the belief system becomes a factor in development. It is a constraint in the attempt to spread benefits among a wider population. This symbolic universe or symbolic environment is to some extent a shared experience, with every member of the society drawing from it. At the same time within it are a number of systems involving various groups.

Frank Parkin's discussion of class inequality and the distribution of values in class hierarchy has distinguished three major meaning systems with relation to the class stratification of Western societies. ¹ Though the classification cannot be used in the rural context in toto, it provides a good categorization. Adapting his meaning systems to my purposes the three belief systems are:

(1) The dominant belief system, the social source of which is the major institutional order. This is a moral framework which
promotes the endorsement of existing inequalities. Among the subordinate classes this leads to a definition of the reward structure in deferential terms.²

(2) The subordinate belief system, the social source or generating milieu of which is the local working-class community. This is a moral framework which promotes aspirational and accommodative responses to the facts of inequality and low status.

(3) The radical belief system, promotes an oppositional interpretation of class inequalities.³

The way a person makes sense of his social world will be influenced by the meaning systems or belief systems he draws upon. By its very nature the dominant belief system will have the largest number of adherents for as Marx states, "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas," those groups occupying positions of power and privilege in society "tend to have the greatest access to the means of legitimation."⁴ As Parkin explains, the dominant values represent the perceptions and interests of the privileged groups, yet "by virtue of the institutional backing they receive, such values often form the basis of moral judgements of underprivileged groups ... Dominant values tend to set the standards for what is considered to be objectively 'right' ... [Thus] moral and political rules hold sway not because they are self-evidently 'right', but because they are made to seem so by those who wield institutional power."⁵ And this holds true for all aspects of life, economic, social, cultural and political. A vast majority of the poor are incorporated into this belief system.
reducing to that extent, conflicts over inequalities. Seen as a process of legitimizing through centuries, the power and privilege of the dominant group, the pervasiveness of the caste system in India begins to make sense. Within the dominant belief system, the moral framework of the subordinate class, according to Parkin is one of deference. Such a deferential attitude is most marked among groups and individuals who "directly experience the social influences and judgements of dominant class members" like those whose occupations bring them into immediate face-to-face contact with employers, or those who live within established local status system.6 Regarding the latter, David Lockwood finds that

Local status systems . . . operate to give the individual a very definite sense of position in a hierarchy of prestige, in which each 'knows his place' and recognizes the status prerogatives of those above and below him.7

The first images that come to the mind are those of the agricultural laborers working on a yearly basis for the landlords. Some years ago, before the land reforms, we would have mentioned the tenant or share-cropper as well, but not today. Most likely he would fit into the second belief system.

The subordinate belief system is essentially accommodative, "that is to say its representation of the class structure and inequality emphasizes various modes of adaptation, rather than either full endorsement of, or opposition to, the status quo."7 Another attitude occurring in this system is the aspirational. Thus while the person with the deferential attitude accepts the social order as immutable and fixed, the aspirational attitude "allows for the social exchange of
personnel between classes, while accepting the necessity of classes as such. The aspirational model recognizes that with talent and ability one can rise above the present position. In the context of the rural society in India, such an outlook would, in all likelihood, be found among those who have experienced a slight improvement in their economic or social or political lives. These are still the conservatives who are not out to question the basis of society itself, but make the best use of available resources. These would be the individuals who will try to educate their children and work diligently at their given occupations. Parkin calls the subordinate belief system a 'negotiated version' of the dominant value system, as dominant values are modified by the subordinate class as a result of their social circumstances and restricted opportunities. Rodman calls this version the 'lower class value stretch.' "By the value stretch I mean that the lower class person, without abandoning the general values of the society, develops an alternative set of values . . ." Thus the lower class individual operates at two levels: " . . . in situations where purely abstract evaluations are called for, the dominant value system will provide the moral frame of reference; but in concrete social situations involving choice and action, the negotiated version or the subordinate value system will provide the moral framework." Even if a lower class individual dreams of a life of middle-class comforts, in reality his demands will tend to be for things within his range for he is aware of the restricted opportunities. Thus the subordinate belief system is the result of the lower class being a part of dominant belief system, but finding it inappropriate to its life situation gives rise to another set of values and beliefs.
The third belief system to be found in the lower class is the radical belief system. It "purports to demonstrate the systematic nature of class inequality, and attempts to reveal a connectedness between man's personal fate and the wider political order . . . the radical value system promotes the consciousness of class . . . [and provides] a more favorable social identity." This system has few followers who question and oppose the system as it is difficult to sustain without the backing of a political party. In Maharashtra such a party is not a powerful force and hence only traces of the radical attitude are encountered at the individual level.

Combinations of these belief systems can and do coexist within the individual to varying degrees. Though the dominant and the radical are contradictory, a person, however opposed to the reward system, may be forced to be deferential, at least outwardly, due to economic reasons. With increasing social mobility the aspirational and oppositional attitudes are spreading from a few to others, though not at the speed one would expect. One of the main reasons for the slow spread of the subordinate and radical belief systems is the absence of sufficient information and its restricted flow. Lack of access to the media like newspapers and radio, low rate of literacy and education, and insufficient contacts with the outside world go into the making of the deferential attitude towards those who do have such access and are able to draw various benefits to themselves. These factors are the very basics of knowledge compared to some of the advanced societies where it is the content as against access that has become the issue. The deferential attitude in turn becomes a big stumbling block in creating
a class consciousness. It retards a full understanding of the possibilities already existing and the changes needed for complete development.

In the make-up of the belief systems, besides the social standing of a person, his age is another factor to be considered. Those who have been under the imposition of social and economic exploitation longer, find it difficult to change. The younger generation is physically more mobile, has more contact with the media, is in greater touch with the outside world, especially the urban centers, and is also relatively more educated. These are the people who want change. The older generation is rigid and for security reasons clings to the traditions and customs which to them are better than uncertainty. In the removal of caste inhibitions, if there is any resistance it is usually from the older people. That is as far as poverty groups are concerned. The others find the status quo suitable and are in no hurry to see everyone get a fair chance. Some of the outbursts against the Scheduled castes in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are a 'nostalgic' re-creation of a past when the landlords had virtual control over the lives of the dependent poor.

Education is another factor that determines the role a person plays. It helps to determine his self-image as well as his efficacy in the socioeconomic sphere. Although education to a great extent can be traced to the social structure, it can stand by itself as an important indicator. In an urban experience the close relationship between education and economic, social and political life is not as pronounced and visible as in rural areas. In the village setting, in all likelihood, those who are economically better are more educated than others. And
those who obtain good education tend to rise in the social structure due to political or economic reasons. The connection between education and economic conditions is apparent enough, but it also affects the individual's level of participation in development. In a short study on the level of community participation and socio-economic status, the association among such independent variables as age, education, occupation and monthly income with the dependent variable of people's participation, was tested.\textsuperscript{13} It was found that education was "the most crucial variable in regard to participation of people."\textsuperscript{14} Those who are engaged in learning, come to a new awareness of selfhood, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them their opportunity of participation.\textsuperscript{15}

Participation or political involvement in turn cuts across all the factors affecting the belief system. It can be likened to the opening of a floodgate bringing in opportunities in training, contacts, programs. It allows the individual to become aware of the possibilities that await him. How much he profits out of this experience depends on his own initiative and interest. His total personality affects his involvement which in turn affects him as a whole. It is an education in the political process and prevents manipulation to that extent. Such people will either join the ranks of the elite or become good leaders of their own people. Political involvement, whether active or otherwise, has a salutary effect on the participant at the least. One of the efforts of development should be to make it advantageous to their constituents as well.
Belief System as a Factor in Development

When one looks at the rural scene, the achievements of a few melt into the background bringing into greater relief the poverty of the many. Statistics only substantiate the suspicion that this number is increasing just as the prosperity of a few is growing. Attempts to relate it to belief systems will have to take account of various factors. First and foremost, as is obvious from the above discussion and the previous chapters, the social position of the individual concerned is of primary importance. Other factors that will determine his attitudes are his income, educational level, political involvement and to some extent, age. These have already been discussed above. One has to be aware of the psycho-social conflicts between different groups, between tradition and modernity, the old and the new generations and the different value systems. All these are internalized and emerge in an uneasy coexistence through compromise.

The environment within which an individual grows greatly affects the way he perceives the world. His basic responses to life are schooled by the belief systems within which he grows. He is involved in a form of symbolism which is a "pattern of communication, identification and control in terms of beliefs, values and aspirations that are both internalized within the structure of self and embodied as the external heritage of society." Individual cognition interlocks with social experience. "Class ties, group identifications, reference groups, and other kinds of 'significant others' help shape patterns of belief, but every individual differs in some degree from any other in the pattern of his or her role taking."
Some Indian Illustrations

The social experience of the poor in India would start with the caste system. To see it in its worst light, we will travel back a few decades when the proscriptions and prescriptions for the lower classes were quite severe. As discussed in Chapter II, in those days class and caste were almost coterminous. The lower class castes were 'inferior' to the higher class castes not only for economic reasons, but due to the 'intrinsic superiority' of the upper castes. At a very early age an average Scheduled caste (then un-touchable) was made aware that he was different from others. He and his caste-mates lived in separate hamlets on the outskirts of the village, in the worst houses around. He was prohibited from entering the houses of the upper caste people, from touching them, from even walking through their localities. Maybe he could approach the back door if at all when an emergency arose. His family would be presumptuous if they wore good clothes or used metal pans in the kitchen or objected to ill treatment. He was too lowly to enter the village temple, use the restaurant as an equal, send his children to school, especially the religious one. The prescriptions on his life and behavior were of an extreme nature. The other lower castes, though not subject to such inhuman conditions, also had it inculcated in them that the higher castes were more intelligent, better, superior, and therefore, entitled to enjoy a higher share of returns, even of other's labor. Thus, the belief system of the entire lower classes was self-defeating. Raised in such an environment, a Scheduled caste individual tends to retain some of his stigma even today when things have changed and greater equality encouraged. The rest of the people too retain
these perceptions while interacting with the Scheduled caste people.

Given the history of social development in the country, it has naturally followed that the upper classes were easily accepted as leaders and superiors. They were the 'elders' who controlled everything. The oppression and subjugation of the middle and lower classes was a given, and one had to live with it. It was only at the middle of the century with the rise of the middle castes to dominance and the efforts of a democratic government to encourage the large number of untouchables to strive for an equal status, that this relationship was disturbed and came to be questioned. Though the lower castes have not been able to cast away their disabilities, there is sufficient mobility in the social system to discourage identifying caste with class. Caste membership may add an extra dimension to the problem, but it is no longer the determining factor. However, since a majority of the lower castes is still in the lower classes, at times in this study the two are used interchangeably, but with a strong sensitivity towards the separation of these two concepts. When there is a reference to the Scheduled caste as a poverty group, it naturally excludes those members of the caste who no longer have any class identification with the group. When the lower castes are specified into the Scheduled castes and others, it is mainly to underline the extreme exploitative relations of production on religious and ascriptive basis towards the former untouchables, rather than separating the two, Scheduled castes and others, into different classes on a caste basis. As often mentioned earlier, the caste system evolved mainly as a ruling class myth that rationalized
exploitation. In the analysis of the caste riots in Marathwada area of Maharashtra Dipankar Gupta found that class interests were mainly responsible for fanning the caste riots. He observes, "Class and caste are not seen as two different axial principles which are mutually exclusive and which apply to two fundamentally different types of social order . . . but caste beliefs, caste rituals and caste observances are seen to justify the debasement of the toiling classes on an empyrean principle."19 A Scheduled caste person belonging to a higher class enjoys the same social comforts and power and is at the same social distance from the others in the caste, as other upper caste members of the upper class. He is therefore able to cast off many of the psychological and social disabilities that affect the not so privileged among his caste. Such a casting off is seen by other castes as an attempt to seek equality with the upper castes, and is resented and discouraged as much as possible.

The two concepts, 'class' and 'caste' interact with one another to give rise to attitudes and perceptions of themselves and their roles in societies. While the impact on economic life is more obvious, it affects political development as well. Here, political development can be specified as the capacity to participate in the political process, such being an avenue that can include and benefit the maximum number of people. In their study "Social Development of Weaker Sections in Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh," Alexander, Verma and Jayakumar have examined the development and change in the condition of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes in respect of (a) eradication of untouchability; (b) disappearance of social discrimination; (c) emancipation
from traditional bondages; (d) spread of literacy and education; (e) occupational differentiation; (f) assimilation of egalitarian values and (g) whether benefits received by the weaker sections promoted their development. Leaving aside the changes found in economic conditions, the social developments are relevant here as they have a direct impact on the belief systems under which the different sections of the population operate. The study concludes:

Observance of untouchability has more or less disappeared in public places, during travel on buses, commercial transactions, in educational institutions, in village restaurants and tea stalls, at places of worship, etc. Its continuance is mainly observed in interpersonal relations, particularly those involving commensal relations ... Several social disabilities under which the Harijans traditionally suffered have lessened considerably ... Although the power of non-Harijans is recognized it does not act as a serious block to the quest of Harijans for emancipation ... Despite their emancipation from many of the traditional bondages and the observance of untouchability, they have yet to go a long way before being accepted as social equals by higher castes and fully integrated with them.

In the course of the study the above description has been amply documented. Yet, to questions about entering the kitchen of a higher caste person or being employed in the house of such a person, the responses are less by experience than by foreknowledge of the social relations between the groups. A majority of the Harijans even today, live in segregated blocks. Attempts to desegregate will be more vehemently opposed by the Harijans themselves, not because they like to live in small, crowded houses, but because the long-term discrimination against them has made them instinctively avoid the undesirable reactions of the other castes and therefore would prefer to live among their own people.
In the above study, a majority of the respondents believed that employment of a Harijan as a bearer in a hotel, for example, would adversely affect the business, as customers would not like to be served food by a Harijan. A large number perceived that higher castes would not even buy milk from them, thus barring dairying as an avocation, unless the milk is collected by a dairy or some such impersonal agency. Seventy-five percent of the respondents believed that if they were to start a tea shop, non-Harijans would not patronize it. "A point to note here is not whether higher castes bought milk from a Harijan or objected to a Harijan serving them food, or boycotted a Harijan's tea stall but the perception of a predominant section of the Harijans, including those who have been assisted by the government, of caste acting as a strong restricting force limiting their employment opportunities." Such perceptions persist despite various social changes that have been introduced. As the study itself observes, "Nevertheless, data reveal that compared with the past, the social conditions of Scheduled castes in the area studied has improved considerably" in matters referred to above.

B. C. Mutthaya examining the impact of perceptions on the life conditions of people, in *The Rural Disadvantaged: A Psycho-Social Study in Karnataka*, has tried to understand the psycho-social factors influencing the behavior of people in lower economic and social groups. "The assumption was that people who have experienced deprivations in their life situations to a large extent also will be affected in their psycho-social development, thereby hindering their efforts to take advantage of the opportunities made available to them for their
betterment . . . [and the] data, by and large, indicate that one's position in the economic and social level determines one's outlook."25 The sample covered 49 high caste, 175 backward class and 147 scheduled cast members, with 78 large farmers, 101 landless laborers and 52 rural artisans. It was found that "their opinion in considering a person as a leader was mostly because of his power position rather than his interest in the general welfare of the people";26 a higher percentage of respondents did not prefer their sons to take up their occupation, more so among the small and marginal farmers and landless laborers; most wanted land, to improve living conditions; a very high percentage among the non-large farmer group did not aspire or expect any increase in income as they had no economic basis for their aspirations. Similarly, a very small percentage aspired to an increase in landholding. Most large farmers did not look for an increase because they already had enough in view of the ceiling on land holding and the remainder did not have means of purchasing land. "It has been found that high caste groups have a higher caste orientation, favourable attitude to women's status . . . [are] politically more efficacious, have lower sense of powerlessness, . . . [are] highly personally effective, less dependence prone, moderately optimistic, less fatalistic in their attitude," as compared to others.27 "It has been consistently found that the landless laborers or the Scheduled castes or the backward classes seem to have some of the unfavorable attributes as inherent in the traditional culture to a larger extent than the high caste or large farmers. Such attitudes as lack of personal effectiveness and personal efficacy, fatalistic outlook, pessimism, dependence proneness, are not conducive
to development as these would create an attitudinal base which deters them from taking advantage of economic opportunities and to develop an orientation of an optimistic outlook for the future."^28

Living over the years in exploitation and poverty, a large majority of the poor have come to accept the order of things. It is only expected that in the development process, the major share of public funds will be spent in areas that are far removed from their concerns and only a small amount can come their way. Their acceptance is so complete that they compete not over the general allocation of plan funds but for the small percentage that will come the way of people like them. Murray Edelman draws an American parallel of such 'dubious perceptions' quoting a study of beliefs about welfare recipients:

Respondents in the study cited persons on relief more frequently than they mentioned any other category of people when they were asked to name persons who got more than they deserved. Approximately one-third of the respondents in each class spontaneously mentioned mothers on relief, men on welfare, etc., as getting more than they deserved. And respondents from the lower middle and laboring classes were more likely to complain of people on welfare than about the obviously wealthy people getting more than they deserve.^29

Such perceptions in the Indian context are most blatantly witnessed in respect of reservations on behalf of the Scheduled castes. If the scope of preferential treatment for the Scheduled groups is fully utilized, it will, at the most, take away 15 percent of government jobs, development allocations and other economic benefits like grant of land. This is the maximum which is rarely fulfilled. Though this was prescribed as a minimum, it has turned into the maximum limit. And yet, the reservations have become an irritant for the other lower and middle castes and classes, who feel that had it not been for
reservations, these opportunities would have come their way. In one sense they are correct; if not for the reservations, this group of people would have stayed out of the opportunity structures. The scope available for the lower classes, Scheduled castes or otherwise, is very limited. When these opportunities are availed of--few compared to the general availability of resources, but substantial when viewed from the point of view of the lower classes--the others feel grieved. This grievance could be directed at the vast resources enjoyed by a select few. But this, it is realized, would be a futile exercise, yielding no results. Therefore, those who are able to make the best of the opportunities available, are disliked by the others. Even among the group of Scheduled castes, the reservations have been benefitting only a few. These people are being looked upon with envy and hatred by their caste-fellows. In all this, the rural perpetrators of scarcity and poverty are left to further their interests and enjoy their prosperity in peace.

This peace has been shattered in stray cases by violent incidents. The limited spread of such violence in the face of exploitation could be due to three reasons. One reason may be that these incidents are viewed as failures as they do not bring in any lasting change. When the landless laborers rise in opposition to the rich cultivators and their rebellion is wiped out by force, others are forced to accept the status quo, for the time being at least. Secondly, the upper classes control most of the sources of production. When living at a subsistence level, acceptance of the dominance of the upper classes is convenient and necessary. The owners are in a position to bargain, as
stoppage of these means of production amounts to foregoing a part of their profits but spells starvation for the laborers. And thirdly, a very very small minority from among the lower classes has entered the political arena. Their power is as yet nominal. But, having gained membership of the elite group, the interests of these leaders no longer coincide with that of their original class members. Though when need arises they are able to allay the fears of their own people, thus guaranteeing their power position.

Trust in this lower class leadership has contributed to a pattern of quiescence among the followers, a trust founded on a common background of class or caste, weathering innumerable betrayals. How else can one explain the continuation of and reliance on leaders who have not proved themselves except in terms of getting elected or selected? Such a leadership can prove not only ineffective but even detrimental to the development of their people. An incident in one of the Zilla Parishads in Maharashtra raises many doubts and questions about the system itself. The Social Welfare Committee that decides and oversees the allocation of funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes selects the beneficiaries as well. It is composed of all the Scheduled caste and tribe members of the Zilla Parishad and the concerned officials who are only expected to inform the members of the rules and regulations, and implement the decisions taken. Since this is a sensitive area concerning that section of the population whose spokesmen are conscious of their rights and recent privileges (to counteract the exploitation of ages), the other Zilla Parishad members or committees rarely interfere with the working of this committee,
except on complaint. On one such complaint it was found on enquiry that almost all the money had benefitted either a committee member himself or his relative. With the connivance of a few outsiders who got a share of the proceeds, and some of the local officials who were too scared to speak out, the Committee had allotted funds to close relatives, fake individuals and persons who were such blind followers that they handed over whatever they received to these members. The oddest element in the whole affair was the complete lack of complaint from the affected individuals who were substantially deprived considering that some of the funds provided an additional means of livelihood, such as sewing machines and the like.

Such exploitation assists in the shift of the development focus from the actual needs of the people to the opinions of a few leaders who seem to enjoy their confidence. This is strengthened by the general attitude of all concerned. Certain perceptions become a part of the general belief set. One such perception concerns the inherent low intellectual capacity of the poor, coupled with laziness. Many agencies working with the poor start out with this premise making their attitude patronizing and supercilious. The extension agency operating on this belief will merely transfer information without bothering to find out whether it was understood and assimilated. The poor wouldn't act on it anyway, is the stock misconception. It is taken for granted that they don't know what is good for them and are unwilling to work hard like the well-to-do individuals to improve their economic standing. In the face of such attitudes the poor seem to build up defense mechanisms of indifference and ignorance that
could otherwise be overcome by dedicated workers who have been successful in mobilizing them to help themselves. Since the unequal creation of human beings based on caste and class is unacceptable, such in-built characteristics have to be rejected.

Belief Systems and the Political Process

Murray Edelman has said, "Effective political action is likely when it does not disturb power, income or status hierarchies. More often, politics creates a way of living with social problems by defining them as inevitable or as equitable." 32

No individual, especially poor, can live his own life in peaceful isolation. There are many waiting to direct him, some to impose upon him and some to thrive on him. His response is also often circumscribed by circumstances. At times the system is sympathetic and things are made easy for him; at others he has no one to turn to. When incidents of the latter kind are recounted more often, it is not to discount the first but to highlight aspects of rural life relevant to this study. The factors determining belief sets are taken from the environment and reinforced by experience. The sense of helplessness and the accompanying quiescence on the part of the people due to repeated experiences of indifference, if not hostility, are two of the many obstacles in the way of change and progress leading to redistribution and equity.

A dramatic illustration of this effect may be seen in an incident involving the Scheduled castes in the state of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India. An atrocity on the Harijans, i.e., the Scheduled
castes, was perpetrated in one of its villages, Sarhupur. The reaction of the Harijans to the atrocity and to the action taken thereafter by the government, illustrates their sense of helplessness in a clash against a dominant class caste. On the evening of 30th December, 1981, three gun-toting men entered the Harijan locality, indiscriminately killing all the people they saw. Fortunately many people were away in a meeting regarding their work of bangle making and the children had run away and hidden at the sound of the first gun shot. Even a three-year-old understood the danger. "... There are not many three-year-olds in the country with any concept of bullets or death or escape, but life has already told Dayashankar some basic truths about his existence ..." Leaving a trail of death behind, the three men disappeared into the darkness from which they had come. It was some time before the headman could muster enough courage to visit the people. One elder admitted, "All the villagers then forced me to go there to show some sympathy. Frankly, in all these years I have never been to that area; I did not know what it looked like; this was the first time in my life that I was going to a 'chamar basti' (Harijan colony)." What followed was more relevant. By the next day the political and administrative bigwigs began arriving, including the police chief, the minister in charge of law and order and right up to the State Chief Minister. According to the same account, "The first priority of the government was to ensure that the thakur (an upper caste) dacoits were not blamed for this massacre, since the Chief Minister was a thakur and the thakurs had committed the Dehuli (another such incident) massacre." The police tried to fabricate evidence that the crime was
committed by another caste, the yadavs, but it was soon exposed.

"Then they tried to make political capital out of the tragedy by saying that the massacre had been organized by the opposition in order to defame the CM [Chief Minister]! In fact the whole effort of the administration now revolved around not trying to find the killers, but towards tarnishing the already dented image of the Opposition. Instead of solutions the search was for scapegoats. The corpses had become another toy in the political games."\(^{37}\)

More manipulation was to follow. The Chief Minister in the course of his visit had announced aid of Rs. 10,000 to each of the affected families.\(^{38}\) He was followed by one Mr. Suresh Ram, the son of the foremost leader of the Scheduled castes at the national level, the former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram.

He advised the local Harijans that they should refuse the government aid. He prompted them to return the government aid and promised Rs. 50,000 to each affected family. Babuji's (Mr. Jagjivan Ram's) posters were distributed and a hero was made out of Suresh Ram. But the Rs. 50,000 per family for the six affected families never reached Sarhupur. Then the leadership of the Congress (I), the ruling party, started a counter campaign led by Gulab Sehra, Uttar Pradesh's Harijan and Social Welfare Minister. Mr. Sehra, himself a Jatav, a Scheduled caste, persuaded the victimized Sarhupur families to accept the government aid. He gave Rs. 10,000 to each family. He also made several promises including that of an all-weather road to the village Harijan area. On January 25 Sehra triumphantly called a press conference at Agra to declare that the Sarhupur harijans had now accepted government aid. There was a sigh of relief in the ruling party. In this confusion and absurd tussle between these self-proclaimed spokesmen of harijans, the main issue had been sidetracked: Who killed the harijans and Why?\(^{39}\)

The above incident is narrated as reported in a journal and may have dramatized the incident, yet it shows plainly the attitudes of the upper classes towards the Harijans--one of the elders of the village had
not even stepped into their area in all the years--the attitudes of the political leadership including the Harijans towards their plight in the face of such a heinous crime. What it must be in normal times can be imagined. The incident reinforces the contention that while poverty has been politicized, the poor have been forgotten and at best manipulated. All that Mr. Suresh Ram intended doing was to spread his father's propaganda and get a few extra votes. The death of the people was used as political capital only, a treatment which has been widespread and pervasive in all such previous incidents.

This is again an extreme case, and it could be pointed out that perhaps such an incident may not occur in Maharashtra, the State on which this study focuses. However, I have used it to illustrate the using of the poor as political pawns, to point out how their condition is taken note of only if it furthers some personal interest, and how they are completely forgotten when they don't serve any further purpose. It also illustrates the attitudes of others towards the low caste classes and the anger of the upper castes at the changing patterns of dependence of the Harijans, and their token of anger at the emerging new order. It also lends credence to the notion that if you have sufficient political weight--in actual or class terms--you can do anything with impunity.

Language and Politics

One of the weapons in the arsenal of the political elite is the use of language. Language is a part of the social context, both reflecting and shaping social realities. It is a reflection and an influence on individual perception and behavior. The relation
between language and politics has to be recognized to realize how manipulation of a particular language can influence attitudes toward power and society. It is a resource available to the government to convince the people of their intentions and disbelieve those of their rivals, to keep the ruling party in power in order to provide an opportunity to 'remove poverty and reduce exploitation', a promise not worn out despite continuous usage.

In Indian politics language in general seems to be used for two purposes, one to identify with the people and the other to establish distance between them. Though apparently contrary, both are essential for leaders to continue their regime and keep the people satisfied and quiescent. Language used to identify with the people is generally the colloquial local dialect. In India the diversity of languages and dialects lends some weight to this aspect when acceptance by the people is at stake. Speaking in the people's tongue is half the battle won. It makes the leader 'belong', one of the community. It opens the door of communication between the people and him, and they are encouraged to come to the leader with complaints and problems for he can understand and probably solve them. But at the same time the difference between leader and followers has to be maintained, and as a representative of the government, the politician will endeavor to speak from the superior position of power and knowledge. Posing as the actual authority with decision-making powers his language is interspersed with officialese and party terminology. Thus, while reassuring the people of popular sovereignty it sets him apart from the crowd. This is not restricted to the political field. The administrator requires the
support of the symbolic use of language as much as the politician. He has to justify his role to himself, his subordinates, superordinates, and the people; and he often believes that correct procedural steps taken in the deliverance of services absolves him if those services fail. "Public administration organizations shape beliefs about their work and their impact on society rather more effectively than they cope with poverty, ignorance, crime..."41 The politician and the administrator work along the same premises, each adopting and adapting the action of the other. When a regime comes up with its plan of action phrased in catchy terms like the 'Twenty-point program' or a 'Ten-point program', the whole hierarchy of politicians and bureaucracy speaks in that terminology. It is similar to the sentiment expressed at the beginning of this chapter. The poor change to needy, to underdeveloped to underprivileged to whatever suits the planners of the day. Though it helps justify the long series of assorted actions it does nothing for the condition of the poor.

Elections and Politics

Democratic politics requires facing an electorate at regular intervals. A common political cartoon during electioneering is that of a political contender revisiting his constituents after a long absence and the villagers expecting to see him only at the time of the next elections. How far this represents the reality in the present day is in doubt. With so many elections--gram panchayat, panchayat samiti, zilla parishad, cooperatives, state and national legislatures--representatives have to carve out their own following. People are no longer satisfied with once a term appearance. These representatives
also have the onus of showing the efficacy of the government programs to the people. Hence travelling among the people has become an obligation, an obligation that does not entail the actual deliverance of services. His main task is to keep people's expectations alive. And expectations are directly proportionate to needs. An analogous experience would be the sweepstakes and the faith in them even in the face of skepticism. When poverty programs are described, there is always a hope that it would some time reach the person himself. The greatest prop in this confidence game is the use of statistics. When figures are available, physical and financial achievement of targets can take the place of actual performance. And such figures cannot be challenged by the poverty groups who conclude that the programs must have benefitted one of their kind elsewhere. Many of the policies are short-term policies aimed at generating immediate support and are in the form of 'crash' programs. Outwardly 'crash' programs are expected to bring quick results as they are to be undertaken on a priority basis to show the great concern of the regime to bring in redistribution in a short span of time. But the very nature of such programs requiring immediate results contributes to its failure in real terms. 'Crash' programs are, significantly, those that would benefit the poorer sections of the society. The bureaucracy is expected to perform extraordinarily considering the magnitude of the work and the time allowed to show results and it, therefore, resorts to figures and paperwork. Allotment of land to the landless is one such favorite. As in most of the developing agricultural countries, land is prized beyond all else, and owning land is supposed to be the only way to improve economic conditions. The
government also plays on these sentiments and proclaims grant of surplus or government land to the landless. Although this is a lengthy process, the time provided is so short that there is no recourse for the bureaucracy but to effect paper transfers. Land is shown to have been transferred without actually handing it over. When the urgency has passed, and the people are convinced of the government's intentions, the program drops into oblivion. There is no follow-up action. By then the credit has gone to the ruling party and the symbolic purpose is fulfilled.

That this cannot continue endlessly and that a time will come when the people find it more and more difficult to believe in the government, is at the same time true. In the eagerness to make such programs successful, the targeted group becomes only a means to that fulfillment, rather than the reason for the entire exercise. This has caused the greatest disillusionment and apathy of the people towards development plans. The poor find plans being made and implemented without being consulted, and their interest wanes. The experience with the provision of housing is a case in point. It is a recognized fact that rural housing is in short supply. Yet, houses constructed by government agencies--originally supposed to be with the help of the government when help was not forthcoming--went abegging. Some of the residents had to be moved by force.

It was found that without exception all of the recipients wanted the house (with a plot to boot), but they did not agree with the site. If consulted, they would have made suggestions which would have resulted in better utilization of resources.
Participation and Politics

Would participation help? Today people's participation is a 'hot' word in development circles. Since outside change-agents and development strategies have failed, local participation has increasingly been emphasized. In most parts of India, especially Maharashtra and Gujarat, participation has been encouraged at different levels and in different institutions in an effort to get all sections of the population into deciding their own future. First came the Community Development Program, then the cooperatives and finally the Panchayati Raj. The 'success' of these in terms of the involvement of the people supported the demand for greater decentralization and delegation and devolution of powers to the local representatives of the people. Backward groups like women and the backward castes have been given appropriate representation on various committees and institutions to bolster the claim that it is a truly democratic and representative system. The contention here again is that not only is participation of women and backward classes symbolic, but the whole pattern seems to be a ploy to keep these people quiet and quiescent. "The definition of people with little status as directly involved in making public policy discourages them from resisting and at the same time minimizes the likelihood that a wider public will perceive them as unfairly deprived." The effectiveness of such representatives is ensured in three ways. First, in case of nomination or co-optation, care is taken to include only those who will be amenable to the dominant will and will not create any problems to upset the applecart. Secondly, if an 'undesirable' element gains admittance through election or some such method, he is subject to group therapy. Being only a minor
participant in a big group is intimidating and makes him psychologically impotent and hence ineffective. Once such members are initiated into the elite club, compliance is easily obtained. And finally, due to social pressures, a newcomer from a poverty group will find many inhibitions to be effective in the presence of the traditional leadership. The greater the prominence of the others, the lower the significance of participation by a person from the fringes of that society. Here again, we find three belief systems directly affecting the political effectiveness of the poor.

Sherry Arnstein addresses the issue of 'empty ritual' of citizen participation in government programs in the United States especially in the welfare programs for the blacks in the ghettos. Citizen participation "is vigorously applauded by everyone. The applause is reduced to polite handclap, however, when this principle is advocated by the have-not blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Eskimos and the whites," in short the lower classes. It is when participation is defined in terms of redistribution of power, as "the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefit of the affluent society," that it stops being such a good idea. These categories of the American population can be replaced by their Indian counterparts, and the criticism levelled by Arnstein would be equally true. Arnstein's eight rungs of the ladder of participation travel from non-participation through degrees of tokenism to degrees of citizen power. Rural power politics in India show a greater concentration of the lower classes in the degrees of tokenism.
Participation, thus, becomes another symbol in the repertoire of the power-wielders. It puts off agitation by the poor for it brings hope. But the realization of the efficacy of such representation may either not dawn at all or come too late. Even in general one finds an apathetic attitude towards issues of change and trust in the leaders who have done precious little to improve their conditions. This attitude allows the continuation of the status quo. Once the party is in power, programs are churned out with machine-like precision. There are 'minimum needs programs', small farmers and marginal farmers development agencies, tribal and Scheduled castes development schemes, model village adoption schemes, etc.

Yet, the minimum needs program may have a measly financial allocation, the programs for small farmers may not necessarily benefit the really small farmer, and the benefits of the other schemes usually go to those already incorporated into the system or their followers. And through all this poverty continues unabated. If there is an uprising against the injustices meted out to the poor, there is always the 'law and order' machinery to put it down. Furthermore getting involved with the administration is very expensive for the poor. Although the democratic process is open to all, the courts, executive as well as judicial, become an avenue to delay and thwart whatever efforts are made by the government. If a tenancy case runs the whole gamut of courts, any number of times in appeal, revisions and counterappeals, the resources of the tenant are soon depleted. And yet, judicial process cannot be eliminated.
Belief Systems and Policy Process

Mostly based on the presumption that most programs for the poor are designed for them without consulting them even the most well-designed schemes prove faulty because the human element is forgotten in the process of planning and implementing. The ones starting out with almost no capital or income to fall back on, are the most handicapped on the development scene. Having a reserve to fall back on allows some flexibility and enables a person to take risks inherent in most rural activities. It has been not too rare an experience that land granted to landless laborers has been leased back to the original owner at a very nominal price. Without the agricultural equipment, or money for seeds and fertilizers, and without the monetary capacity to await the harvest, the laborer is often forced to lease out the land. There are numerous instances of under-utilization of land due to scarcity of funds to make the land cultivable. The procedure of making fortnightly payments for work done put the much publicized Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) out of reach of a large section of the really poor for whom the scheme was originally designed, but who could not afford the long wait for payday. According to an evaluation report, a large share of the employment was received by the non-target group, followed by small farmers in the target group and the worst off were the agricultural labor households. "The landless agricultural laborers were more concerned about daily payment of wages which, however, was not a material factor weighing with the cultivators. This implied that landless agricultural labourers who did not participate were essentially those who were living hand to mouth and could not afford to wait for the
wages to be paid after a week, 10 or 15 days of their participation on EGS works despite knowledge of 'better wages' on EGS works.\textsuperscript{48} Thus, even schemes specifically designed for the lowest deciles of the population go beyond their reach because they have no income to carry them over the interim period.

At the same time due to the democratic nature of the Indian polity and efforts at all-round development, the belief systems of a small percentage of the population are undergoing a change. Behavior patterns are changing as a result of the awareness that poverty and exploitation are not inevitable. The continuance of the dominance of the rich is more on an economic basis than on psycho-social grounds. The social structures would come down faster if the poor were offered an alternative employment source that would eliminate the necessity of depending on the landed classes to provide their livelihood. If provided an opportunity to express their most pressing needs, the ones that would improve their incomes head the list.\textsuperscript{49} A demonstration of this point may be found in a study of a village in Tunisia. Although the conditions may be slightly different from India's, the findings are relevant. Jean Duvignaud studied Shebika, a Tunisian village over a period of years. When he and his co-workers arrived it was "a village which had lost what Durkheim would have called its 'conscience collective', its collective identity . . ."\textsuperscript{50} Over the years, when the villagers began to realize that their future could be brighter than their present drab existence, they began to make their needs known. "None of the speakers asked for food, or tea, or tobacco. They spoke only of seeds and machines and tools . . . Tools seemed to them the clue to any real change in the
village life. Hence the consciousness of self-hood, awareness of their condition and efforts at more equitable social structures emerge in regions that provide the scope for such non-dependence on the traditional elites who were the centers of economic and political power. The most obvious illustrative example would be a rural community that has been offered diverse and more employment, whose population has higher educational standards and is more politically aware. My contention is that they usually occur in that order. And a rural community close to an urban center would be the one to feel the impact of education, occupation and income on equity and equality. While the social stratification and the politico-administrative context have developed in the same manner all over such communities, they would show marked differences in the belief systems from the wholly rural ones. And the differences are the changes due to the greater and freer flow of information and knowledge and keen awareness of the socio-political forces.

Thus, to understand the development ethos we have to be aware of the belief systems--dominant and others--prevalent in a society. By its very nature the dominant belief system will hold sway over all the classes with the subordinate system forcing out its impact in certain respects. It is a blend of all three--dominant, subordinate and radical-belief systems with varying strengths in the different villages, and within the villages, in the different individuals. The more backward a village or community, evidently the more apparent the dominance will be.
If these forces are kept in mind it will be easier to understand people's reactions and attitudes towards development programs and towards participation in the policy process.

This is not an exhaustive study of the belief systems and their impact on development, but is mainly dealt with from the point of view of this study. The aspects discussed herein are necessary for understanding the rural scene, particularly to explain the quiescence of the masses, and their patience, as well as their defeatist attitude.

Does it then mean that the situation is hopeless, that there is no chance for the millions pressed under exploitation, in poverty, illiteracy and inhuman conditions? It would seem that in dealing with belief systems the darker side of the issues have been emphasized without dealing with the redeeming features that are bound to exist in any society. This stems from the interest in the lowest deciles of the population, who invariably get the worst of any deal. There are many who are not subject to the disabilities discussed above, but the concern here is with the majority of those who are poor and hence those aspects are dealt with in detail. There are opportunity and resources that are appropriated from the poor by those above them in the social world. To avoid the continuation of such deprivation, there are policies to remove the disabilities of ages and allow them to live in equitable and participatory relations. Such policies should, with time, affect their belief systems as well.
1. Frank Parkin, *Class, Inequality and Political Order* (London: Paladin, 1972). It is a study of a few key problems of stratification and inequality in modern capitalist and socialist countries. In his exploration of the systemic variations in the social interpretations given to inequality, he argues that most members of the subordinate class are exposed, in varying degrees, to all three of these meaning systems and that affects their overall perceptions of political and social reality. Basically he is dealing with fairly developed economies and hence differences arise when using his meaning systems to the Indian situation. However, this difference is mainly of degree than of kind and has been adapted and if necessary changed to suit my purpose.

2. Ibid. Parkin includes the aspirational attitudes as well in the dominant belief system. According to him this attitude is generally found among the downwardly mobile--those who have tasted better conditions--and those in the upper periphery of the subordinate classes. However, as it is akin to the accommodative attitude, I have taken it in the second category of subordinate value systems.

3. Ibid., p. 81. Parkin emphasizes the role played by political parties based on the working class, in organizing the radical value system. Such a party or organization does not exist in rural Maharashtra. Hence the emphasis on the political party has been dropped. But, the radical value system is relevant insofar as it represents those elements that are not content with the social system. Even if such tendencies are not organized their presence cannot be ignored.

4. Ibid., p. 83.

5. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

6. Ibid., p. 86.


8. Parkin, op. cit., p. 86.


11. Ibid., p. 97.

12. It can be said that more important than mere access to information (through media, schools, etc.) is the message or the ideology that
is spread through the media, etc. However the argument here is that in the first place equal opportunity has to be provided to the people to decide for themselves what they will accept and what will be rejected by them, instead of a small elite deciding it for them. This can be done only if they are literate, know what is happening around them and what can improve their living condition. It opens up a possibility of mobility. Hence access to information is stressed throughout this study.


16. Radhanath Mukherjee, The Symbolic Life of Man (Bombay: Hind Kitabs Ltd., 1959). See Preface. In this sense, symbolism is another name for belief systems in the way it is discussed in this chapter.

17. Murray J. Edelman, Political Language: Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail (New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1977), p. 11. Though Edelman deals with a part of the human experience that is affected by and in turn has an impact on the belief systems, his observations have a wider application even though he speaks with particular reference to American politics.

18. The most telling accounts of those times are to be found in the literature of those days. Many literary stalwarts emerged who wrote of the social conditions of the poor and the depressed classes. The acknowledged master of the form was Munshi Premchand. Followed by Bankim Chandra and Vallathol and others.


20. K. C. Alexander, G. L. Verma and E. C. Jayakumar, "Social Development of Weaker Sections in Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh," Behavioural Sciences and Rural Development, July 1981, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 245-279, p. 278. The study is an attempt to understand the social impact of economic development set in motion through the introduction of canal irrigation. This was done by studying the
features of the social structure of two areas having differing levels of economic development.

21. Ibid., p. 278.

22. Ibid., p. 260.

23. Ibid., p. 261.

24. B. C. Mutthayya, The Rural Disadvantaged: A Psycho-Social Study in Karnataka (Hyderabad, India: National Institute of Rural Development, December 1980). The approach in the study is one of a few of its kind. The disadvantaged have been conceived by combining economic and social criteria in order to include their psychological factors like potentialities, awareness, perceptions, motivation and attitudes, besides economic factors in explaining the success and failures of government programs.

25. Ibid., pp. 103, 117.

26. Ibid., p. 280.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.


30. In Maharashtra, the Mahars, who have always been occupationally (laterally) and physically mobile, have been able to claim many benefits. Others like the Mangs are very backward compared to them. In most caste riots it is the mobile castes that have been involved and have taken the brunt of the other classes' ire. The more backward castes are now being encouraged to come forward but it is a slow process as they lack the basics like education, which hinder their getting jobs and other benefits.

31. This was a personal experience when working as Chief Executive Officer of the said Zilla Parishad. The enquiry was a prolonged one. After it was concluded the general council of the Zilla Parishad, which was expecting elections any day kept delaying any punitive action. Final outcome is not known as I moved out of the Zilla Parishad.

33. This description has been taken completely from a news item in a magazine, SUNDAY of February 7, 1982 (Calcutta, India). M. J. Akbar in "Tale of Two Villages" has recounted this incident alongside a narrative of a story depicting life in the 1920s, and has drawn parallels that remind one of the little change in some aspects of rural life.

34. Ibid., p. 25.
36. Ibid., p. 27.
37. Ibid.
38. At the exchange rate of Rs 9=$1, it works out to approximately $1,200. But as the purchasing power is nearly as much as the dollar, the amount can be taken to be equivalent to $10,000, which is fairly substantial, though no substitute for the lost lives.

42. The Community Development Programme, Cooperatives and Panchayati Raj are discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.
45. Ibid.
46. Arnstein divides the eight rungs of the participation ladder into three categories, non-participation, tokenism and degrees of citizen power. Manipulation and therapy belong to non-participatory categories. Informing, Consultation and Placation often pass off for citizen participation, though they are only varying degrees of tokenism. Partnership, delegated power and citizen control alone are truly participatory in character.

The common theme running through Arnstein's article is that as a rule, true participation of the disadvantaged and the poor --the blacks, the hispanics and the other minorities in the U.S.--is difficult to accomplish given their present economic situation. The authorities do not have commitment to offering more than token participation either.

48. Ibid., p. 43.

49. This was observed repeatedly, almost invariably, during the study of the rural areas in Maharashtra. It was only the very destitute that asked for things like a house to live in.


51. Ibid., p. 266.
CHAPTER V
RURAL DEVELOPMENT: PROFILE OF TWO VILLAGES

Introduction: Nagpur District

While previous chapters have presented various elements of the broad setting affecting development activities in the rural areas, particularly in the State of Maharashtra, this chapter will focus on a microanalysis of development trends in two small communities of Nagpur district in eastern Maharashtra. These are the two villages of Prathama and Dwitiya.¹

A socio-political description of the district will provide a general background for the two villages, followed by an examination of an annual plan that indicates the priorities of the planners and policy makers in the district. Then the class structure of the villages will be surveyed with various aspects of development related to the class structure, and where relevant, to the caste system.

Nagpur district was a part of the Maratha confederacy before the British took over the administration from the Bhonsala king, Raghunji III on the grounds of his minority in 1818. It remained under British management till 1830 and later by escheat came under their complete control in 1853, and became a part of the British territory of the Central Provinces. After independence it was in Madhya Pradesh till 1956. At the reorganization of the states on a linguistic basis it came to be included in the bilingual State of Bombay and in 1960, in Maharashtra. Through these vicissitudes it remained the capital city
till 1956 and played a vital role in the creation of the Marathi-speaking State of Maharashtra. By agitating for the formation of Maharashtra the regional leadership could extract certain benefits for itself. Being a long-time capital with the elite concentrating around it, Nagpur was able to contribute the lion's share of leaders from the region at the State level. It is recognized as the second capital of the State and one session of the legislature is held in Nagpur when the essential administration shifts there for the period.\(^2\)

Nagpur district stretches over an area of 9,928 square kilometers constituting 3.34 percent of Maharashtra's area. The main soils of the district are 'kali' (medium deep black cotton), 'morand' (a comparatively light deep brown soil), 'bardi' (red gravel with boulders) and 'khardi' (rice lands in few areas of the district). The population of the district according to the 1981 Census\(^3\) is 2,582,280, or about 4.7 percent of the State's population. However the rural population of the district of 1,117,150 forms 2.7 percent of the total rural population. The rural working segment of about 46 percent (i.e., 518,220 persons) consists of cultivators forming 16 percent of the total population, agricultural laborers 20 percent, while 1.5 percent are reported in the household and 8.8 percent in the other services. About 45,000 persons or 4 percent, mainly females, are marginal workers and the rest, almost 50 percent of the population are non-workers.\(^4\)

The literacy rate for the district as a whole and the rural areas is 54.68 and 41.39 percent respectively. Thus in the district 63.83 percent males and about 45 percent females and in the rural areas 52 percent males and 30 percent females are literate. In 1971 the
literacy rate for the district was 45.26 percent. The 1981 figures compare well with the state figures in all respects, the Nagpur literacy percentages being higher than those for the State.

Nagpur, like the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra of which it is the leading district, is predominantly agricultural. This is in sharp contrast to the Western part of Maharashtra which is developed industrially. Bombay, Poona and Nasik are the industrial centers of the State, around which its industrial wealth is built up.\(^5\) Nagpur has a higher degree of urbanization, though, than Maharashtra as a whole. According to the 1981 Census approximately 44 percent of the district population was rural as against 65 percent for the entire Maharashtra.\(^6\) Nevertheless, the predominance of agriculture is clear. Almost 63 percent of the male workforce is employed in agriculture. This being the case ownership of land has been the crucial factor in determining the class structure and the socio-economic scene. The dominant class, even if city based, derives its strength from land. To understand the rural class structure, it is necessary to elaborate on the caste composition and the changes brought about by the reorganization of states.

As briefly referred to earlier, the Vidarbha region was part of the State of Central Provinces and Berar till 1956. As Marathi speaking people were in a minority, they were effectively kept out of political power with only a token representation granted to them. The rich Marathi speaking people were overshadowed by the Hindi speaking elite, a majority of whose leaders were Brahmins.\(^7\) The formation of Maharashtra was a golden opportunity for the Marathi-speaking people of Vidarbha to reassert themselves. The Maratha-Kunbis, forming 40
percent of the population, could become dominant and at the same time benefit from the concessions earned from Bombay.\textsuperscript{8} They came to occupy a dominant position in the socio-political scene. Though dominant, the whole caste did not belong to the upper rich agricultural class. Mainly an agricultural caste, they made use of caste solidarity to build a solid base to establish a powerful ruling coalition by the rich farmers. In its efforts not to restrict itself to just one caste, since anti-Hindi and anti-Brahmin were the slogans of the day, it appealed to the other segments of the population as well, such as the trading community and the Scheduled castes. As in the rest of the country, the Brahmins forming about 5 percent of the population, had considerable hold on the economic, political and social scene. Because this caste took to Western education before most of the others, it came to dominate the political scene. In its alliance with the Hindi speaking Brahmins, these Brahmins had undisputed leadership.\textsuperscript{9} Breaking their hold necessitated translating into political and social terms the numerical strength of the Maratha-Kunbis.

Therefore, a non-Brahmin movement, similar to the Satya Shodhak movement launched in the 1920s and 1930s of this century in Western Maharashtra, came to be started in Nagpur in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{10} Most of the Brahmins were absentee landlords and it was not too difficult to arouse anti-Brahmin sentiments and mobilize public opinion. The first stage of land reforms aimed at restricting absentee landlordism, ended their hold on land. As Rosenthal says, "In Maharashtra . . . the law had the effect of formalizing the expulsion of Brahman and other urban based interests from the countryside . . . In contrast those Marathas
and other non-Brahmans who held fast to their land claims during this period had little to fear from the land tenancy laws. Thus effectively pushing out the Brahmans and other urban interests from the rural areas, the rich Marathas gained leadership roles by whipping up the anti-Brahmin feelings which were fairly widespread and could mobilize sufficient rural interest to capture political power at local and state levels. Their make-up is different from that of the previous regime. Rosenthal's remarks of Western Maharashtra leadership are equally applicable to Vidarbha, especially Nagpur. He observes,

There has been a considerable diffusion of modern values to the countryside at the same time as those political actors whose bases are in the villages and small towns have moved into positions of State and national power . . . They interact easily with urban-based politicians and administrators. They . . . have chosen to build their political careers upon rural constituencies and [their] concerns are oriented to problems of economic and political development in rural Maharashtra.¹²

This capture of political power by the rural-based politicians is also noted by Mary Carras.¹³ This process is obviously facilitated by the overwhelming numbers of the Maratha-Kunbi castes, a presence of 40 percent being high for any caste in any part of the country. And integrating other important communities like the Marwaris--initially petty traders and moneylenders who later turned into landlords--only added to their hold. This is a small but powerful community and its co-option has been very beneficial to the rich farmers. Similarly, the Scheduled castes have also been given some say in political matters. They constitute 19 percent of the population of Nagpur district; close to 15 percent of them have become Buddhists following the example of their leader B. R. Ambedkar.¹⁴ This community
is well organized in Vidarbha regions in general and in Nagpur district in particular and have a political party called the Republican Party of India. The ruling coalition also includes one faction of the Scheduled castes.

This rural based coalition has been able to direct governmental programs to the rural areas. The political power enjoyed by this group has helped the rural areas by increasing governmental investment in irrigation, modern scientific farming methods and easy credit to farmers. Thus, though a small minority of rich farmers got most of the benefits out of the government's development programs, the vast majority of farmers were also not forgotten. The rural rich of Maharashtra and Nagpur district have a better record of acceptance of land reforms than many other states of India. The average size of a farm in Maharashtra is 11.5 acres. Table 7 (page 166) presenting the breakdown, by area, of agricultural farms in Nagpur district, also shows that only 2.47 percent of the farm households own more than 20 hectares and the area held by them is 14.7 percent of total agricultural area. For the whole of Maharashtra only 5.28 percent of landholding households have more than the legally permitted landholdings, a figure which is significant, for in many states of India land ceilings and agrarian reform laws have rarely got beyond the statute books. Other benefits flowing to the rural areas in Maharashtra are also visible. For the state as a whole, rural unemployment was a low 2.9 percent and between the 1961 and 1971 census, the workforce in agriculture declined in Maharashtra, from 13,247,077 to 12,002,078, by almost 10 percent.
Thus, the rural area as a whole has gained considerably from the capture of power by the rural interests. The increase in economic activity in the rural areas of Nagpur district is pronounced. Cultivation of oranges, a major cash crop, has spread remarkably, bringing increased incomes to the lower middle and middle level farmers. This is not to assert that benefits have accrued evenly to the rural community nor to deny that a small group of rich agriculturalists have cornered most of the benefits of development. By most accounts, effective power within this powerful rural coalition lay with an elite of rich agriculturalists. Rosenthal calls it 'the expansive elite'. It is the small segment of rural population, with strong economic power, high social standing and political clout, whose share of the benefits from the governmental investment in the rural areas of Maharashtra has been out of proportion to their numbers. Mary Carras too, defines a small group of rural rich who have been instrumental in organizing the rural people and who benefitted considerably from governmental investment. Other observers of the Maharashtra social scene, like Lele, also identify such a group of influential rich rural agriculturalists. It is possible to discern such a rich agricultural class in Nagpur district. The members of this group are mostly from the Kunbi-Maratha community, but also include Marwaris and scheduled castes. In spite of the economic and social dominance of this group in the rural areas, till the merger of Nagpur district in Maharashtra, it lacked effective political power. The economic, political and social power of this group has advanced considerably since Nagpur joined Maharashtra.
This group of rural rich—whether called an elite or the dominant class—has been instrumental for a marked increase in investment in the rural areas. One would imagine that such increased investment in rural development would lead to a bridging of the gap between the rural rich and the poor. Yet, village life bears little evidence of such equality. Those who lost lands under land ceiling laws could, because of resources at their command, turn for extensive to intensive cultivation. Agricultural research came up with new varieties of hardy seeds, a better package of practices and fresh ideas. Cash crops became possible with short-term food crops and high yields. And those who were only agriculture based before, now ventured into other lucrative fields. The professions attracted the younger generation leaving fewer in the family to tend the lands. Hence it was more of a change-over than a complete loss. In fact modern agriculture was more profitable and brought in greater returns to the richer farmers, while the poorer ones struggled with the traditional methods of subsistence farming, having no wherewithal to make improvements.

The capture of the rural local government bodies—the panchayati raj institutions—has been the single most important reason for bringing enormous gains to select groups. As discussed in Chapter III, Maharashtra has, along with Gujarat, the most powerful elected rural government system in India. Elected representatives at the district, development block and village level decide most of the development policy, allot funds and supervise the implementation of these policies. This is no mean function when one considers that the annual budget of the Nagpur Zilla Parishad alone is about Rs. 100 million. (The Zilla
Parishad, in addition, also has some say in the district planning Council.) This control over the panchayati raj bodies helps distribute resources and mould public policy. As many observers of panchayati raj in Maharashtra have noted, control over these institutions is often more crucial than control over the State legislature. Seshadri found that the Members of the Legislative Assembly feel challenged and threatened by the local office holders who were able to exercise direct influence over the delivery of services and goods to the people who were their common constituents. 27 "An MLA was thought to be at a disadvantage when vying for political influence with an office holder in the Zilla Parishad or Panchayat Samiti. He might still exercise influence through his connections with State ministers or key State government bureaucrats, but this influence was clearly less direct than the kind of political leverage exercised by an office holder in one of the local government bodies." 28

The advantageous position of the rural rich when the panchayati raj was started in 1962 found them in leadership roles in these bodies. Anthony Carter noted that in Western Maharashtra the rural rich had more educated and competent candidates for these institutions than any other social group. 29 This social predominance was translated into electoral advantage. 30 The situation in Nagpur district was no different from this. It was not very difficult for the rural rich to sustain the leadership position obtained. The electoral gains of the rural rich of the first elections has been sustained in the subsequent elections, the fluctuating fortunes of the political parties notwithstanding.
This control over the local government has helped the rural rich to tide over the continuing though limited egalitarian measures passed by the government and required of the zilla parishads. Since agriculture is a crucial activity of the zilla parishads local government plays a vital role in the distribution of high yielding seeds and scarce inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and credit. Being the power wielders the landed agriculturalists found alternate routes of investment with the help of the zilla parishads. In the last two decades Nagpur has developed as an important orange and cotton growing area. It has also been able to upgrade its cattle population with the help of exotic and hybrid breeds. Such policies involve a great deal of public investment which is made by the parishads and which ultimately help those who can afford to take up these progressive steps. The excellent returns have helped to support the land reforms in the form of ceiling and tenancy laws. They have also helped to accommodate the social reforms that have taken place. Thus it was possible for landed agriculturalists to retain their predominant position in the rural areas and the gap between the rich and the poor remained substantially unchanged.

It must be borne in mind that the rural rich are not a small, close-knit group with a homogeneous background. They are a broad assortment of the rural rich with similar social and economic goals. It is no monolithic structure, but a heterogeneous group with political cleavages and groupism and infighting. Even with new members joining, it has the unanimous goal of maintaining its predominant position in the rural scene.
Policy and Class Domination

In concrete terms this interconnection between class and power gets translated into development programs. We find trends that continue despite rhetoric that emphasizes a move in the other direction. Every Five-Year Plan reiterates "overall" development, development of every section of the Indian population, with special programs for the backward classes in order to help them come up to a better standard of living. As these Plans come down to the district level the emphasis on production and productivity has become more pronounced taking precedence over aspects of redistribution. In this process, the poor are again left on the fringes of most of these efforts at development. A brief scrutiny of an Annual Plan can be illustrative of this tendency. In the '78-'79 Nagpur district annual plan the expenditure on various heads of development was as follows:

Table 6
Expenditure on Various Heads of Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of Development</th>
<th>Expenditure (in Rs 00,000)</th>
<th>Percentage of total expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Programs</td>
<td>160.55</td>
<td>16.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation &amp; Community Development</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation &amp; Power</td>
<td>203.24</td>
<td>20.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry &amp; Mining</td>
<td>37.64</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Communication</td>
<td>114.72</td>
<td>11.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>331.31</td>
<td>33.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Guarantee Scheme</td>
<td>137.90</td>
<td>13.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Socio-Economic Review, Nagpur District, Nagpur, Government of Maharashtra, 1980.)
A breakdown of the schemes under these sectoral heads will give an indication of the type of beneficiaries. Thus, under Agricultural Programs, of the total allotment of Rs 160.55 lakhs slightly more than 50 percent is for minor irrigation. The next largest amount of Rs 23.02 lakhs is for dairy development. This amount was spent for establishing a milk powder plant and cold storage for preserving milk. Next in amount of expenditure was Ayacut development which received additional funds from Employment Guarantee Scheme. This was spent on constructing field channels and field drains, bunding, levelling, etc., to achieve efficient and optimum utilization of available irrigation potential. Soil conservation following close behind had schemes of terracing, counter bunding, farm forestry, etc. Again, like ayacut development, funds from the employment guarantee scheme were used for these schemes. Without going into the minor programs, the above allotments account for 86 percent of the total funds in this sector and will either go to create irrigation facilities or improve its utilization. Given the rural conditions these will be sought by a select group that can influence the flow of these benefits. When related to the pattern of landholding and the incidence of irrigation given in Table 7, the ones who have taken advantage of such agricultural programs turn out to be generally the bigger landholders. In addition to enjoying the security of assured water, these groups can afford the initial investment required in all the above-mentioned schemes which are usually subsidy schemes.

A second major head of development is Irrigation and Power accounting for one-fifth of the Plan allotment. Here irrigation refers
Table 7. Pattern of Landholding and Irrigation Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Class in hectares</th>
<th>Total Holding</th>
<th>Irrigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of total number of holders</td>
<td>Percentage of total area held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Below .05</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. .05 - 1.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 1.0 - 2.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 2.0 - 3.0</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 3.0 - 4.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 4.0 - 5.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 5.0 - 10.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 10.0 - 20.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 20.0 - 30.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 30.0 - 40.0</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. 40.0 - 50.0</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. 50 and above</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from the information in Table 20 of Socio-Economic Review, op. cit., p. 66.
to the medium projects. And the programs under 'Power' are the electrification of villages and providing connections for irrigation pumps. The people benefitting from irrigation schemes are obviously the larger landholders. So are those who can avail of the advantages flowing out of electrification at the individual level, as opposed to the community schemes. Thus, the development programs remain outside the experience of the really poor. One can argue that since these are agricultural schemes, they are bound to benefit the cultivators. What is unsettling is that not all cultivators can participate in them to the same extent. Besides, agricultural based programs have taken care of nearly 40 percent of the total plan.

The next head of expenditure is 'Industry and Mining', with a comparatively smaller expenditure of about 4 percent of the total. This spending promoted employment by providing training to educated unemployed persons, advancing seed money as loans to help start businesses and extending loans to industrial cooperatives. By its nature this amount was spent mostly in the urban areas where most of the educated unemployed and industrial cooperative societies were found. Since completion of school education is beyond the reach of most of the lower classes, they were again left out.

'Transport and Communication' and 'Social Services' are infrastructural and general by nature, with 9 percent of the latter's amount expressly for the welfare of the backward classes. In recent years, Maharashtra has been spending vast amounts on its rural employment schemes called Employment Guarantee Scheme. In the late seventies, it was consistently 13 percent of the total plan outlay and it has been
increasing ever since. In 1978-79, the expenditure was nearly 14 percent. It was meant to provide employment for the rural people when no other avenues of work were available. Reference to the evaluation report of the Employment Guarantee Scheme has already been made in the previous chapter where it was pointed out that a higher proportion of the non-target group received employment, followed by small farmers in the target group, while the worst off were the landless agricultural laborers. As the EGS works had to be productive works they brought in more than employment. They also increased productivity according to the Joint Evaluation Report on Employment Guarantee Scheme of Maharashtra:

Of the user households [those whose lands were benefitted from the productive assets created by the EGS works], 91 percent belonged to the category of cultivators whereas only 7 percent were agricultural labourers. Disaggregating the cultivator households by size of operational holding, it was observed that benefits of EGS assets had gone to a large extent to the medium and big farmers. The small and marginal farmers constituted only 21 percent of the user households. Nearly 78 percent of the user households had reported increase in agricultural production to the extent of 25 percent. There was also change in the cropping pattern in case of 40 percent of the households. The EGS had, thus, given them both technical and economic exposure to achieving higher production possibilities.

It would seem that the accepted approach to development is that increased production is the solution to the problem of continuing rural poverty. The stress throughout is on agriculture and in the process, those small and marginal farmers with no irrigation facilities and the agricultural laborers are left out. In the next section, the socio-economic and political conditions of the populations of two villages in Nagpur district will be analyzed to see how such governmental programs affect the living conditions and development opportunities of the
individuals. In the study, it must be pointed out, the Neo-Buddhists have been clubbed together with the rest of the scheduled castes. It has been discussed in Chapter II that in Maharashtra, especially in the Vidarbha region, of which Nagpur district forms a part, a large number of Mahars converted to the Buddhist faith. In so doing, they were excluded from the Schedules of the Constitution that lists the castes to be considered for special benefits. However, the government of Maharashtra in a special concession allows them the same benefits in the State and local schemes, while they are not eligible for similar concessions from centrally sponsored schemes. Therefore as most of the programs being looked at in this chapter are State and local ones, the neo-Buddhists are taken together with the remaining Scheduled Castes and are referred to as such. According to the district statistics in the rural areas the Buddhist and the Scheduled caste population forms 14.9 percent and 4.1 percent respectively, of the total population. In the two villages of Prathama and Dwitiya, however, they together constitute 40 percent and 25 percent of the population respectively. In the same manner the other castes are also grouped together. The Brahmins are taken along with the other higher castes that have been doing well economically, like the Jains, Marwaris and Rajputs. The Kunbis are the major agriculturist caste in the area and are dominant in the political field. The Kunbis and Marathas are clubbed together as they are said to originate one from the other. The rest of the castes are referred to as "Others," thus bringing the total number of caste categories to four.

As this study is not of the villages per se but of the patterns, tendencies and probability of change for individual households emerging from the socio-cultural and politico-economic conditions, the two
villages are taken together when both show similarities and as separate units to emphasize differences when any.

**Development in Prathama and Dwitiya**

Prathama in Hingna block and Dwitiya in Kalmeshwar block are almost equidistant from the city of Nagpur; the first is fourteen miles southwest while the other is thirteen miles northwest of it. As mentioned in the Introduction, these two villages were chosen mainly because of the rich intermixture of various castes in the village community, especially a sizable Scheduled caste population. Agriculture is the main occupation in both villages, with dairying coming up as an important economic alternative, if not a source of additional income. In Prathama, it is a fast-growing activity due to the establishment of a milk collection center and an artificial insemination center. The veterinary dispensary is not far from the village. And most important of all, the president of the district Milk Producers Federation belongs to this village. In Dwitiya, the emphasis is not so strong on dairying; vegetable gardening is taken more seriously. Both villages are connected to Nagpur city by all-weather roads and buses ply regularly, ensuring a good return on the produce. The main crops taken during the monsoon months (from mid-June to September) when all the precipitation occurs, are millet, cotton, pulses and oilseeds. In very few cases is rice sown. In areas receiving irrigation, these crops are followed by wheat or vegetables. In all these crop varieties hybrid and high-yielding seeds are now available and are often used.

The total population of Prathama is 1,263 with 216 households. The area of the village is 905.72 acres. The occupational pattern of castes
is in Table 8, and the landholding according to castes is given in Table 9.

The population of Dwitiya is 747 living in 145 households. Total area of the village is 991.53 acres. The occupational pattern and landholding according to the castes in this village are shown in Tables 10 and 11. The implications of these tables are discussed later in the appropriate sections, but a glance at them will show that at least in Prathama, the castes are equally represented in the landholding class. (The Brahmins are too few in number, and doing well in class terms. Their not being landholders does not affect this study.)

The houses in both villages are predominantly temporary constructions with only a sprinkling of semi-permanent and very few permanent brick houses. But Prathama has comparatively more permanent public buildings. The Scheduled castes live on one side of the village, and in both instances there is sufficient drinking water supply and electricity in the area. However, compared to the rest of the village, many houses in this part seem congested and close together. But there is no apparent segregation, such as distance between the houses of the Scheduled castes and the rest of the village population. It forms a continuity (see Figures 2 and 3).

Before discussing the flow of benefits from government programs specifically, I will describe some of the salient features observed in the two villages, concerning landholding, education, labor pattern, etc. These are general impressions that will give a better understanding of the program benefits to be analyzed thereafter.
Table 8. Occupational Pattern: Prathama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste category</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
<th>Cultivator Households</th>
<th>Solely dependent on jobs/skills/trade/etc.</th>
<th>Agriculture labor households</th>
<th>Cultivator households doing agri.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Brahmin&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kunbis&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Others&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scheduled Castes&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Brahmin category includes Marwaris, Jains and Rajputs.

<sup>b</sup>Kunbis include the Marathas as well.

<sup>c</sup>Others include an assortment of castes like Manas, Nhavi, Gadi levar, and others.

<sup>d</sup>Includes the Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, and neo-Buddhists.
Table 9. Pattern of Landholding: Prathama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Category</th>
<th>Total Cultivator Households</th>
<th>0-5 Acres</th>
<th>6-10 Acres</th>
<th>11-15 Acres</th>
<th>16-25 Acres</th>
<th>Over 25 Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% of caste</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% of caste</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Brahmin, etc.</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kunbi</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Others</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scheduled Castes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. Occupational Pattern: Dwitiya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Category</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
<th>Cultivator Households</th>
<th>Solely dependent on jobs/skills/trade/etc.</th>
<th>Agriculture labor households</th>
<th>Cultivator households doing agri. labor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Brahmin&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kunbis&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Others&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scheduled Castes&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Brahmin category includes Marwaris, Jains and Rajputs.

<sup>b</sup>Kunbis includes the Marwaris as well.

<sup>c</sup>Others include an assortment of castes like Manas, Nhavi, Gadi levar and others.

<sup>d</sup>Includes the Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes and neo-Buddhists.
Table 11. Pattern of Landholding: Dwitiya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Category</th>
<th>Total Cultivator Households</th>
<th>0-5 Acres</th>
<th>6-10 Acres</th>
<th>11-15 Acres</th>
<th>16-25 Acres</th>
<th>Over 25 Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Brahmin, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kunbi</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scheduled Castes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Landholding and Class Structure

Landholding usually forms the basic criteria for determining the level of living of various categories and their class standing. Though land is an important criterion in this study as well, the emphasis is more on the income that arises from the land than the fact of mere ownership. In both villages it is frequently observed that poorer quality land is generally owned by the smaller farmers, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes. This can have various explanations: These cultivators bought the lands from the big landholders, who wanted to rid themselves of excess land fearing the possibilities of ceilings being imposed by the government on landholdings; they sold the poorer land to reduce their total holdings. The purchaser did not have enough finances to shop for a better piece of land and had to be content with the one offered, hoping to improve yield with his labor as major input. The land may have been received from the government for a nominal payment. When the government fixed a ceiling on individual ownership of land, the surplus was distributed among the landless. But the choice of the land that was to be given up rested with the landlord, and naturally he relinquished the poorer quality lands. These were then distributed to the landless persons. Further, the small cultivator is not always in a position to apply the required nutrients and improve or at least maintain the quality of land. Through time, the soil deteriorates into poor quality lands, at times even requiring to be kept fallow.

Secondly, the land yield is determined not merely by the quality of the soil, but the package of agricultural practices applied. And to apply this package of practices, the farmer has to be initially in
a position to do so. Here again, there are two factors that go together: finance and knowledge. It is essential for the cultivator to have funds or credit to raise funds, in order to use better quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. It is at the same time helpful if he has sufficient information about them. If he knows of sources that can get it cheaper, for example through a subsidy, his gain is that much greater. The village data suggest some conjunction between literacy (in the simplest sense) and utilization of land. Though this fact cannot be overstressed to hypothesize that higher educational level has resulted in greater utilization, yet low utilization and low yields are often found in illiterate households. From this it can be deduced that perhaps information is not physically accessible, and if easy of access, not comprehended, making a difference in the yield.

Thirdly, land is becoming one of several sources of income for rural people. After the white revolution,36 dairying is no longer a supplementary occupation, especially with the introduction of exotic and high yielding cross-bred animals. If this source of income is not taken into account, land may not be a sufficient indicator of the class position of a person. Besides dairying, a skill or profession or a government or any job, can make a great difference.

Then again, income from land can be misleading, moreso if the amount is reported by the cultivators concerned. Villagers may not be too keen to expose their earnings, especially when the government offers help to small cultivators. Besides, in agriculture, unlike in a salaried job, there are hidden expenses and earnings. While family labor is not deducted, self-consumption and seed requirements for the next season may not be calculated. This is not necessarily a conscious
act, but is a likelihood that has to be taken into account. The richer cultivators may act in two ways. Either they will inflate their agricultural income because it is exempt from income tax, or they may reduce their agricultural income so as not to exhibit their earnings.

Earlier in this chapter reference was made to the implementation of land reforms in Maharashtra. Besides making land available for landless households, the reforms encouraged the erstwhile non-cultivating castes to take up agriculture. Tables 8 to 11 make it clear that besides the traditional cultivating caste, the Kunbis, the artisans and the Scheduled castes have taken to cultivation in large numbers. In Prathama, out of the eighty-four Scheduled caste households, forty-nine own land, some of them fairly large holdings. Similarly, many skilled and semi-skilled persons like blacksmiths, carpenters, oilseed pressers, etc., either get their income solely from agriculture or they use agriculture as an additional income to their original occupation. The same situation is the case in village Dwitiya.

These tables indicate that all castes except the Brahmins are well represented among the landowning category. However, the traditionally agricultural castes still hold substantial land and probably the better quality lands, but the others are making their presence felt as well. This can be contrasted to the experience of Harijans reported by Aruna Nayyar-Michie in her study of two Rajasthan villages. In both these villages caste Hindus refused to let Harijans cultivate land received from government.
Rising Levels of Education

The most striking feature about the educational levels is the increasing number of literates at all levels of society. The older generation, in general, was illiterate, especially at the middle and lower social levels. But, below the age of 25 it is common to find education at least to the primary level. In a few cases it is up to the high school level and in stray instances higher education is observed. The prejudice against educating women seems to continue in many cases. However, there are large numbers of persons among the scheduled castes going beyond the primary stage. If we relate age and literacy, it could strongly be stated thus: children below age 14 would have a large percentage of literates, followed by men below 45, women 35 and less and the least educated would be women over 35.

Education has encouraged people to go out in search of jobs while the less-educated members of the households stay back to look after the land. Within the village community as well, it has helped in getting more secure jobs even if they be as yearly agricultural laborers for big landholders. With reservations in government jobs and other opportunities for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and specified other backward classes, education is gaining greater importance; and this fact is being recognized by the people. However, despite the knowledge of better income possibilities, immediate economic necessities make it incumbent on many families to employ their children in whatever avenue is open to them despite a low remuneration. In village Prathama, there are three brothers aged 40, 36 and 26; all three follow different occupations. The first brother owns 4 acres of land and leases another 4 acres. He has two oxen, two cows and two calves.
His wife goes out to work in the fields of others; he is illiterate. Brother number two has studied up to the primary level, has no land and he and his wife work as agricultural laborers. Brother number three is educated up to high school level, has a low paying salaried job, but earns almost as much as the older brothers with only one person working in the house. He would like to own dairy cattle to increase his income without requiring his wife to go out to work. Though in per capita terms the incomes may not be very disparate, since the size of the families of the brothers varies, in social terms the three would be viewed differently. Again education by itself does not necessarily bring in gains, unless it is used industriously. In village Dwitiya, one of the families with the lowest income boasts of a lawyer as its head. He is not practicing law and is looking for a job. Because of his qualifications he finds it beneath his position to soil his hands with manual labor or take up a petty trade. The two other members of his household are women who are agricultural laborers and whose low wages support the household.

**Skills**

More than mere literacy, certain basic skills are observed to greatly improve the income capacities of the individuals concerned. Time and again there were households that seemed to be doing slightly better than their neighbors due to the simple fact that one of their members was able to exploit his talent or skill. It is not only the basic skills required for village life like blacksmithy and carpentry that made the difference, but even being able to play a musical instrument for the local village band brought in extra income. Village
Prathama is able to accommodate more than one carpenter. Some belonging to this caste are following their calling and doing well. In fact a comparison between one such household and another of the same caste living by agriculture labor will be a case in point. The first household is composed of a couple with two children. The family gets by on the earnings of the father who does carpentry work. His wife does not go out and work on anyone's farm. The other consists of a mother with three adult children. All these members of the family are required to work as agricultural laborers. The standard of living of the first is still higher than that of the second. It would seem that without the father, the family would have to start anew and that expense would be too much to bear.

In village Dwitiya, in a 'matang' (a Scheduled caste) household, the income of one person occasionally playing a musical instrument is almost twice the amount earned by any one member of the family as agricultural laborer.

In the above examples it may appear that following the traditional caste occupation earns the most emphasis and is probably advocated. In these instances efforts were made to improve living conditions by the acquisition of certain skills. Acquiring such skills is easier when an occupation is handed down in the household itself, providing its members training and apprenticeship at almost no expense. Outside the family, any investment in training is difficult among the lower classes, hence the examples above are of those following their traditional occupations. On the other hand, if it is possible to invest and diversify, the returns seem to multiply manifold. This is made possible when there is an initial advantage by way of knowledge and funds. Take the
example of a Brahmin household in Dwitiya. It does not belong to the elite landed class, but has risen in status because of the initiative and enterprise of its members. The family consists of the parents, an adult son and four younger children. The father is the local priest. He also owns five acres and has leased an additional five acres of land. He has four cows and the eldest son operates a small shop in the village. All the members of the household, including the wife, are well educated. His wife and children do not work in the fields, including their own. Such diverse sources of income keep the family well equipped even through a bad season. The higher one goes in the socio-economic scale, the greater the evidence of such diversification, whereas at the lower levels subsistence farming precludes other activities. Absence of additional sources of income, in turn, keeps agriculture at a subsistence level. Even a small additional income helps to create a better agricultural basis. Joan Mencher, in her study of agriculture and social structure in South India, also stresses the difference made by an additional outside source of income. Any improvement on land is crucial. Digging a well and fixing a pump is expensive, but pays high dividends. However, when there is nothing to fall back on, any such improvement is out of the question. The soil of Dwitiya is qualitatively inferior. The incidence of fallow land is higher in the poorer households who are forced by circumstance to keep it barren as they cannot afford to make any improvements in the land on their own. In this village, among the lower classes, a large number of persons have expressed the need for help from the government.
Labor Patterns

Social factors determine the role perceptions of women and children within the family and outside. During this study, it was commonly observed that in certain families women went out to work as a last resort. To others, where there was land within the family, the menfolk worked on their own land while the women worked on land belonging to others. This situation prevailed despite the fact that women brought in only half the wages that a man would get. It appears that the higher caste women did not go out to work, while those of lower and middle castes did. Though this statement is true to a great extent, it is incomplete. It has more of an economic than a social explanation. In general, women work outside the home to supplement the household's insufficient income. When the menfolk are able to earn, either from wages or their produce, the minimum required for the family, the women stop working. Usually the higher castes are doing well and consequently their womenfolk have not had to work on the land for a long time. Since most of them are educated, they become teachers, nurses, etc. The non-upper castes are only now entering the economic race as equals; and hence the larger numbers of women entering the labor market from these castes. Secondly, perceptions have developed in such a way that higher caste women do not labor in the fields, but can work in white collar jobs, while it is acceptable for those belonging to the lower castes to do the manual work.

It is again economic necessity that also prompts child labor in the villages. Although educational opportunities are attractive--free tuition, free books and uniforms, and the elimination of discouraging attitudes as in the old days--many children from the lower classes are
still employed in subsidiary occupations, such as grazing cattle, even though it is not very remunerative. The employment of children in such economically poor activities becomes a vicious circle. Because of economic conditions they are forced to stay away from school and this in turn hampers their future chances for advancement. Addressing the issue of literacy and the development of women, Mary Slaughter refers to the economic feasibility of literacy. "There must be surplus over subsistence," she writes, to spare hands for the time it requires to obtain education.\(^3\) This is equally true of children, unless the family is willing to forego immediate gains in lieu of future betterment.

**Women as Head of Households**

Though government has proclaimed equal wages for equal work by men and women, it is commonly recognized that women get paid only half the wages earned by men. Socially too, women have been allotted an inferior position. This nurtures a sense of inequality and dependence in everyday life. Though observed in the rural society in general, the feeling by women of being unable to cope becomes more apparent in households having women as their heads. In both villages they fare badly. Socially, they are almost discounted from society. They seem to exist without identity, earning only pity from others. In this category there are hardly any instances of good utilization of land, of enterprise, of initiative. Living on the fringes of society, they are forgotten unless specifically called to the attention of others.

In village Dwitiya, there are eight such households (One, with good economic condition is excluded.) Of these, five own land, three do not. Of the three that do not own land, one belongs to the
Scheduled caste, one to the Maratha and one to the "Other" (carpenter) caste; caste being no bar to widowhood and poverty. All of them live in tumbledown houses, earn their livelihood by agricultural labor and are very poor. Of the five who own land, one who owns 4½ acres gets no yield as the land is of inferior quality; three have leased out their lands (3 acres, 11 acres and 10 acres), receiving low lease rent and working as agricultural laborers. The one who has leased out 11 acres has another 5 acres lying fallow. Both she and another widow owning 10 acres have young children and feel incapable of coping with agriculture and have not even tried to get any government benefits for themselves or their lands. The eighth widow supports a family of seven on 2 acres and her own hired labor. Thus they all seem to be struggling against great odds to make both ends meet. They receive a lot of sympathy and maybe help in times of need. But that seems about all. Widowhood seems a great leveller. All are faring poorly.

This pattern is seen repeated in the other village as well.

Class/Caste Structure in Prathama and Dwitiya

Information regarding various dimensions of the households in the two villages is largely based on the facts as expressed by the members of the household itself. In an economy wherein no records are maintained of the income earned, this seemed the best and the easiest way to get details regarding every member of the household. This has helped cover all aspects that would otherwise have been absent from the data, such as evidence of child labor, educational levels of non-school-going persons, opinions, needs. An open-ended conversational method encouraged people to talk, especially those at the lower levels
of the social scale. An admixture of facts and opinions gave a rich picture of the concerned village. However, it has also had its drawbacks, the most serious being the reporting of low incomes on land and cattle. Throughout the study when there were reasons affecting the land yields or income levels, these were recorded. In village Dwitiya there is more land left fallow due to its soil condition than in Prathama. There are instances, though, when the income is reported deliberately as low, a phenomenon more common among the middle level cultivators, but oddly absent among the smaller unit holders. This drawback was also noticed in respect to cattle. With milch cattle becoming an increasing source of primary income, cows and buffaloes have been increasing in number in most households. When income from the sale of animal produce is not reported, it can give a distorted picture. Take the example of a Scheduled caste family in Prathama. In this family a widow and son and daughter work as agricultural laborers. As two of them are women their earnings are meagre. But they own eighteen cows and some sheep, a factor that immediately improves their economic standing. If, in such a case, the income from the cattle is shown as very low, it would not be a correct statement.

Therefore to obviate such falsifications and to arrive at some understanding of the class structure, the likely income from land and cattle was to some extent standardized. From the data of these villages itself, the average income per acre of dry and irrigated land and per animal owned was computed. These were then applied to all households in general, except those with special reasons, such as poor soil. There are instances when the income reported originally is
higher than the computed one but the same formula was applied. It works out as follows:

One acre of dry land would yield an income of Rs 300
One acre of irrigated land = income of Rs 1000
Two acres barren land = income of Rs 100
One buffalo = income of Rs 600
One cow = income of Rs 200
One ox = income of Rs 200
One calf = income of Rs 100
One sheep = income of Rs 50.

The wages of agricultural laborers, skilled and semi-skilled workers, and salaried personnel have posed no problem and the reported earnings have been accepted. This exercise has been done solely to fix the class standing of the individual households when analyzing the impact of government development programs and policies.

Once the incomes of the various households were derived, the next step was to determine the levels for the various classes. As we have seen in the case of the family cited above, even though it did not own land, it cannot be said to be poor. Additional or supplementary or non-agricultural incomes are much in evidence; hence, class structure has not been based on landholding alone, but on the income yielded by such holding. Despite owning 20 acres of land a family can still be below the poverty line if that land is barren, hence the derivation of class has been done with the help of income levels.

According to government estimates, drawn from successive rounds of the National Sample Survey, studies of various scholars and the
Planning Commission, the average monthly per capita consumption for people below the poverty line has been set as Rs 44.96 and the average aggregate monthly per capita consumption as Rs 75.61. These figures have been accepted for this study. Taking five members as the average family size, the average annual consumption per household for people living below poverty line is Rs 2697.6; and the average annual consumption per household is Rs 4536.6. Therefore Rs 3000 is fixed as the poverty line for the families in the two villages. Overall there are four classes of households: Upper classes, Middle classes, Lower classes, and those living below the poverty line. A household with a total income of Rs 3000 or less is taken as living below the poverty line; between Rs 3001 and Rs 5000 as the Lower class; between Rs 5001 and Rs 7500 as the Middle class; and Rs 7501 and above as the Upper class.

Based on these calculations the class and caste configuration in the two villages is summarized in Tables 12 and 13.

These figures substantiate the contention that a certain degree of mobility has helped a section of the lower castes to improve their economic conditions. In village Prathama, if we look at the two categories of Scheduled castes and "Others," which can be called backward castes, they both have a fair share in the upper and middle class groups. Though compared to the Kunbi-Maratha castes, they have fewer in proportion to their numbers, it is a fairly promising trend. However, these two categories, Scheduled castes and "Other" castes, contribute the maximum to the "below poverty line" group, while the Kunbis are accommodated in the lower classes. On the other hand, in Dwitiya the Scheduled caste community is still at the lowest economic level with
Table 12. Class-Caste Equation: Prathama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Brahmins No.</th>
<th>Brahmins %</th>
<th>Kunbis No.</th>
<th>Kunbis %</th>
<th>Others No.</th>
<th>Others %</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes No.</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes %</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Classes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Classes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Classes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>34.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below Poverty</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>99.97</td>
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</table>
Table 13. Class-Caste Equation: Dwitiya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Brahmins No.</th>
<th>Brahmins %</th>
<th>Kunbis No.</th>
<th>Kunbis %</th>
<th>Others No.</th>
<th>Others %</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes No.</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes %</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Classes</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9.79</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>99.9</td>
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</table>
only two households in the middle classes and none in the upper classes. Even in Prathama where the picture appears brighter, 71 percent of the Scheduled castes and 56 percent of the 'Others' belong to the lower and below-poverty-line classes. To be exact, 35.7 percent of the Scheduled castes are among the lower classes and the same percentage is living below the poverty line. From among the 'Others', 30 percent are in the lower classes and 26 percent in the below-poverty-line category, individually and together comprising a substantial portion of the population in that group and of the village. In Dwitiya the composition of the population is slightly different with half the population being Kunbis. Here a large number of persons from among the lower classes (more than half) are Kunbis. Similarly, of the 48 households living below the poverty line, 23 are Kunbis. Thus in both villages caste is not a determinant of class, but is indicative of it. Poverty cuts across all boundaries of caste; however, due to historical reasons, larger numbers from among the lower castes are found at the lower levels of society. When we speak of poverty groups, therefore, these groups are composed of all castes, not necessarily the lower castes, though the caste factor will be emphasized where appropriate.

The upper class households of Prathama belonging to the lower castes are doing well in all spheres of development--agriculture, education, political participation, etc. They are almost on a par with the upper and middle castes. How can the differences between the two villages be explained? The explanation will have to be in class terms. First of all, the economic opportunities in the two villages are different. Not only has cattle-rearing made a difference, but there
are many more chances for higher wages in Prathama. Those who started first on the upward journey are able to easily maintain their position and acquire more wealth. These tend to be the representatives on the local development and cooperative bodies or those who have had close ties with them. They are considered more credit worthy by the cooperative and commercial lending institutions. They, in addition, have more direct access to the extension staff and its advice. These classes also have more access to the mass media and the outside world. Many of those belonging to this class, irrespective of caste, praised the farm broadcasts from the regional radio station, which gives localized expert advice and news. These were the households with better-educated individuals, especially of the younger generation. This education in turn enabled them to get government jobs, the Scheduled castes helped by the reservations made on their behalf. In Maharashtra, the other backward classes, which incidentally covers a wide spectrum of castes including the Kumbis, are also covered by a separate set of reservations, second only to those offered to the Scheduled castes and tribes. Again, it is the middle and upper level farmers who can take advantage of the training programs offered by the governmental and non-governmental agencies. The incentives offered to the small farmers are not sufficient enough to make it feasible for them to attend. Thus, better knowledge and agricultural practices get concentrated in the medium and large cultivators.

It is clear therefore, that if permitted to take advantage of the opportunities around him, any individual, despite his caste is capable of improving his economic standing.
Against this background of the various classes, in the next section, the different aspects of development will be related to the class structure. Here development does not refer only to schemes that bring in direct and immediate benefit, but also to the long-range introduction of changes that are expected to lead to better development.

**Economic Development**

Agriculture is the mainstay of the rural economy. Almost every member of the rural population is affected by it. By and large people in the rural areas can be said to be cultivators and agricultural laborers. Very few households live independently of agriculture. The traditional distribution into various occupations does not exist any more. Even if a rural artisan follows his trade, he still tries to hold on to some land, or some member of his household may work on land. Even the commercial castes, who used to run shops, indulge in farming as the second occupation. Therefore changes in agriculture can be said to affect large numbers.

Being the principal economic activity, agriculture merits first consideration. In both villages there are large numbers of landholders, big or small holdings, good or bad lands, but landholders. In addition many of the families are dependent solely on agricultural labor, and fluctuations in agriculture affect them through changes in wages and availability of work. In Prathama and Dwitiya there are 59 percent and 73 percent cultivator households respectively, and 23 percent and 21 percent agricultural labor households, respectively; in short a majority of the population.
Within agriculture there are certain broad areas where development policies have been initiated to increase production and productivity. The ones being considered here are, adoption of new agricultural practices, spread of irrigation facilities, utilization of credit, and cattle-rearing.

One consequence of the green revolution was the continuous research into hybrid and high-yielding variety seed and the best package of practices to go along with it. The various agricultural universities made localized research possible and little time is now lost between a demonstration plot and widespread use of a new innovation. In Maharashtra most of the distribution of seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides is done through the cooperatives or the Panchayat Samitis which have local outlets and the new varieties are subsidized. Therefore their acceptance by large numbers is possible.

But mere acceptance and availability is not enough. One major drawback in the use of hybrid seeds is that it requires application of fertilizers and pesticides that immediately eliminates most of the smaller farmers. Even if such a farmer does use the fertilizers and pesticides, he is completely dependent on the vagaries of nature. Without protective irrigation, it becomes a risky affair. Therefore, hybrid varieties, despite their advantages, are beyond the means of most lower class farmers. Data in the two villages show high returns to those farmers with irrigation facilities as compared to those without. And those without are invariably the cultivators from the bottom two categories of the social structure.
In Dwitiya, for example, out of more than a thousand acres less than a quarter of the area is planted with improved varieties of seeds, mainly hybrid jowar or millet in the kharif and hybrid and high yielding wheat in rabi season. Much of this is double cropping; that is, on irrigated lands first hybrid jowar is harvested and then wheat taken on the same area. Thus it would seem to bring double benefits to the cultivators with irrigation facilities. In agriculture, these practices bring in the profits. Most rural people grow hybrid crops for the market, reserving only the conventional varieties for self-consumption. The conventional or local varieties are supposed to taste better and hence their continuance, despite an abominably low yield. And low yields account for the vast acreage required to be covered to fulfill the needs. This leaves very little for sale in the market for the non-high-yield-variety grower.

It would thus seem that irrigation facilities make the great difference. With the exception of a narrow coastal strip, the State of Maharashtra is situated on a plateau gradually dipping towards the East. Even though the water table of Nagpur is higher compared to the Western and Central parts of the State, it stands nowhere near that of the Gangetic plain or the southern States. It has a low percentage of irrigated land, with the low water table making the cost of digging a well and pumping water beyond the reach of many. Hence there is great demand on government resources. The utilization of these resources is decided by local pressure groups even when the decision is formally made at the State headquarters. The composition of these pressure groups ensures that the first priority goes to the bigger
landholders who are the power wielders in the local organizations and local politics. The hot contest for approval of the appropriate site and the demonstrations, protests, and counter-protests bear witness to the significance of water to rural well-being. All these factors contribute to ownership of irrigation facilities following a particular pattern, a pattern made clear in Tables 14 and 15. It is not contended that irrigation alone assures the class standing of the household, but it brings security to the main source of income allowing investment in others.

Data from the two villages show there is a high percentage of landowning persons who are required to work on the land of others to augment their income. But those with even a small plot of irrigated land can employ the entire household and make enough for themselves. Another feature of irrigation, linking it to the caste and class structure, is the clear indication of what has contributed to the income of the family. Those with irrigation find themselves well placed in the social structure. For example, if the middle class of Prathama is examined, we find five out of seven of the Kunbis deriving most of their income from irrigated land. Out of the eighteen 'Others' and fifteen Scheduled caste households, eight and five, respectively, get income from irrigated land, the rest deriving income from other sources. The households of the 'Other castes' are occupational households and many of these earn a large part of their income from such occupations as carpentry, tailoring, and blacksmithy. But in the case of the Scheduled castes, it is mainly agricultural labor in combination with cultivation of dry land that accounts for the rest of the unirrigated landowning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Level</th>
<th>Brahmins</th>
<th>Kumbis</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of cultivators</td>
<td>No. with irrigation</td>
<td>Area irrigated</td>
<td>No. of cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Class</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty Line</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15. Availability of Irrigation Facilities: Dwitiya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Level</th>
<th>Brahmins</th>
<th>Kunbis</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of cultivators</td>
<td>No. with irrigation</td>
<td>Area irrigated</td>
<td>No. of cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty Line</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information available only about one family as the other was unwilling to give any details. From other sources it was learnt that there was substantial irrigated land in the household. However it was not included as it was not received from the householder. Therefore no percentage figures are given for the higher class in that caste category.
households reaching the middle class. Therefore, due to the differing sources of income, the social status enjoyed even within a class can be different as it is determined by the status of the source of income.

When water is such a vital ingredient and its impact so apparent, why do not more cultivators create irrigation facilities for their use? The main, and probably the only, reason is the cost of digging the well and fitting it with a pump. Due to the low level of the water table in these areas, the minimum expenditure for digging a well is Rs. 5,000 with another Rs. 5,000 for the pump, provided that water is struck at an average depth. The high cost and the risk involved pushes it beyond the reach of most households, unless the government helps. And it does. There are two types of interventions on the part of the government. The government grants the cost of the well to scheduled castes and small holders; in the other scheme the government offers one-third of the cost as subsidy if the rest is taken care of by a cooperative or commercial bank. Most of the scheduled caste and small holders with irrigated lands are beneficiaries of such government schemes. But government resources are limited, and very little financing is possible every year. After the well is dug, some are lying unutilized for want of a pump. If the beneficiary is a defaulter with the cooperative institutions he cannot get any credit.

Credit is a much sought after commodity. With limited resources to go around, and a high level of defaulters, the ones who manage to get credit are the middle and big farmers. As they have sufficient assets to pledge to the institutions or are influential within the cooperative hierarchy, these persons despite long-standing loans, get
most of the credit. In the two villages under examination, some of the large farmers have borrowed extremely large amounts. In recent years the government has issued directives requiring that some percentage of the credit has to be lent to small holders. This has benefitted some households. It has also created problems for a few. In both Prathama and Dwitiya, a scheduled caste household that borrowed the entire amount for digging a well and installing a pump spent the amount for other purposes. Even though such instances are few, these have been used by the office bearers of the cooperative societies to deny credit to the scheduled caste cultivators and to give more to those 'who will use credit productively.' Thus, besides blacklisting the defaulting debtors, these instances have been used to channel credit to the already well-off sections of the rural society.45

The ones who have received money are normally the ones who have irrigation now, who can take hybrid crops, and whose risk factor has been reduced. For reasons discussed above, many of the small cultivators are not eligible or are not able to get financing. The other group that is left untouched are the agricultural laborers and artisans. Without any assets, they are not 'viable' borrowers. Almost all would like to get financing or get government help to buy cattle or land or some agricultural implements, but they do not always get the financing and thus get little from the cooperative or government financing systems. Many do not even look towards the financing institutions for their needs as they realize the futility of it and find the local moneylender more sympathetic and all too ready to advance money. Many are left to fend for themselves and fall into the clutches of the
Table 16. Distribution of Agricultural Credit: Prathama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Level</th>
<th>Kunbi</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of cultivators receiving loan</td>
<td>Amount (RS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of cultivators receiving loan</td>
<td>Amount (RS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Class</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>105,800</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>64,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22,600</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46,200</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty line</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total amount disbursed: Rs. 4,59,500

Note: Brahmin caste not included as there are no cultivators from among them.
Table 17. Distribution of Agricultural Credit: Dwitiya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Level</th>
<th>Kunbi</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of cultivators receiving loan</td>
<td>Amount (RS)</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46,300</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27,200</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty line</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6,000*</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Out of these amount of Rs 6,000 and Rs 14,000, recipients of Rs 4,000 and Rs 11,500 respectively, did not utilize the amounts for the purpose for which it was lent.

Note: Brahmin caste not included as there are no borrowers from among them.
moneymakers. Needless to say such circumstances do not auger well for the poorer sections of the population. They seem caught up in a network that deepens their dependence and widens the gap between themselves and the middle and upper classes.

One aspect of rural economic activity that requires no land ownership is cattle rearing and dairying. In recent years it has only been growing in importance with the creation of a suitable infrastructure in the form of dairies, dry milk plants, chilling centers, collection centers, etc. The cattle owners have been encouraged to upgrade their stock through artificial insemination and these are regularly done in all regions of each district. To maintain the health of the cattle, veterinary dispensaries have been established. People are given additional information through exhibitions, training camps, competitions, etc. The returns on the animal itself are incentive enough and, therefore, one finds an increasing number of milch cattle. In the two villages I studied, there has been an appreciable increase of this activity in the last few years. There has been an influx of crossbred heifers, especially from Northern India, as well as exotic breeds. Many also own buffaloes. The IRDP, which has taken the lowest deciles of the population as its target group, has gone in for provision of subsidy on milch cattle in a big way, offering as much as one-third of the cost of the cattle as subsidy. The official agency also arranges for a loan component so that the landless laborer or marginal farmer can afford to buy the cattle. The inadequacy of this sum to buy a good milk producing animal and its resulting consequences have been discussed in an earlier chapter. The result is, however, a proliferation
of low quality milch cattle among the poorer section of the population. Although they are not very productive, they still have to be fed. Thus, the cost-benefit ratio is low.

As a policy, all these developments can be taken together for they are all aimed at one target: to make milch cattle more profitable. In this respect, the impact follows a pattern similar to what is observed in other fields of development. The poor families have been able to participate; many of them have taken loans from the banks and bought cattle to augment their incomes. So have those from the higher income groups. Two distinctions existed, though, between these two, the poor and the rich beneficiaries, that made all the difference: quantity and quality. The poor could afford only a few head of cattle while the others could operate on a grander scale, and secondly, the few cattle owned by the poor were of poorer quality, as far as income generation is concerned. They bought cows, sheep and poultry. Those, too, are only of the local type. The richer class persons own buffaloes and cows, very few of local variety, but mainly of the high milk yielding kind, making it possible to run businesses on a more commercial basis. Thus, the same program content made available to all has a varying impact, further strengthening the class inequalities.

During the study of the villages, enquiries were made of every household of the benefits received by them in the past five years. As the villages in question were only one of many in each block, it was preferable to consider the benefits according to the recipients rather than sectors. Furthermore, some policies may not be implemented in these villages. In the previous section the discussion was about
development benefits derived from the creation of the infrastructure and general policy. Here the concern is with the more direct policies, i.e., policies that come directly to the individual, such as receipt of subsidy. Some of these schemes are meant for the whole population while a few are deliberately directed to only particular categories, such as the small farmers and the Scheduled castes. Often because of the latter type of policies, the former get concentrated in the non-small farmer and non-Scheduled caste groups on the presumption that the specific groups will get their advantages from the other policies.

It is useful to keep in mind that indirect benefits, as we can call those that accrue from policies discussed above, are easier to manipulate and less obvious to others. A program offering seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at 25 percent subsidy will have few takers from the upper classes. But supply of carbofuron treated seeds, for example, will invariably be demanded by and monopolized by them.\textsuperscript{47} The latter will not be reflected in Table 18 probably because it does not involve the exchange of money, but is in kind, and in the perception of the beneficiaries it would not be worth mentioning, as is clear from the responses received.\textsuperscript{48} Such being the case it is doubtful if the information in Table 18 is complete and must be taken more as indicating the trend of flow of benefits.

From the available data, based on the information given by the people themselves, there exists an equity of numbers rather than of actual aid received. There are many from among the lower and below-poverty-line classes who have gained from some government program. The financial gains, however, are quite low for them as compared to the
upper and middle classes. The figures will show that from among the lower classes two persons have received fairly large sums—both for digging wells. Of these, one person has not utilized the money and has experienced no change in his life situation. He lives almost on the borderline close to the poverty group. The other person has been able to improve the living conditions of his large family due to the irrigation that his land now receives. Much of the aid received from government below Rs 750 is for subsidy for seeds and other specifics, the amount being decided by the size of the holding and caste membership, the Scheduled caste receiving 50 percent subsidy and the others 25 percent. The middle and upper classes have received more lasting assets. Their help from government has been for wells, pumps and milch cattle.

Some policies gain such political overtones from the timing and urgency attached to them that much more than the initial government investment goes into them. The administration, political parties, voluntary agencies, and private individuals interested in making the policy a success put in their own resources and efforts, the end result is quite different from the one envisaged in the beginning. Take, for instance, the program of constructing houses for landless laborers without homes. An older scheme of granting plots on government lands was further strengthened to cover all such persons, and wooden beams were to be provided as additional help and to ensure that the homes would be completed in record time. The beneficiaries were expected to provide their own labor and procure the remaining material at no cost to them. Soon the program became so important to the government that the local administrators vied with one another to get a better
house constructed. The local companies were roped in and asked to make contributions; brick manufacturers gave bricks either free or at a reduced price; the voluntary agencies came to lend a hand in the construction, the political parties joined in last and took most of the credit. The end result was that the beneficiary who should have worked on the construction was paid for the work out of the Employment Guarantee Scheme and got a much better product than would have been possible with his own efforts. Such policies are difficult to price. The beneficiary, realizing the political stakes involved, withdraws into the background, anticipating that all initiative will be taken by the government for his personal welfare. Such an attitude helps those

Table 18
Benefits Received by the Various Classes in Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Received in Rupees</th>
<th>Upper Class (41) %</th>
<th>Middle Class (41) %</th>
<th>Lower Class (74) %</th>
<th>Below Poverty (58) %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to Rs 250</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 to 500</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 750</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750 to 1000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 to 2000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 to 3000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 to 4000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000 to 5000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 to 6000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


in power to maintain control by making policies suitable to them while giving out a small share to the last few deciles of the population. This has become amply clear from the distribution of gains from development among the different sections of the society.

The politicians, in turn, are aware of this and admit that development has not taken place according to expectations. The consensus among them is that two things are mainly responsible for this miscarriage of intentions. For one, the government has become too politicized, with the result that decisions are taken not because they are feasible but because they would appeal to the masses. For example, it was pointed out that government's action of writing off loans of marginal and small farmers was not a positive step. Instead, the same amount should have been offered as production incentive to the same persons. The Gram Panchayat, too, has become a factional, rather than a representative, body it was supposed to be. The second drawback of development today is that the people's initiative has been killed by the government taking on complete responsibility for development. In the days prior to the Panchayati bodies, local contribution, at least in token form, was insisted upon for the implementation of any program or scheme. Today there is no self-awareness and sense of social obligation. What should be done by the people is now expected from the panchayati or government bodies. For small matters, individuals approach ministers who, in turn, are thrilled to interfere in petty matters. This results in those being near the source of power enjoying greater benefits, very much like those near a percolation tank receiving all the water. This reliance on the political leadership is
useful to the leaders who like the people to remain ignorant. It helps maintain the status quo. Therefore the leaders don't bother to educate the people. It would only increase competition for their own positions.

Throughout the study the close connections between economic and political development became obvious. How far the people have developed politically and how it has helped them in furthering their economic ends necessitates making a detailed examination.

**Political Development**

Political development and perceptions of change in these two villages, as in any other village in the State, will have to be related to the Panchayati Raj organization that has become a vital link in development between the local and the State governments. The increasing role allotted to it has made the people more aware of its significance and of the people running it. It has become a vehicle to remove the traditional elite from village politics, albeit yielding place to a new elite. The new elements may be an improvement in that they are relatively more responsive to the people due to regular elections. One outstanding feature noticed in both the villages is the recognition of the Gram Panchayat as the intermediary in development activities. Even though almost all expected help from the government and were aware that the Gram Panchayat could not offer much, it was clear to them that the Gram Panchayat played a pivotal role in implementation of various government or Zilla Parishad policies. The Gram Panchayat, in turn, was organically connected to the Panchayat Samiti and the Zilla Parishad, more so if a representative of either of these hailed from the village
in the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat. The development level of the village depended on such factors. The slight edge enjoyed by Prathama over Dwitiya can be conjectured as being the result of the former being a well-represented village. For fifteen years the Zilla Parishad member for that area belonged to Prathama. The present Chairman as well as Deputy Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti are from this village. The relative power of these representatives vis-à-vis the district or State leadership also counts. For example, the ex-member of the Zilla Parishad had high connection with the State ministers, and was on many committees. Though no longer in the Zilla Parishad, he is the President of the district Milk Producers Federation. Dwitiya has no such distinctions. All these politically active persons have substantial land holdings and milch cattle. Their constituency is the rural areas.

They have high stakes in the development of the infrastructure of the village and the welfare of individual persons, at least the key persons who are essential to their holding their power positions. This may be one reason that Prathama has developed more and its people have enjoyed more individual benefits.

Once a plan becomes operative, the efforts to benefit their respective constituencies begin with representatives taking the programs as close to home as possible. Just as political connections help individuals, these connections are instrumental in whether the village or constituency qualifies for the implementation of programs and schemes. In a comparison between Prathama and Dwitiya a review of just one sector will make the above clear. (These villages figure in the list when individuals from the village are chosen. Though giving no clue
to the type of persons who would ultimately gain, it takes us a step further in understanding the process of policy implementation and demonstrates the close connection between power and the direction taken by a public policy.)

Under the agriculture department in 1975-76, out of the nine schemes implemented in Hingna block, five reached Prathama, benefitting nineteen individuals.

In 1976-77, there were eleven such agricultural schemes in the block, seven were implemented in Prathama and benefitted thirty individuals.

In 1977-78 there were nine schemes, of which seven benefitted twenty persons in Prathama.

In 1978-79 of the fourteen schemes, six benefitted twenty-one persons there.

In 1979-80, eleven schemes were implemented in the block, of which seven were implemented in Prathama.

And in 1980-81 of ten schemes, five reached the people of Prathama.

In contrast, during the same years, of the fifty-nine schemes implemented in Kalmeshwar block only four schemes were accessible to the village of Dwitiya. There are other villages in that Panchayat Samiti that occur more frequently in the expenditure statements.

The more concrete signs of development—permanent constructed public buildings—are also more numerous in Prathama than in Dwitiya. There is an attempt in the Panchayat Samitis to spread certain kinds of facilities in as many villages as possible—for example,
recreation centers—but there are other, even more prestigious, constructions that find their way only to some villages. In Dwitiya there is the Gram Panchayat building, a recreation center, the school and the temple buildings. In Prathama, besides the above, there is a dispensary, a huge structure of the milk producers cooperative. Since 1980 the village has been getting funds consistently from the block incentive grants to undertake another public building. This village also has a good drainage system that is missing in the other one. Thus the two villages have developed to slightly different degrees due to the varying lobbying capacity of their leaders.

The class structure of Prathama and to some extent Dwitiya exhibits the mobility of the backward castes in recent years. This can be linked to political mobility of at least some members of such households. It was observed that generally those who were or had been politically active had done well for themselves. It has not been easy for them to penetrate the strongholds of the higher caste classes and participate in the political process. But the fact of penetration itself is significant. For actual statistics, I will cite the figures for Hingna block, as I have already referred to some of its functionaries above.

There are eleven members in the Panchayat Samiti. Of these, two are from Prathama, the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman. The Chairman is a Kunbi and the Deputy Chairman belongs to the 'Mana' caste categorized here as "Others" in the study. Two are Panchayat Samiti members as well as Zilla Parishad representatives. Both are Marwaris, combined with the Brahmans in the study.
co-opted woman member, a Kunbi, and a member from the cooperative institutions, an 'Other' caste member. Of the remaining regularly elected members, one is a Kunbi, three are 'Others' and one is a Scheduled caste person. The caste composition of the Gram Panchayats can be done at two levels, of the Sarpanchas (Headman) and the members of the Gram Panchayats. There are fifty-two Gram Panchayats in Hingna block. Of these fifty-two Sarpanchas

- 1 is a Brahmin,
- 14 are Kunbis,
- 26 are of the 'Other' castes, and
- 11 are of the Scheduled castes.

Similarly there are 362 members of the Gram Panchayat. They are

- 3 Brahmins,
- 61 Kunbis,
- 168 'Others', and
- 129 Scheduled castes.

By any standards this level of participation by the Scheduled castes is high. It can be explained to some extent by the large number of Scheduled tribes which are concentrated in the large tracts of forest lands in the block. There are as many as seventy-two members and six Sarpanchas of the Scheduled tribe in the above Scheduled caste figures. If these are deducted, we could expect the resultant picture to be not very different in other blocks of the district. Even if we take the reservations of seats for the Scheduled castes into account, the number of Scheduled caste and other castes is high enough to conclude that the lower castes are beginning to take advantage of their numbers to get a
fair representation. It however seems that the closer one goes to the local level, the higher the participation of such groups. Today, at the higher levels, their number is small. But it may be only a matter of time before this is rectified.

In Dwitiya the police patil is a Scheduled caste member. Before him his uncle held the post. It is a reserved post. He is a well-educated and well-travelled person and a progressive farmer. The position gives him very little besides status in direct return, but he builds up contacts with the official as well as non-official circles and therefore considers it worthwhile. He also becomes aware of developments outside the village—the new plans, new programs, new opportunities. Probably in the next elections he will enter politics. The number of such individuals is increasing, though slowly.

While the political and economic awareness among such individuals is quite high, to find the level of political consciousness among the people in general, a small sample from the two villages was selected: thirty-two individuals from Prathama and thirty from Dwitiya. Where relevant the two are taken separately; otherwise, they are combined. The sample breakdown by strata is given in Table 19. This sample was used to find out the political awareness as well as to get details about education and information levels which will form the subject matter of the next chapter.

In an analysis of the people's attitude a sense of great dependence on government emerged. Though the Zilla Parishad and the Panchayat Samiti were accepted as the organization for implementation with certain powers for formulating their own programs, everyone looked towards the
government to provide the basic necessities and the subsidies, Panchayat raj bodies are accepted more as agents, with the final sanction lying with the government. This may be the result of long experience with the Panchayats which has not benefitted all to the same degree, and a more equitable deal is expected from the government. This understanding cuts across all the classes, as is seen in Table 20. This is also why elections and heavy turnout are considered important (See Table 21.) In their perception such participation is directly linked to the benefits they may receive as there is a trade-off between support and advantages provided to the supporters. Such advantages, they feel, are provided not out of genuine concern for the people, but enlightened self-interest which makes the leaders responsive to the wishes of their constituency.

Table 19
Sample Breakdown by Strata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total number of households</th>
<th>Number of persons in sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRATHAMA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWITIYA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20
Perceptions of Who Can Fulfill their Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Upper Class</th>
<th>Middle Class</th>
<th>Lower Class</th>
<th>Below Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Party</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No One</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives and acquaintances</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing institutions</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayati Raj organization</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percentage</td>
<td>120.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>110.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage goes beyond 100 as some gave more than one answer.
Table 21
Perception of the Importance of Voting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether voting is important</th>
<th>Upper Class</th>
<th>Middle Class</th>
<th>Lower Class</th>
<th>Below Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percentage</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The panchayati raj organization was expected to take the government as close to the people as possible, to operate at the grass roots so that people's needs are incorporated into governmental programs and the people are in turn educated in governing themselves. One indicator of the success of this democratic decentralization can be the distance between the people and the leaders. In an organizational arrangement when the people and their welfare is emphasized and always spoken about, the access to political leaders was considered the first step in bringing power to the people. The respondents were therefore asked if they contacted leaders directly or through an intermediary. The responses are presented in Table 22. Respondents who had only indirect contact stated "not knowing the individual personally" as the reason for needing the intermediary. Of these only one said that unless you are known to the leaders your work is not done. Therefore he usually
Table 22
Access to Political Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Direct contact</th>
<th>Indirect contact</th>
<th>No occasion/ No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty Groups</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48.38</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

approaches through those who know the concerned person. Similarly, two persons from among the nineteen who had either no occasion to meet them or had no comment, thought the political leaders to be unhelpful and therefore did not bother to approach them. The rest of the nineteen had no opinion. The above figures seem impressive as all classes of persons have access to the political leadership. It is in keeping with the current feeling among the people that since the representatives are dependent on them for staying in power, it is their duty to help them when need arises. Even within the village, it was the Sarpanch who was approached when a problem came up. This was the response of the overwhelming majority.

Yet, where developmental activity was concerned it was the official agencies that proved useful. A distinction was made between the type of help rendered when approached and help rendered in the form of advice,
guidance and information without being approached. Here among the lower classes the reply was almost unanimous. On their own neither the officials nor the non-officials bothered to let them know about any schemes or problems that would be helpful to them. It was either their friends or acquaintances who told them about it or they found out about it on their own, unless there were targets to be fulfilled and there was pressure from the top. The general feeling was that the extension machinery identified more with the higher classes and communicated mainly with them. Similarly, the local leadership, except a few Gram Panchayat members, were invariably from the same background and were socially and economically far removed from the masses. Except for the police patil of Dwitiya, almost all other office holders are from among the Kunbi or Mana castes of the Upper class. This set them apart not only from most of the lower castes, but the Kunbi and Mana lower classes as well.

In such circumstances, the respondents were asked what the solution was. Surprisingly many turned towards the same institutions and power centers, i.e., the government and the political leadership, as the answer. Any other alternative was far fetched or beyond comprehension. Their immediate concern, however, was of a more personal nature. Barring a few, every household expressed a desire to improve their economic condition first, a desire completely focused around land and cattle. Those with dry land laid highest priority on irrigation facilities or land improvement if quality of soil was poor. Other landed households wanted to increase their wet land capacity and the number of cattle in their possession. Oddly enough only a few of the landless laborers expressed a desire to get land. Invariably they opted for milch cattle
and sheep. The amount of help wanted from the government varied ac-
cording to the financial capacity of the household. Some of the big
landlords wanted tractors and buffaloes, while the poor were satisfied
with sheep. Very uncharacteristically, none expressed any desire for
jobs or skilled training.\textsuperscript{52} This could be attributed to various
reasons. First, in the rural setting, their own existence converges on
agriculture and hence their reactions are geared towards such occupa-
tions. Secondly, reaction to the researcher could have produced such
responses. People are known to tailor their replies to the expectations
of the researcher. If instead, a person with some authority were to ask
them the same questions their responses may have been different. Third,
some amount of conditioning has occurred due to the types of policies
being implemented. Demands are geared to such policies. Those without
land have been receiving help to buy cattle and therefore expect future
help in the same form. The landed, on the other hand, have received
subsidies for wells and pumps and therefore their expectations take that
route. Besides, these are the only possible ways to get better economic
returns. There have been no alternatives explored and tried that would
offer a choice for future development. Thus, a limited existence and
past experience has decided the changes that they would like to see
happen to them.

Many of the rich villagers maintain only a skeleton household in
the village, the family having shifted to the city because of its edu-
cational and business facilities and city attractions. Such contacts
with urban centers create an awareness that opens up wider horizons
and provides choices that are missing or not available to the isolated
villager. The starting point in all change seems to be access to and
availability of information and the capacity to use it. In the next chapter information and education (defined earlier in the chapter as the capacity to use this information) will be examined along with the difference created by greater access to information and its impact on perceptions, political awareness and general living conditions.
Figure 3. Detailed Plan of Village Dwitia.

LEGEND
- Temporary House
- Permanent House
- Well
- Electric Pole
- House of SC
- House of ST
- Kunbi
- Other caste

STATE HIGHWAY

Road to Village Linga

Towards NAGPUR

TOWARDS NAGPUR
1. These names of the villages are fictitious. They are Marathi words; Prathama means first and Dwitiya means second. They are merely used for convenience. The actual meaning of the words is no reflection on the development standard or the living conditions of the people of the respective villages.

2. For a detailed social and political history of Maharashtra and Nagpur see, Maharashtra State Gazetteer and Nagpur District Gazetteer (Bombay: Government of Maharashtra, 1968).


5. Nagpur District Gazetteer ... Also see Socio-Economic Review ...


8. Nagpur District Gazetteer ..., p. 30. The political division of India into the various provinces made by the British continued after independence in 1947 till 1956. The British had divided India into various provinces for administrative convenience. Some of these provinces had been conquered, some bought over from the Indian kings and their identity maintained. Thus many of these provinces lacked homogeneity, the administrative unity notwithstanding. The absence of a formal political process during the British rule -- i.e., elected legislatures, political parties, etc.-- made this possible. The present State of Maharashtra, for example, was in the Bombay Presidency, almost the size of a country. It extended from Karachi in Sind (now in Pakistan) through the Gujarat speaking State of Gujarat, present-day Maharashtra, and one half of the Kannada speaking State of Karnataka in South India. After independence, political movements started for reorganization of states according to the languages spoken in the various regions. A committee appointed by the Government of India called the States Reorganization Committee, recommended the division on a language basis. Accordingly on 1st November 1956, the new states came into being. Maharashtra and Gujarat however, stayed together, the parting with Bombay not being acceptable to the business community made up of Gujaratis and
Parsis. Eight districts of Central Provinces and Berar also stayed out in the State of Madhya Pradesh. It was only after a long drawn-out struggle by the Marathi-speaking people, especially in the rural areas, that the two parted company and the present State of Maharashtra came into being on 1st May 1961.


10. The Satya Shodhak Movement—Truth Seeking Society Movement—is the name of the non-Brahmin movement launched in the Bombay region in the early decades of this century. The movement was responsible for raising the political and social consciousness of the Maratha-Kunbis, who though formed nearly 40 percent of the population, were dominated by the Brahmins. It mobilized the Marathas and eventually helped them wrest political power from the Brahmins. For a detailed account see Gail Omvedt, "Jyotirao Phule and the Ideology of Social Revolution in India," Economic and Political Weekly, 11 Sept. 1971, pp. 1969-1979.


11. Donald B. Rosenthal, The Expansive Elite, District Politics of State Policy Making in India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 312. It is useful here to briefly trace the stages of land reforms in Maharashtra. The years 1960-62 saw the passing of legislation for the abolition of a small number of absentee landlords and another for giving land to the tiller. The first had little impact unlike the second. Similarly the first land ceiling law was passed. Depending on the type and classification of the land, the maximum land allowed was 104 acres of dry land.

More recently the second land ceiling act was passed bringing down the ceiling to 54 acres of dry land. Though there is continuous fear that the ceiling would be further lowered, due to the quality of the land in the State, it does not seem likely in the near future.


14. Those members of the Scheduled castes who have embraced Buddhism under the influence of Ambedkar, call themselves Neo-Buddhists. The Neo-Buddhists are the best organized in Maharashtra among the Scheduled castes. They have been able to retain from the State government the privileges granted to Scheduled castes. For an analytic study of the Scheduled castes in Maharashtra see Eleanor M. Zelliot's "Buddhism and Politics in Maharashtra," in Donald E. Smith, ed., *South Asian Politics and Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 191-212.

15. The Republican Party is exclusively a Scheduled caste party, though there is no bar on other castes from joining it. It is most active in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Recently, however, it has split into factions, one group aligning with the Congress (I) and the other with the Janatha Party.


18. Ibid., p. 14. One hectare in the metric system is about 2.5 acres.

19. S. K. Rao, "Inter-Regional Variations . . .," p. 1334


21. In 1977-78, 7,733 hectares of land were under orange cultivation. Orange is the major cash crop in Nagpur and it is to Nagpur what sugarcane is to Western Maharashtra. It is, however, not very prevalent in the areas under study where field study was conducted.


26. Annual Administration Report of Nagpur Zilla Parishad (Nagpur: Z. P. Press, 1981), pp. 7-8. Throughout this study the rupee values are maintained. The exchange rate is 1$ = approximately Rs 8. However the purchase power being different it does not make any sense to convert it to dollars as it will not convey the proper value of the amount.

27. This has been noted by Anthony Carter, Mary Carras and Rosenthal among others. My discussion with the elected officials of the Nagpur Zilla Parishad confirmed this view.


31. Socio-Economic Review . . ., Directorate of Statistics and Economics, pp. 27-33. In India, Rs 100,000 is referred to as a lakh.

32. Ayacut is the land which will be irrigated by an irrigation project, i.e., the command area. For the optimum use of the water that will be available, it is necessary to prepare the land, lay down field channels, and prepare the drainage system.

33. Irrigation projects are major, medium and small projects according to the cost and the area irrigation capacity. Irrigation schemes costing Rs 10 lakhs (one million) or less are small, 10 lakhs to 100 lakhs are medium projects and those above Rs 100 lakhs are called major irrigation projects. The financial limits are subject to change by government to keep up with the rising prices. Major projects cover more than one district and the high cost makes it beyond the means of one district planning body. Hence these schemes are decided and the allotments granted by the State government. It is the medium projects that are most sought after at the district level. They irrigate up to 50,000 acres.


36. The white revolution refers to the milk production and upgradation that was taken up by the government and incentives provided, marketing and storage facilities created and better animals offered. This was expected to allow every individual in the rural areas to participate in development unlike the green revolution where good land was the prerequisite.


41. Kharif is the first agricultural season during the south-west monsoons, extending from June-July to October-November and the Rabi follows it extending till March-April.

42. Maharashtra ranks very low among the states as far as irrigation facilities are concerned. The percentage of irrigated area to total cropped area is only 13 percent. It is 20 percent for India as a whole. Among other states, Tamil Nadu has 45.6 percent, Punjab 44 and Uttar Pradesh 20 percent. The figures for the other states are nearly ten years old while the Maharashtra figures are recent.

43. The construction of an irrigation dam will involve submergence of a large tract of land for storage. The choice of a dam site therefore will depend on whose lands are submerged and who will get the benefit of irrigation. It is all the more important in a state like Maharashtra where irrigation is difficult and expensive. Therefore such schemes are selected not only according to economic and technical considerations, but also social and political pressure. Examples are the Jayakwadi project which was shifted miles to accommodate some interests, and the Upper Wardha project which cannot be started because those who are to lose their lands are orange growers with considerable clout in the political field.

44. Cooperative Credit societies are an important source of credit for agriculture in the state. The cooperative societies sanction loans to members which are refinanced by the cooperative banks and the Federation of cooperative societies. But for a society to be eligible for refinancing it is necessary for them to recover a determined percentage of loans to individual farmers. If a cooperative society, for example, has too many small farmers and recovery is low, it may not be able to get finance in the next season. For a detailed analysis see, Y. J. Mohite, "Maharashtra II: Cooperatives, The True Story," Economic and Political Weekly, 29 Sept. 1973, p. 1956.

45. Studies have indicated that in fiercely competitive societies, 'infiltrators' have purposely defaulted on cooperative loans to
deny refinancing to these societies. This mostly affects the small farmers and those of the scheduled castes who are solely dependent on them.

46. This has already been discussed to some extent in Chapters II and IV.

47. High yielding seeds are sometimes treated with a chemical called carbofuron which makes them extremely resistant to pests and diseases. The yield from the seed is very high. It is not possible for individuals to treat this seed themselves because of the cost and the type of chemical used which has to be handled very carefully even while sowing. There is therefore great demand for this seed which unfortunately is always in small quantity.

48. During my field research I noticed a tendency on the part of the middle and rich farmers to underplay the gains from government, even if such gains play a big role in increasing their incomes.

49. This is based on my conversation with the President of the Zilla Parishad, the Chairman of the Works Committee, and the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee. Though a part of the same political scene, playing the same games to gain and maintain power, their frank expression of opinion about the role played by the panchayati raj was a pleasant surprise. They all agreed that political influence was important for getting programs implemented and enjoying benefits. And for political influence, economic power was an essential ingredient.

50. The state government grants incentive grants to blocks and districts that get substantial amounts invested in small savings bonds issued by the government. These grants are usually used for constructing community halls, housing facilities and sports complexes. The more influential members are able to get these grants spent in their villages. Thus though the grants are due to the overall performance of the whole district only some villages are able to benefit from substantial amounts being spent in the rural areas.

51. A police patil is the honorary representative of the executive magistrate in the village. He is appointed by the district magistrate and is expected to maintain law and order. During the British rule and in the sixties, it was a hereditary post going to the richest landlord in the village. Now it is done through selection every five years. Educational qualifications are given consideration and some posts are reserved expressly for scheduled caste candidates, who can also apply for the non-reserved posts. At one time a very powerful position, it has lost much of its importance after the coming of the panchayati raj.
62. I have used the word 'uncharacteristic' because my general experience has been that even agricultural graduates seem to prefer salaried jobs to returning to their lands and cultivation. This is mainly due to the security and continuity provided by such jobs, especially in the government.
CHAPTER VI
DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF INFORMATION

Introduction

The two main concerns throughout this study have been the understanding of poverty and inequality and the role of rural development policies in their removal. There is a strong relationship, it is contended here, between these concerns and the structure of the Indian society, with its impact on sociocultural relations, economic capacities and political roles. In turn these relations, capacities and roles have affected the flow of benefits from government programs. Income levels are one indicator of the degree of amelioration of poverty and the extent of equity in government programs. Income levels are affected not only by occupation, but also by the amount and kind of information reaching rural families. To some extent this was observed in the two villages of Prathama and Dwitiya, where mere possession of land did not determine the living conditions of the family. It was noted that when information was combined with land ownership, as in the case of some progressive farmers, or those who combined cultivation with animal husbandry, the increase in income was substantial.1

Government programs operate against the backdrop of a particular sociocultural, political and administrative setting in which some families transcend the class/caste barriers and are in a much better position to progress economically than those whose condition remained stagnant. Mobility is a vital element in the development of the rural poor and merits a closer look.
It can be argued that infusing mobility into the social structure delays the possibility of structural change. Reformism, by reducing class conflicts, blunts the need for such a change, according to this argument. Since poverty and inequality have been traced back to the social structure, it is logical to assume the removal of these twin ills requires that this structure should come tumbling down, its place taken by a new set of relationships that are based on equality and justice. Class mobility will slow this process, even stop it, make people less aware of class differences and allow the continuance of socioeconomic and political distinctions.

The contention here is that social change can be brought about by concentrating on increasing class mobility which will achieve new social relations by ignoring or by-passing the old ones. It would be an adaptation of the Marxian solution suited to local conditions. Social change through revolutionary or violent means is doubtful in Indian conditions today. An example is the Marxist government in the state of West Bengal. It can advance any strategy of rural development because its party cadres control most of the local government organizations. Yet the thrust of its programs has been better implementation of land reforms, provision of employment to laborers through rural works programs (similar to the Employment Guarantee scheme of Maharashtra), and the panchayati raj system. In other words, even a Marxist party has responded by inducing mobility into the system in an effort to remove poverty and inequality.^{2}

The two villages of Prathama and Dwitiya, with their differences and similarities, have substantial numbers from various caste groups
and occupations living in poverty. But some individuals have managed to benefit by achieving mobility, despite the constraints of class and caste. These are individuals who have not been helped by historical circumstances, but developed anyway.

The causes of this class mobility which occur only in stray instances in two Nagpur villages are more widespread in another village on the western coast of Maharashtra, in Tritiya. In Tritiya class mobility can be witnessed at the community rather than the individual level. It is a village situated in Thane district bordering Bombay and as such enjoys many of the benefits accruing from its proximity to a metropolitan city. In this chapter, therefore, those aspects of Tritiya's development which would be relevant for the development of Prathama and Dwitiya and other villages like them will be examined. It will be seen that those individuals in Prathama and Dwitiya who have been able to rise in the social structure have much in common with the people in Tritiya. Some of the common factors are:

1. Higher levels of information and education;
2. Access to media and men who matter, such as political leaders and administrators;
3. Physical mobility, and

These factors are present in Tritiya as well as in the individuals referred to above in the two other villages. Therefore strengthening their impact can be considered one way of infusing mobility into a static, poverty-ridden society. Since these factors constitute a general trend in Tritiya, the village as a whole will be studied before relating
the significance to the different sections of the population in Prathama and Dwitiya.

In Prathama and Dwitiya the social system has some flexibility. In Tritiya the old socioeconomic relationships have broken down even further. Class mobility helps to conscientize the people and make them aware of the programs and opportunities that are available to them and can be of benefit to them. Such an awareness helps to improve their income levels and remove poverty, paving the way toward equity.

It will be clear in the following pages that Tritiya serves a specific purpose and while some aspects are emphasized, others are not. In the case of Prathama and Dwitiya, benefits received from government policies are important; here, they are examined only briefly. It was clear in the previous chapter that complete dependence on land, unless it was sufficient and irrigated, cramp the scope for development. It was mainly diversification of occupation, or sources of income, that allowed optimal use of land on the one hand and better income levels on the other. In this chapter the extent of diversification will be examined first before investigating those factors considered essential to equip persons to develop economically and politically.

**Tritiya: A Transitional Village**

Tritiya is situated in Vasai block of Thane district. Many parts of Thane are designated as backward. These are mostly inhabited by tribals. The rest of the district has developed well and some parts are almost as industrially developed as Bombay. It has taken full advantage of its proximity to the city of Bombay. Vasai panchayat samiti is one
of these and references will be made more to the block, which is homogeneous with the village, than to the district as a whole.  

Though places in the district are identified with references to the Puranas and the Epics, the historical importance of Vasai can be traced to the Maratha period. With frequent battles the fort of Vasai and its surrounding areas changed hands among the Marathas, the Portuguese and the British. In 1730 the Portuguese conquered it from the Marathas and held it for seven years. Thereafter it went back to the Marathas. In 1774 the British entered the scene on the pretext of helping one of the factions in the ruling household and made their presence felt thereafter. In 1802 they finally succeeded in taking over Vasai, spreading their control over the district by 1818. The short period of Portuguese rule is significant for it resulted in large-scale conversions to the Christian faith. According to the 1961 Census Christians comprised 25.4 percent of the population of the Vasai panchayat samiti. This has also had other effects such as opening of English medium schools and a higher propensity for women to seek employment.  

Vasai is one of twelve panchayat samitis covering about 6 percent of the area of the district but supporting almost twice that percentage of people. Its coastal climate is temperate and equable, with fairly heavy rainfall. The soil is blackish and contains sand making it suitable for garden crops. With a population of 277,700 persons, 66.6 percent of the males and 48 percent of the females are literate. Of this population, 39 percent are workers, 2.2 percent are marginal workers and the rest are non-workers. Of the total population, 7.19 percent are cultivators, 7.75 percent are agricultural laborers, 3
percent are working in the household and manufacturing industry and 20.75 percent are working in other sectors. Many of those in the last category are employed in Bombay and its environs. The male-female ratio in all of the above has the following characteristics: Females form two-fifths of the cultivators, half the agricultural labor, one-fourth of those employed in the household industry, one-sixth of those employed in salaried jobs, two-thirds of the marginal workers and non-workers. Within the block most of the villages can be said to have developed to the same extent; however, when compared to the villages of Nagpur or most other Maharashtra villages, these villages show higher income levels in general.

Tritiya is one of the well-developed villages. It is situated near the western coast, connected by road and rail to Bombay. Its main produce are vegetables, flowers, bananas and other fruits. The bananas of Vasai are famous all over the country. Due to its proximity to Bombay and accessibility it has a ready market for all that it grows. The total population of Tritiya is 1,010 persons living in 175 households. The composition, though, is entirely different from that of Nagpur villages, or for that matter, of any village in other districts of the State. Of the 175 households, sixty-two belong to the Brahmins, six to the Scheduled castes, nine to Scheduled tribes and three to the Other Backward castes; ninety-five are Christians. The number of Christians is high even by Vasai standards. The Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe residents are mainly from the backward areas of the district and this fact is reflected in their occupational and class standing as will be clear in the ensuing discussion. One feature that
this village has in common with others is that all who own land, irrespective of its size and its contribution to total income, claim to be cultivators.

The occupational pattern for the village is given in Table 23.

In all, sixty-seven families are solely dependent on land, while the others have diversified occupations according to the opportunities available. For example, many of the self-employed have become vegetable and fruit vendors travelling to different parts of the city of Bombay and establishing a regular clientele. In forty-two households at least one person is employed in a salaried job, generally called 'service' in these parts, usually in Bombay. In some households there are as many as three persons in such service. There are in all fifty persons with salaried jobs. In such households, except the seven which are not dependent on land, some members of the family, either the older or the less educated ones, tend the land while the others look around for additional sources of income, preferably an assured one. In pursuit of such security they are prepared to undergo a great deal of hardship. Commuting can take as much as two hours each way if a person is working in the business district of Bombay. With an eight hour work day it means being away for more than twelve hours every day, six days a week.13

Yet, it pays off in terms of family income. Though the attachment to land is very strong it is such families that are doing better than those completely living off the land.14 In general, compared to Prathama and Dwitiya, or for that matter any average Indian village, Tritiya is prosperous and well-developed. Most of the houses are permanent structures on well-laid out roads. A few Scheduled castes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Ag labor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Service</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Self-employed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service alone</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agricultural labor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other Backward Classes
and Scheduled tribe houses are on one side of the village. Though better than those found in Prathama and Dwitiya, they are the poorest houses in the village. Being outsiders they have not established themselves in the village. There is no water problem as almost all have their wells. Those without water supply are provided with wells by the government. As the water table is not low, water poses no problems.

A special feature of this village is the size of landholding. Table 24 gives the land ownership pattern for Tritiya and the state as a whole. The highest landholding in Tritiya is 2.30 acres and the lowest is 0.05 acres. Ordinarily landholding of such size would be very insignificant but here the value is increased by the perennial irrigation received from wells and the garden crops that are grown. As seen from Table 24 landholdings in Tritiya are much smaller than for the rest of the state; this is because most of the land in the village is irrigated whereas irrigation is generally scarce in Maharashtra. One sees a pattern as one travels from the Western coast towards the East. Irrigation is high in Vasai, but size of landholding is small; in Vidarbha, to the extreme East of the state, irrigation is very low but landholdings are larger, with the rest of the state falling somewhere in between. Almost everyone in Tritiya owns land except seven Christian and all the Scheduled castes and the Scheduled tribes households. All these Christian households derive their income from salaried jobs while the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes are agricultural laborers. Only one from among them lives by non-agricultural labor.
Table 24

Pattern of Land Ownership: Maharashtra and Tritiya

Size-wise classification of cultivating households (Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Group (acres)</th>
<th>Cultivating Households</th>
<th>Maharashtra</th>
<th>Tritiya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>84.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 to 5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 15</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 25</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 50</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The figures for Maharashtra have been reported in Review of Agricultural Development and Cooperative Credit in Maharashtra, All India Debt and Investment Survey 1971-72 (Bombay, Reserve Bank of India, 1977), p. 4.

Table 25 describes the class background of the village. As the caste composition in the occupations followed in Tritiya are different from those in Prathama and Dwitiya, the classification is different from that of the previous chapter. However, the income levels that demarcate the upper, middle and lower classes and those living below the poverty line, are the same. As the intention is to show the difference made by combining agriculture with various other occupations the categories are given for those occupations.

From the table it would appear that those relying on agriculture alone are the worst off economically. One reason could be the extremely
Table 25. Occupation and Class/Caste Structure: Tritiya  

(Percent in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Brahmin</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>O.B.C. (^a)</th>
<th>S.C. (^b)</th>
<th>S.T. (^c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming alone</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(16.13)</td>
<td>(8.42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(17.74)</td>
<td>(7.36)</td>
<td>(33.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Line</td>
<td></td>
<td>(16.13)</td>
<td>(20.0)</td>
<td>(33.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labor (^d)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>(22.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td>(3.16)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>(66.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Agricultural labor (^d)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td>(2.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Service (^d)</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14.5)</td>
<td>(17.89)</td>
<td>(33.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25 (continued) Occupation and Class/Caste Structure: Tritiya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Brahmin</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>O.B.C.</th>
<th>S.C.</th>
<th>S.T.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Self-employment</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11.29)</td>
<td>(8.42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.06)</td>
<td>(10.52)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service alone</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agricultural labor</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(99.85)</td>
<td>(99.95)</td>
<td>(99.99)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\text{a}\) Other Backward Classes  
\(\text{b}\) Scheduled Caste  
\(\text{c}\) Scheduled Tribe  
\(\text{d}\) In some of the categories there are no persons in the Upper classes, in others like 'Farming + Service' and 'Farming + Self-employment' there is no one below the poverty line.
small plots into which the land is divided. It can be assumed that all the increases in income in the other categories are due to the other occupations followed in the household. If one was to compare the two villages of Nagpur district to Tritiya the picture would be as in Table 26. Of the 31 households in Tritiya living below the poverty line, one is that of an agricultural laborer, and the rest, 30 households, are agriculturalists without any other income. The other 18 agricultural labor households are not doing so poorly because the wage rate is higher in this area. They are therefore to be found in the lower and middle classes depending on the number of persons going out to work. The one Brahmin and two Christian families whose members work as agricultural laborers, besides being cultivators, have large families, requiring them to work as laborers.

The next category is that of farming plus service. By far these are at the top of the income scale. Even those who work in offices in the area earn a sufficiently high income by local standards. Those who do not have adequate education or are not able to find a job, have taken up vegetable vending in a big way. They may not necessarily vend their own produce. Sometimes they buy from the other producers before making their way to Bombay. Besides produce vendors, there are shopkeepers, small traders and artisans. These are the real entrepreneurs. They have seen the need in the community and taken the opportunity to fulfill the need. There is very little relationship between caste and occupation. It is more opportunity and occupation while holding on to the land within the family.

To take advantage of the opportunities however, the people here are aware that it is essential to equip oneself according to the
Table 26

Class Structure in Prathama, Dwitiya and Tritiya

(Percent in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prathama</th>
<th>Dwitiya</th>
<th>Tritiya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19.15) (9.79) (29.14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19.15) (20.27) (29.28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(34.57) (36.36) (26.85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty-line</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29.10) (33.56) (17.71)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

requirements. For example, most of the persons travelling to Bombay are in clerical posts. Those who have other backgrounds such as a degree in agriculture, find openings in the extension agencies of the block. Even those who are self-employed need some literacy. Thus, as in most settings, here, too, education or the acquisition of skills seems the first step if one is desirous of stepping beyond the limits of poverty. As can be expected the educational levels in Tritiya are higher and more varied than those occurring in Prathama and Dwitiya (see Table 27). There is much greater stress laid on children's education. Almost all families expressed the importance of education and refrained from employing children except for odd jobs around the house and outside of school hours. Due to the high number of Christians, there is also a private school near the village run by
Table 27

Educational Levels in
Prathama, Dwitiya and Tritiya

(Percent in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prathama</th>
<th>Dwitiya</th>
<th>Tritiya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Persons</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(50.18)</td>
<td>(48.89)</td>
<td>(7.31)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(33.76)</td>
<td>(37.01)</td>
<td>(41.12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Level</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16.06)</td>
<td>(14.08)</td>
<td>(51.56)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

missionaries. Not too far from the village there is a college, but many travel to colleges in Bombay city. Though this consumes a great deal of time the general consensus is that it is worth it since those colleges are of a better standard. There is a doctor belonging to the village who returned home after completion of his studies and opened his own private practice. Economically he is doing well, and socially, he is enjoying a higher status than he would have if he had stayed on in a bigger city. Thus education is taken seriously. Unlike the situation in Prathama and Dwitiya, women, too, have ventured into higher education and the job market. Those staying at home are also literate and have often completed high school.
The Dynamics of Change

My first impression of Tritiya was of a sleepy village surrounded by lush coconut palms protruding over high hedges. It was afternoon when most people who work on their lands were resting, others were out at work, children at school. The scene changed dramatically a few hours later. More people were in evidence, water pumps were humming, greater traffic along the roads. One could feel the activity inside the houses; a few glimpses showed the household geared to the preparation of the evening meal.

My first visit was to the house of a gram sevak (village level worker) of the block working in another village. He was a young man in his early thirties. At first glance, he was different from the gram sevaks of Vidarbha. He was more smartly dressed and much more confident in his dealings with his superior officers. It was learnt that he had been pursuing further studies and expected to rise higher in the administrative hierarchy. His 'family home' was a fairly big permanent structure with the land attached to it. He lived there with his own family (i.e., his wife and children), his parents and two brothers and their families. One of these brothers worked in an office in Bombay while the eldest looked after the land along with the father. The women in the household were mainly housewives. Adaptation to change could be seen in the attitude of the father. Brahmin by caste, he accepted the changes in social and economic relations as inevitable. No one in the family followed the traditional vocation, nor wanted to. The breakdown of social barriers between the castes, as well as religions, was to him a sign of the changing times and would
have to come in other regions as well. He realized that the greatest inheritance one could leave to one's children was knowledge, and therefore he had taken great pains to educate his sons and their children. That they would no longer enjoy the special privileges he had seen in his younger days was the price one had to pay for development and better living conditions, he said.

Such sentiments were echoed by various individuals who have made adjustments and benefitted. This has led to greater and freer interaction among the people, on the one hand, and between the people and the administration and political leadership, on the other.

Economic Change

The proximity to an industrial metropolis has been the greatest catalyst in economic development. Agriculturally, Tritiya has been able to exploit the demands made by Bombay because of its soil composition. In a rice growing district its produce would otherwise have been destined for the local market. Nowadays, only the early shoppers get anything in the local market, most of the produce being marked for Bombay or for export. This has ensured rising returns. Therefore plots even of the size found in Tritiya bring in returns that are much higher than would have been imaginable with any other cropping pattern. Such agriculture has in turn led to new investments and ventures. For instance, some have engaged in transportation, plying scooter-taxis between the railway station and the villages. It has also led to higher wages for agricultural labor. On an average a laborer gets one and a half times the wages of Prathama. Compared to the number of cultivator households, the number of agricultural laborers is very small.
because most of the holdings are taken care of by family labor. This same small size of the landholdings has also been responsible for people seeking alternative employment. Whether a different pattern of landholding would have resulted in a different occupational division can only be conjectured with such a big labor market within reach. It is hard to tell if the choice of occupation has been one of economic necessity or of economic opportunity and choice.

Yet agriculture remains an important activity of almost all the households in Tritiya—agriculture that has been modernized to become commercially more profitable. There are many institutions in the district, governmental and private, doing research on seeds and agricultural practices, holding demonstrations and training sessions for the people. These are taken full advantage of and necessary changes made. No more do you find the ox-driven water mill. It has been fully mechanized. The consumption of fertilizers and pesticides is universal and considerably higher than elsewhere. That the produce is no longer for self-consumption or the local market is reflected in the care and added attention that is given to the land to cater to a more discerning market. The commercialization has necessitated that people be better informed, not only in matters of growing a better crop, but also other aspects, such as current prices, better markets and other economic forces that might affect them.

A decade and a half or two decades ago, most of the fruits and vegetables were bought by middlemen who in turn sold them to wholesalers. This took away a large chunk of the profits. Slowly the cultivators and other local persons have taken to marketing the produce themselves, at times forming cooperatives to get a better price.
Agro-industries have also cropped up to process the fruits and vegetables, such as the banana powder plant. Though the industries are outside of Tritiya, the village people contribute to these industries and benefit from them. They have provided employment to some. Others, seeking employment outside agriculture, are seen travelling to block headquarters and to Bombay to get training in secretarial skills, technical and mechanical courses and other employment-oriented qualifications. But the highly profitable agricultural base is neither forgotten nor neglected. The result of the combination and diversification is evident in the higher income levels and even better prospects as larger numbers join in. Compared to Prathama and Dwitiya the living standards are definitely higher with fewer persons living below the poverty line.

Social Development

Unlike most Indian villages, Tritiya does not have a predominantly Hindu population. Nearly 55 percent of the village is composed of Christians. Of the remaining about 36 percent are Brahmins, together forming more than 90 percent of the population, with the Other Backward Classes (OBC), Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes making up the rest. Caste, religion and occupation do not follow any pattern in the village. Between the Brahmins and the Christians the different occupations are fairly evenly divided. As seen in Table 23 (page 238), they are represented in all the occupations with the Christians having a slight edge over the Brahmins in salaried jobs, while the Brahmins are a higher percentage in cultivation. The Christians took to English education more easily and hence have a higher number employed in salaried jobs. However this is only relatively speaking, for the
Brahmins have been slowly catching up. The need for the Brahmins to work with persons from different religions and different castes, the necessity to travel in crowded trains and buses where class and caste are no bar, and the very contact with a wider world by such a large number of the village inhabitants, has made them less conscious of caste and religious distinctions. In Prathama and Dwitiya as well, it was seen that in the economic sphere, caste barriers—which were more relevant there than religious ones—were slowly breaking down. In Tritiya, it can be said to have progressed even further, although more from necessity than choice. For instance, the medical doctor in Tritiya is a Christian. His patients are from all religions, castes and walks of life. Whether it would be any different if there was a Brahmin doctor, or even a Hindu doctor, in the village can only be a conjecture.

Caste and religious barriers have not broken down completely. As far as religious observances are concerned, both groups are conservative and tend to stay away from one another. It does not appear to be consciously done or felt by either group. It is just taken for granted that the two will not mix for religious functions. But on non-religious occasions and other celebrations the two groups come together more freely. Compared to the two Nagpur villages, the interaction here is freer and on a more equal footing. The Scheduled caste and tribes are too few in number. Due to their lack of land and education they are at the bottom of the social scale. Though they have been in the village for some years, they still consider themselves temporary residents and are looked upon by others as outsiders. They seemed interested only in economic relations and are happy to get what they earn. Most are interested in returning to their own villages after accumulating enough
to buy land. Like their neighbors, none of their children work. Having seen the impact of education, they are particular about their children attending school. They are aware of the reservations made on their behalf, and hope that at least their children will not have to follow their occupations. However, they were very definite in their stated positions that they did not face any discrimination from the others in matters of employment and economic activities.

Such an attitude is not common even in this area. During my travels to and from the village, I came across a small hamlet inhabited by a Scheduled caste who were traditionally weavers of baskets and are still following the same trade. Their baskets are so good that the fisher-folk of the area use only these baskets for carrying their ware to the market. Enquiries revealed that the price for the baskets had not varied for the past few years, even though the prices of bamboo had gone up, and their clientele was the richest group in the area. They had not varied their designs or tried different markets to sell their goods. Their constant fear was that if they raised the price, someone else might sell the goods, leaving them high and dry. They did not have sufficient work. Yet, most of the family members stayed home, the children continued to play and life went on. When asked why did they not form a cooperative and get better incomes from their trade, they replied that they had never given it any thought and there was no one to give the lead. Did they consider seeking work as agricultural laborers? They had not tried, and even if they tried, were not sure that they would get any employment, as they had absolutely no knowledge of such work. Thus the Scheduled castes and tribes of Tritiya are not necessarily representative of the changing perceptions of their people
in the region. It was either the impact of the people around them or their own consciousness resulting from this impact that made them want change. Thus, economic opportunity helped break down social and caste barriers in their respect.

Tritiya's social development can also be seen in the working pattern of its women. There are no women agricultural workers, except from the Scheduled caste and tribes, but they play a major role in the cultivation of their own garden plots. Many of them are employed in white collar jobs, such as teaching and office jobs. Most of the women are aware of the developments taking place around them even if participation is not that pronounced. But many do look after panchayat samiti chores such as complaints and problems of a minor nature. Being well educated they can articulate better than the women in the other two villages. In Prathama and Dwitiya even the well-educated women have little role to play except within the house and hence they are diffident interacting with outsiders and are generally ignorant about development issues. 16

With income levels coming closer and employment opportunity available equally to all, the social gap between the elite and the masses is being reduced. Social deference can no longer be taken for granted. With most families caught up in the busy daily economic routine, it is mainly performance that matters. Those who are in business and who affect them directly are more important than the traditional elite. Since there are no large landholders in the village the traditional elite were anyway a loose group, now without much power.
Political Development

As can be expected, interest in politics is not very high. In Prathama and Dwitiya, the village was an important entity, the people's experience being limited to its boundaries. What was decided by the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti affected them directly and immediately. But in Tritiya, the Gram Panchayat and the Panchayat Samiti play only a subsidiary role. The people's mobility and contacts with the other villages and the city make them less dependent on government agencies. "The cumulative effect of increasing mobility, of an exposure to attractive opportunities elsewhere, of the feedback that comes into the community from those who have moved on or accepted jobs in a nearby city, is a general feeling of self-confidence." There is not a very keen interest in contesting for elections. It is considered to be appropriate only for those who can afford to spend time on politics. Some of the seats in the Gram Panchayat have been elected unopposed.

The political leadership as well as the administration have lost their importance. The Block development officer and the extension agency have to make an effort to get in touch with the people. Instead of haughty indifference, one finds a more cordial attitude in such officials. There are many private agencies and institutions that are doing research in agriculture and rural development, so the people have a variety of choices and are not completely dependent on the government.

The class composition of the village has a major role in the attitude of the people to politics. What can be termed the middle class is dominant in the village. The attitude of such a class favors
the maintenance of the status quo. The middle class of Tritiya has such a political and social outlook. Since the present political system in the village does not pose a threat to the established order, there is little interest in local political activity. Apart from the homogeneity of interest of the middle class, another factor which pre-empts any threat to its interest is the relatively low level of poverty in the village. Only 17 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Poverty is not inevitable for any historically determined reason. The consequent absence of an adversarial role for the rural poor rules out any fear of their mobilization. Thus there is an absence of a compelling need for most villagers to be active in the political field. Apart from a widespread lack of interest in local political activity, the level of participation is also low. This is in striking contrast to the situation in Prathama and Dwitiya. The residents of these two villages exhibited a high degree of politicization. The role of local government institutions in the lives of the villagers is more prominent than that observed in Tritiya. This also contributes to the higher degree of political activity in the Nagpur villages. The gap between the rural rich and the poor is wider than in Tritiya and therefore the social and political polarization greater.

If there is a marked lack of interest in local political activities, there is high involvement in the political life of Bombay. Bombay is more important than the district capital of Thane. Most of those who work in Bombay take part in the labor union activities. All these commuters are white or blue collar workers; three of them are office bearers in the labor union of the establishment where they work. Bombay
has a highly active labor population with a strong union movement. The white collar work force is highly organized and has been able to extract many concessions from management. It is natural for the villagers in that environment to become associated with labor union affairs. But their political and union affiliations do not extend to the village. The office bearers, who are very conscious of their rights and are quick to point out the alleged anti-labor policies of their employers, are less than responsive to the demands of the rural poor, the agricultural laborers. It is quite common to hear the same labor leaders criticizing the attempts of landless laborers to raise daily wages. They express concern at the likely increase in prices of vegetables and agricultural produce and the likely loss of markets in the city. The crucial fact here is that while these people are blue/white collar workers in Bombay, in Tritiya they are landowners and middle level agriculturalists. Thus they have a dual interest and their behavior is determined by which role they are called upon to play. They are perfectly willing to deny to the laborers of the village what they demand in the city, and are quite candid about it. Many admitted that if the small number of agricultural laborers would organize like themselves, their daily wage would surely go up. But such organization had to come from the laborers themselves. They would get no help from the other residents.

Many observers of the labor movement of the Maharashtra have noted similar phenomena. Golwalkar and Punekar found the landowners of Ratnagiri working in blue and white collar jobs in Bombay, quite insensitive to the needs and rights of agricultural laborers, while they
were very vocal in the demands for their own wages. Similar observation was made by Asha Rane in a study of the Konkan area for the UNICEF. These features are not limited to Bombay and its environs. Similar conclusions have emerged from studies elsewhere.

Government's Role in Development

To discuss development in the context of an Indian village is to analyze the changes brought in by government agencies. Neither private nor voluntary effort has much role to play. This was obvious in the previous chapter, and will be true in almost all villages. However in most such cases this is because of the agricultural economy of the village and we have seen how the policies are geared towards agriculture and its connected spheres. In Tritiya only 28 out of 175, i.e., 16 percent, households have no agricultural land; hence, one would normally expect it to follow the usual pattern in development. It has become clear that though government does have the same role as in other areas, its impact has been reduced by the enterprise of the people. Whatever land is available is extremely valuable, and the owner will seek out the necessary information needed to keep it at its peak. In search of this information he will go to all the available sources, including the Panchayat Samiti, and once he knows what is to be done, he will do it without waiting for a subsidy or any other help from the government. Such self-reliance is made possible by the value of the land and the additional source of income in most families that has reduced their dependence on government resources.

Since the people do not look upon land as the sole source of income, or the main one for that matter, they have to fend for themselves if
they seek any alternative path. In the case of Tritiya plenty of such alternatives exist. On the other hand the needy of Pratham and Dwitiya do not have such easy access to similar opportunities. They have remained stagnant. Since they are also the lower classes without much awareness of what could be done, they are forced to work on lower wages and continue to live below the poverty line. In Tritiya this isolation has been broken. People have higher levels of knowledge, and their enterprise is fired by contact with opportunity. The improvement in the living condition of those already going beyond agriculture into other fields are examples others can follow. And therefore there is much activity at the individual level to improve their own living conditions. It could take the form of higher education, a training program or a business enterprise—all beyond the scope of the present activities of the panchayat samiti.

Role of Information in Development

If one were to ask the question, what made change a possibility in Tritiya, there would be several explanations. Chief among them would be the commercialization of agriculture, availability of ready markets, possibility of jobs, easy accessibility to these markets and jobs, and the infrastructure that allowed the exploitation of these opportunities. In this process of 'conscientization'—mainly in the economic sense in the first place—one common element in all the above is information. The awareness of the scope available to improve their living conditions presumably resulted in information being sought in the respective fields.23
The role of information in improving the standards of living of the rural poor has been emphasized by many writers on the role of communication for rural development. Without assuming that information is the main factor that can bring in development, and can replace other resources for doing so, it can be said that "every activity considered vital to rural development is information related or information dependent in some way ... [and] a better mix of material and information resources can achieve a better result." Here information does not refer to the diffusion of knowledge and information alone, but to its accessibility and distribution; not the technical, but its political aspects. Mere availability of information, like the presence of development potential, is not the solution that is sought. In Prathama and Dwitiya it was not the mere lack of information that got in the way of the people, but the means to use it. In Tritiya it is being used with excellent results to all.

In all respects, facilities for receiving information are better in Tritiya than in Prathama and Dwitiya. In Prathama and Dwitiya there are very few radio sets and even fewer newspapers. Though both these are shared by many more people and there are community sets, the range of people using any of these media is limited. There is an overwhelming dependence on the village level worker for information needs. Under the circumstances the worker's class and caste affiliations and biases shut off many sections of the community from receiving development messages. Thus the rural rich and those belonging to the right caste tend to monopolize the vital information which helps them reinforce their dominant position in society. In Tritiya, on the other hand, information
about modern agricultural practices and other development related news is not the monopoly of the village level bureaucrat. It is openly available. Almost every household owns a radio. Besides the local publications, many subscribe to the Bombay national editions. There are a large number of periodicals and magazines in circulation, many picked up during the daily commute to work. At the time of the field study the village was expecting to start receiving television programs from Bombay. The attitude of the development agencies too, is different. In Prathama and Dwitiya the people's capacity to understand is judged by their economic level. Here there is no such prejudgment, with the result the inhabitants of Tritiya receive more information. The urban contact by itself is an additional factor in widening the information base. According to Emile McAnany the free availability of information helps spread benefits of development more evenly.26

Thus in all respects, including educational levels, the people of Tritiya have wider, better and more varied sources of information. Due to their higher economic standard, the people of Tritiya can afford to purchase radio sets, newspapers, etc. How information helped development in Tritiya can be conceptualized thus. Information penetrating into a self-sufficient, closed economy may have triggered change. At first it may have been only the elite who recognized the possibilities and opportunities this information conveyed. (This is happening in Prathama and Dwitiya now.) Educational facilities opened up these avenues for the masses who found that they too could develop in a similar fashion. As development spread, people's needs and interdependence increased and more and more participated in the process. With increasing development, a greater need for information was felt and it
was sought from every possible source. It was in turn strengthened by
daily contact with an urban center by a large number of the inhabitants.
This brought in its own development returns. And the process continued.
The main advantage in Tritiya was that along with the availability and
access to information the infrastructure to strengthen their economic
capacity also existed, and this was fully exploited.

The big difference between the two Nagpur villages and Tritiya
would be the level of people's awareness and conscientization—in the
economic, social and political fields. For geo-historical reasons, the
people of Tritiya are more aware of the developments around them, know
the means to participate in these developments, come in contact with
new ideas due to their mobility, and are able to absorb them and
translate them to their advantage. This flow of information, the circu-
lation and internalization of new knowledge, ideas and thought has become
a part of the social process, so much so that it is generally accomplished
without any effort or even at times, awareness, on the part of the
people involved.

Tritiya is not an average Indian or Maharashtra village. When the
level of awareness of the people is analyzed, it cannot be concluded
that the mere circulation of similar ideas will produce changes and
development in any other village. The role of communication or
information can be accomplished only if some changes are made in the
environment. "Skillful communication can change a peasant's per-
ceptions of his situation but it cannot, acting alone, change that
situation very much. It can help a farmer to see opportunities he
ignores, but if few opportunities exist, information will not create
them."27 Obviously in villages like Prathama and Dwitiya, it is only
through government intervention that such opportunities can be created. How it can be done will be indicated in the next chapter. What follows is an examination of the differences in the information scene in Tritiya on the one hand and Prathama and Dwitiya on the other, that might give us some indication of its role in development.

It is obvious from the work done by the people of Tritiya that for most of them the sphere of activity lies beyond the village—in the block, the district or in Bombay. This entails interacting with people from different backgrounds, different walks of life, exchanging ideas and opinions. The movement beyond the village itself expands the horizons by revealing different developments taking place. Add to it the complex networks of activity and organizations, and the exposure to information becomes more intricate. It also offers a variety of choices so that a person can evaluate the merits of each and select the most appropriate or relevant one. The feedback provided by these members of the community, helps those whose activity is restricted to the village environment.

With increased mobility, the dependence on the extension machinery is reduced. While elsewhere the farmer will be at the mercy of the visiting extension agent, in Tritiya many will not wait for him, but demand his services, or go up to the block office to check out his new information or seek answers to his problems. At the block office there is an array of experts and the latest information pertaining to his interests. Since he is well informed he can discuss his requirements with the block staff on a more egalitarian basis. He can pick up the details of programs and projects that can benefit him. Those who are physically mobile also become aware of the employment opportunities
and training programs. They are able to plan their children's education in order to fill future openings. Technical schools and apprenticeships become possible, because distance is telescoped, due to large numbers travelling the distance daily. While a person from Prathama or Dwitiya will think twice before undertaking a journey that will take more than three hours both ways--because of distance and expense--in Tritiya it has become a way of life for many and others will not hesitate to take the same route to a better income.

In Prathama and Dwitiya, the sarpanch, gram sevak and in some cases, the extension officer were the main sources of information about government plans. These persons interpreted the policies and conveyed them to the people. When the people needed guidance or details, they approached these same people and had to rely on them. On the other hand, such intermediaries are not required in Tritiya. Even if they convey the information, they are aware that their audience is capable of seeking out or checking on the information themselves. If it is relevant to them, they most probably will. Therefore there are fewer chances of distortion and concealment. In fact, the people of Tritiya had so many sources that some could not pinpoint with confidence the source informing them about a particular policy or scheme. There are local newspapers, the local representatives, officials and friends. Thus there was rich information available on multiple economic activity that allowed an individual to make a choice. In Tritiya there is a small group of families living below the level of poverty--about 17 percent. But this group cannot be clubbed together with their counterparts in Prathama or Dwitiya; perhaps both can be compared for levels of income, but as far as the aspects discussed in this chapter
are concerned, this group will be closer to the other people in Tritiya than those of their class in the other two villages. The productivity of their land is as high as that of a person from the higher class. It is mainly the farm size without any support from any other source that is the greatest drawback for them. Thus, the causes of poverty in Tritiya would be different from those in Prathama and Dwitiya.\textsuperscript{28}

It would be natural to find that the population of Tritiya--open to the impact of all this knowledge, information and education--would have a different belief system as well. It was observed in Chapter IV, "One of the main reasons for the slow spread of the subordinate and radical belief systems is the absence of sufficient information and its restricted flow. Lack of access to the media like newspapers and radio, low rate of literacy and education, and insufficient contacts with the outside world go into the making of the deferential attitude, which in turn becomes a big stumbling block in creating a class consciousness. It retards a full understanding of the possibilities already existing and changes needed for better development."\textsuperscript{29} The behavior patterns here are therefore not conservative, but assertive and innovative as far as individual lives are concerned. The absence of stark poverty, however, prevents the radical belief system from taking roots among the poor. The constraints of rural life are much weaker than evidenced elsewhere. There is no deference towards any group. Instead of ascription and prescription, status is more by achievement and endeavor. The Brahmins and the Christians enjoy a similar social status. The interchange between them is free and unrestricted, just as it is with their representatives and the officials. The distance between the
elite and the masses felt in the other two villages is not as tangible here. Both parties realize the importance of the other.

Though most of the above discussion does contain references to attitude and adaptation to change, it would be useful to speak of it briefly in specific terms. Prathama, Dwitiya and Tritiya are all conscious of change and, in each, individuals are assessing the manner in which they can participate in it. Their attitudes are reflected in their desires for future development, in the manner they seek further information to fulfill these desires. In this respect we could rank the three villages, Dwitiya, Prathama and Tritiya, progressing, in that order, towards a conscious effort to develop and change. In Dwitiya and to a lesser extent Prathama, though almost everyone is aware that things can be much better, a majority is not certain what steps are necessary to make those changes possible. Their only source of development and change is government agencies, and with their complete dependence on them, their rate of change depends to a great extent on government initiative. Table 20, Chapter V, shows that all classes of people expect government to fulfill their needs. On the other hand, the people of Tritiya are confident of an ever-widening scope for development. With the possibilities to which Tritiya is exposed, its people can seek knowledge about the avenues of change available, and then act to turn these to their own advantage. Very few will wait for others to act on their behalf. Having experienced the benefits of change, they not only take full advantage of what is available but seek out potential wherever available. Distance being no great concern, their field of activity is very wide and varied.
Tritiya, then, "demonstrates the changes from traditionalism to modernization--a faster pace of life, an adoption of new norms, the virtual breakdown of caste-occupation code, a spirit of self-help, and the beginnings of an implied recognition of the fact that one is, to a greater or lesser extent, the master of his own destiny and responsible for his own actions."31

To conclude, what would be the sort of information that would be most sought after in a changing society? Based on the responses received, information sought falls into the following order: Job opportunities, land, training and education, consumer and producer goods, and miscellaneous. Though attachment to land is strong, salaried jobs bring in highest returns even if these are only lower administrative or routine blue/white collar jobs. In a competitive economy receiving such information in time is very vital. It can decide the chances of getting the job itself. But place the village beyond the reach of the city and its job openings, and then one would change the above order. For example, in Prathama and Dwitiya job opportunities would not be as important, though it might be sought after training and education. Since a large number of people in Prathama and Dwitiya own land their first priority would be improvement in land yields. Those who don't own land, but follow a trade, would be interested in upgrading of their skills and openings to utilize them to the optimum, and those with neither land nor a trade would look forward to better paying, higher status work. Thus each category would strive to improve its income level in its own way and would look upon information or knowledge as the means to achieving it. Having looked at
information as an important change factor, in the next chapter, I will try to spell out the strategy that can be applied in the case of each of these categories to bring about greater development.
1. Knowledge of modern agricultural practices is very crucial for increasing production and income. The combination of land ownership, rural wealth and information help the rural rich become richer and widens the gap between the rich and the poor. Indeed experience is that knowledge of modern agricultural practices went mostly to the rich agriculturists. It is a privileged minority in the rural areas who receive most of the messages that reach the villages. It is not necessarily that these benefits are directed specifically at them. Since the rural rich are better equipped to understand and use the information received from the extension agencies, they can maximize their gains. That this is the universal experience in all developing countries is seen from the various studies in this area. See, Eduardo Contreras, "Brazil and Guatemala: Communications, Rural Modernity, and Structural Constraints," in Communications in the Rural Third World, ed. Emile G. McAnany (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980); and Luis R. Beltran, "Alien Promises, Objects and Methods in Latin American Communication Research," in Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives, Everett M. Pogers, ed. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1976), pp. 15-42.

2. The real name of the village, as in the case of the other two villages in the previous chapter, has been changed. Tritiya means 'Third' in the Marathi language, and has been so called in keeping with the first two names of Prathama and Dwitiya, first and second respectively. This is situated in the Vasai block of Thane district on the coastal Konkan region of Maharashtra.


4. This goes back to the connection between income, occupation and information (or education) mentioned in the Introduction. These factors are the main ones if one desires to introduce mobility into the social system.

5. Thane district borders Bombay city and is in the Konkan region. It is a district of great contrasts. The parts of the district bordering Bombay are well developed with heavy industries, chemical plants and electronic industries. The northern parts are backward and not as easily accessible. The district has heavy annual rainfall and good irrigation facilities. The Konkan region, because of its proximity to Bombay has been isolated from the rest of Maharashtra, it has also suffered from some drawbacks. For a detailed account of the economic and social structure of the Konkan

6. Due to the differences in the different regions of the district, it will be meaningless to compare the village to conditions in the district. Therefore throughout the chapter reference is made only to the block of Vasai panchayat samiti unless specified otherwise.

7. Some of the references go back to the prehistoric times of the Mahabharata and even earlier based on the names occurring in the Epics and the Puranas which are semi-religious texts. Similarly the spread of Buddhism in the region is traced from a stupa dating back to King Asoka of the third century B.C.

8. The 1961 Census figures are obtained from the *Socio-Economic Review and District Statistical Abstract of Thane District, 1961-62*, Maharashtra Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Maharashtra. These are the latest figures available. Thereafter the Census has not been publishing figures according to caste and religion categories.

9. Many of the trends in this area are similar to those of an urban area. Every year the number of women going out in search of employment is increasing keeping in line with the rising cost of living. It is even said that the employed young girls attract better prospects in the marriage market.


11. Ibid., pp. 42-44.

12. Thane district and Jalgaon district grow the maximum bananas in the State. The excellent irrigation facilities and the ready availability of an expanding market make its cultivation profitable. In recent years the processing of the fruit has given a fillip to the business.

13. Most of the residents of Vasai who work in Bombay commute to and from work. But residents of the other neighboring districts who work in Bombay reside in the city, often in cramped quarters. These workers remit home a large amount of money each month and so the economy of the Konkan region is often called the money order economy.


15. In the present technology mix of agricultural practice, irrigation is a vital component. Most of the development in agriculture requires assured irrigation. The Green Revolution package can be applied only if water is available and no breakthrough has been achieved in increasing production in dry cropped regions.
Maharashtra, as noted earlier, stands low in irrigation potential. Most of its scarce irrigation is limited to the western flat land. As one goes east into the Deccan plateau the hard rock formation makes water scarce and expensive.

16. Specific reference to women's development has been avoided because it involves complicated issues and can form the subject matter of yet another dissertation. The social implications and their role in society even in the developed areas cannot be done satisfactorily in such a study. Here they are mostly included as another unit of the population without any special problems and needs.

17. Many studies of electoral behavior in India also make similar observations about the low interest in politics in urban areas compared to the rural. See Myron Weiner and John Osgood Field, 


19. Indian trade union movement was born in Bombay. Most of the major Indian trade unions like INTUC, AITUC, HMS, etc. started in Bombay. For a detailed account of the labor movement see Pannalal Surana, "Leftist Movement in Maharashtra," in A. K. Bhagwat, Maharashtra: A Profile (Kolhapur, Maharashtra State Board of Literature and Culture), pp. 480-538.

20. Punekar and Golwalkar, Rural Change in Maharashtra, pp. 117-122.


22. Studies conducted by the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad and Vijaywada, and by the Madras Institute for Development Studies around Madras city also came across similar reactions. For more of Bombay area see, Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, "Governmental Responses to Migration: Preferences for Local Residents on Bombay," in N. K. Wagle, ed., Images of Maharashtra: A Regional Profile of India (Toronto: Curzon Press, 1980).

23. It has now been widely accepted by researchers in communication and rural development in the Third World that widespread publicity to development programs and governmental assistance to rural poor goes a long way in improving living conditions. During the fifties the information about development programs was 'controlled' in the sense that the extension agent was practically the only source of such information. This led to excessive benefits going to the rural rich, who in effect cornered all the benefits of such a 'diffusion of information', thanks to their access to the government apparatus. In order to counter the defects of such an approach
widespread publicity to all governmental measures has been increasingly accepted as an alternative.

Indeed it is useful to remember that while the defects of the diffusion approach have been gradually accepted there is no unanimity about the alternative. That is, while we know what to reject, we do not know what exactly should take its place. However support has been gaining for the view that wider access to information of development schemes will help remove the restrictions on communication and make its impact felt by making development available to greater numbers. For a detailed discussion see, Emile G. McAnany, Communication in the Rural Third World: The Role of Information in Development (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 3-16; and Goran Hedebro, Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations: A Critical View, The Economic Research Institute, Stockholm School of Economics, 1979.


27. Ibid., p. 4.

28. In Prathamama and Dwitiya, poverty was mainly land-based. For example, lack of irrigation, poor soil, etc., were found to be the main reasons for poverty among those owning land and yet being below the poverty line. In Tritiya the farm productivity of the below poverty-line cultivators will be higher than that of even the best farms in the other two villages, but the small size of the holding is the main drawback. Though in general all the holdings are small, the others are helped by income from other sources and land is only one of multiple sources of income.

29. See Chapter IV, p. 120 of this study.

30. See p. 215 of Chapter V.

31. Y.V.L. Rao, Communication and Development, p. 178. Rao in his study makes a comparison of two villages. His comments, quoted here, regarding a progressive village can be applied to Tritiya. Though this is an old study, some of it is relevant even today.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

In the setting of rural development public policies, an understanding of the factors that affect policy making and implementation requires an analytical 'handle' to study the impact on poverty and inequality. For this purpose the concept of class and social structure can provide an insight into the interaction among classes, among castes, and between classes and castes. In the Indian context the inclusion of caste is essential to understand the emergence and operation of classes on the one hand, and the trends of development in the economic, social and political fields on the other.

Social Structure and Public Policy

The problem of the masses lagging behind, while a few prosper in the process of development, is mainly due to the unequal distribution of resources, such as land, skills, income and information. While such conditions create a stratification in the social system, the continuation of policies that do not recognize this imbalance or having recognized the imbalance, do not take the steps necessary to correct it, exacerbate the situation and widen the gap between the rich and poor. The structural analysis applied in this study involves the examination of the class and caste configuration in the Indian society in general, and in the state of Maharashtra in particular.

In the old Indian society class and caste were coterminus: the higher classes were invariably composed of the higher castes and the
lowest castes were living on the fringes of society. During the British regime some element of mobility was introduced into this rigid social order. With the spread of vernacular and English education, the lower classes could aspire to overcome the socioeconomic disabilities, especially in an urban environment. With independence came a number of policies that tried to concentrate on the plight of the lowest classes, the then untouchables and the tribals. Policies of progressive discrimination were made mandatory. As a result, many hitherto deprived groups attained better jobs, professional training, and opportunities to participate in the political process. At the same time an upsurge of political and social awareness helped to replace the traditional elites with a new elite that had to concede some amount of representation to the other castes and classes. The past three decades have resulted in some degree of delinking of the caste and class nexus. Though this trend is more obvious in the urban settings, one can no longer generalize even in the rural areas without taking elements of mobility into account. These changes provide the basis for understanding the social structure.

Mobility, however, is still at the individual, rather than the general, level—more pronounced in the economic than political spheres and least in social or cultural relations. However, with new class alignments, old relationships recede into the background, and even new members adopt the positions of the class they have recently entered. Thus, class interests emerge stronger than caste attachments, the latter being evoked only to serve specific self-interest, as in an election campaign. The structure of political and administrative leadership reflects the social structure. There is a concentration of the higher
classes in the higher positions of power, with just a little left over for the other classes. The policies which are formulated and implemented tend to maintain a system whereby the bulk of government resources benefits the middle and upper classes, the rest being used for the development of the poor. The self-interest and class interest of each participant in this process results in the continuation of policy bias, and therefore, very slow progress for the lower classes.

Another element that prevents a faster and more drastic change in the social structure is the belief system held by victims of the inequities. It tends to blunt the effects of deprivation and inequalities and to force individuals to accept the position they find themselves in, the blame for which is only sometimes placed in the right quarter. Although the problem persists there are a few signs of change, stray instances which indicate a modification of the constraints set by such belief systems.

In such a system, increasing social mobility is expected to be the quickest way to social change, to reducing poverty and inequality. This was illustrated by the development of Tritiya discussed in Chapter VI. The lessons of a social mobility strategy in public policies can be applied to the villages of Prathama and Dwitiya. Such a strategy is one which would not stage an assault on the structure that has been held responsible for the continuation of poverty and inequality, but would constitute a slow and permanent process to change the nature and composition of the structure. This approach would replace the old social system with a new and more equitable one. M. N. Srinivas expresses the need for programs and projects which "give employment to the poor outside the local power structure..."
to have priority in [the] effort at emancipating them.\textsuperscript{1} Similarly Scarlett Epstein discusses the social benefits of service centers which can create new channels of mobility for the bottom strata of society by removing them entirely from the old socioeconomic networks.\textsuperscript{2}

In a recent press interview, expressing her opinion on the extent of development achieved by the country, the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandha, said "Although poverty exists . . . the picture has changed tremendously . . . The rich are richer. But this doesn't mean the poor are getting poorer. What is happening is that they see their poverty--even though it is an improved situation--with much sharper eyes. Before they tolerated it. Not now."\textsuperscript{3} This statement seems to bear out the findings in the two villages of Nagpur district which were taken to represent the average conditions in the villages of the State of Maharashtra. The condition of the poor has not deteriorated over the past two or three decades. In fact it has improved when compared to what it was at independence in 1947. While the condition--economic, social and political--of the poor has improved over the years, it is the upper classes who were able to attain greater benefits. Throughout this study it has consistently been observed that any policy intended to alleviate the poverty of the lower deciles of the population did not benefit them in its entirety. The whole approach to development could be called faulty, even in the State of Maharashtra which is generally accepted as a reformist State\textsuperscript{4} one that has taken some steps to introduce redistribution along with its policy of production. It is these two concepts--production and redistribution--that decide the balance of development. Both are essential. With increasing population, it is essential to keep up and if possible, increase, the
food supply with production-oriented policies. To that extent such policies are acceptable, even imperative, but can policies in favor of production be followed at the cost of redistribution? To right the wrong done over centuries, special efforts to set up an egalitarian social structure are required. Since the funds available for development are finite, the decision is one of dividing it between the two types of policies, policies aimed at increasing production and those stressing redistribution (removing poverty and increasing equality). An increase in allotment to one results in reduction in the other and it was observed that most rural development policies are aimed at raising production. Even those of a redistributive nature, such as Employment Guarantee Scheme which guarantees at least a minimum wage for work done, emphasize production except in scarcity conditions. In that respect rural development policies are found wanting. Not only are vast numbers of landless laborers almost bypassed in the development process, but even smaller farmers cannot yet participate in the production activity. Since the latter are not equipped to take advantage of new variety of seeds and better agricultural practices, they are left behind by the middle and large farmers, who benefit from government research and opportunities, while inequalities are made worse.

The class analysis made in Chapter V is one way to show the tendency of production-oriented development to benefit middle and upper classes. This bias can be traced to the traditional social structure which has concentrated economic and political power in the higher caste classes. The policy of growth reinforces these tendencies, but redistribution policies would yield some amount of flexibility. The long history of deprivation comes in the way of present development as well.
When benefits are purposely channelled towards the lower classes, in the absence of the capacity to make use of such benefits, the efforts are often in vain. In general, most of the plan schemes, except for the 'social services', being implemented in the district are directly or indirectly aimed at increasing land productivity and therefore leave out the large chunk of the rural population that does not own land or are small farmers without the wherewithal to take advantage of such schemes. The expenditure under 'social services' is for education, health, and other sectors for the general population. Here, too, due to the same economic constraints, it is only those who can afford to send their children to school, or to take time out from work to travel to the clinic who benefit from the facilities provided.

Those below the poverty line can be expected to derive the least advantage from government policies and the higher the class, the more benefits that are enjoyed.

The explanation in class and caste terms is linked to historical reasons. In Maharashtra, as elsewhere in the country, caste has had close links with class. These links have been loosened sufficiently to allow some amount of mobility—both ways—among the castes. Gail Omvedt has been an observer of the Indian rural social scene for a long time. Though she finds caste still 'viable and virulent' today, "the development of capitalist agriculture in India has broken down this old correlation between class and caste and reconstituted a new and more complex relationship between the two." While the Maratha-Kunbi castes are generally dominant, members of other castes have also gained access to the upper classes. Even some Scheduled caste persons have been able to cast off the disabilities of centuries and join the ranks of the
upper classes. This phenomenon has been of recent origin, perhaps the last fifteen or twenty years. Sometimes the retention of old ties benefits families. In Prathama and Dwitiya there are examples where the traditional occupation has helped the family lead a comfortable life, compared to those who have given it up. That can be explained by the lack of something better than the traditional place in the village economy. We can therefore say that caste is not necessarily coterminus with class. There is a mobility within the social structure, but a mobility with many constraints.

Limitations on Mobility

The main constraint is that the social structure is self-reinforcing. The class and power nexus has established groups of individuals in a dominant position in society, and the various functions of society maintain this dominance and often increase it. The state helps organize the long-term political interests of this power bloc. Due to the government's institutionalized role in development economic power is transformed into social and political power.

In the rural development policy process, this is in the main true. Most public policies concern the interests of the upper and middle classes, leaving the others to cope with and adjust to these interests as best they can. In agriculture for instance, cultivators may find an infrastructure developed by the government helps to maximize their production and profit. But the type of infrastructure that is available benefits only those who have some investment to start with. Those completely on subsistence cultivation realize that opportunity is present, but they cannot avail themselves of it. This was amply clear
among the agriculturists of the lower classes and those below the poverty line. Other sector policies follow the same line. The only gains come from those policies that are specifically meant for such categories of people, like the integrated rural development program and the employment guarantee scheme. Though they do not fulfill their objectives, their impact is felt, just as the policy of government grants of land and house plots to landless persons has benefitted many, even if the numbers have not been up to expectations.

These concessions to the poor have been due to various factors. Primary among these is the genuine desire of some of the national leaders during the freedom struggle to raise the socioeconomic standards and increase the political participation of the most backward groups of the Indian society—the then untouchables and the tribals. In pursuance of this desire, they incorporated progressive discrimination on behalf of these groups into the Constitution. These reservations, being Constitutional, had to be adhered to at all levels of policy making and implementation, resulting in some amount of mobility within the structure and instilling a self-conscious awareness among the more progressive poor. This awareness led to demands, in some cases militant and violent, for quick action by the government. To avoid any confrontation and further exacerbation, most state and local governments formulated social reform policies. In Maharashtra, where Scheduled groups are quite numerous, their leaders at all levels were incorporated into the system. As the economic conditions of these leaders improved, politically they became power wielders, and socially they were more acceptable. They and their followers were quick to seize opportunities that were offered and some of these backward groups rose
fast in the social hierarchy. In Maharashtra, some other castes were also offered concessions and, similar to the Scheduled castes/tribes, a few improved their condition. Educational and employment opportunities that were offered through reservations were another medium for improving socioeconomic conditions and many joined the ranks of blue- and white-collar workers.

The situation in Tritiya was different, but that cannot be taken as a representative rural village. However, Prathama, and to a lesser extent, Dwitiya, showed these trends clearly. So did the figures of political representatives for Hingna block.

While these changes accounted for some amount of mobility among the backward castes and tribes, the numbers below the poverty line remain high. At the national level the figure is reported to be nearly 50 percent of the population. The estimate at the village level is 27.1 and 33.56 in Prathama and Dwitiya. Even in Tritiya it is 17.71 percent. After thirty-two years of planned development and twenty years of decentralized democracy, large masses are still in poverty.

The second constraint is at the policy making and implementation stages. The levels of government with the most impact on poverty and inequity are the State and local governments in Maharashtra. Elections and politics are costly phenomena and only the upper-middle and upper classes can compete and spend time and money on politics. Members of these classes are the most likely to occupy positions in Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads. Others have an uphill task, starting with the Gram Panchayat, building up a constituency and power base over some time. The majority are from the upper classes, the policies that are shaped generally suit their purposes, with just the necessary minimum
for the poorer sections to keep the latter appeased and expectant. The policies are then implemented by a machinery that is again drawn from the same background and has interests akin to those of the political leadership.\:^{14} And in States like Maharashtra where each successive government attempts to make the political leadership stronger, being 'representatives of the people', the administration is often an instrument at its disposal. With the Zilla Parishads and the District Planning and Development Councils determining policies and reviewing their implementation, the independent role of the administrative machinery is curtailed to a great extent. With increasing incidents of intervention from the State government, those working in rural areas are more and more at the mercy of the political bosses.\:^{15} Therefore even if a part of the bureaucracy were to plan a completely poor-oriented program, its success would depend on its acceptability to the local leadership. This role of the political wing of the government is clear in the two villages of Nagpur district. The village leaders of Prathama and Dwitiya are big cultivators with a fair amount of education and experience in politics. If democratic decentralization was meant to be equal development of all the villages, there would have been the same level of development in both villages. The administration would have cut out equal pieces of the economic pie for both villages. But it was clear that that was not the case. Prathama was ahead of Dwitiya, with a larger amount of funds being expended in the village and on its people, traceable to the more powerful leadership hailing from Prathama. Given the ecology of the rural village therefore, the composition of the political leadership and its influence on the administration has to be taken into account.
The third constraint works at the recipient stage, at the level of the people themselves. It is in the form of access to the politico-administrative system, the economic capacity to participate in development activity, and the belief systems. Given the socioeconomic structure much of the political leadership and the administrative machinery is beyond the reach of the lower classes. Even if this were not true, the belief is significant, because it is not only deeply rooted in the cognition of the concerned, but it interferes with their relations with the leadership. They will tend to keep away due to feelings of deference or indifference or even bitterness. The panchayati raj has helped to break down much of this distance and the people of Prathama and Dwitiya have had some success in gaining access to the political representatives. Even though they admit to approaching the representatives in time of need, it is not clear whether this interaction requires a special effort or is the normal routine, although the former seems more likely. The usual attitude is to wait for someone to bring the government programs that might benefit them. This attitude is almost nonexistent in Tritiya where the people do not wait for intermediaries to bring information and benefits to them, but demand and obtain them for themselves. It is true that such individuals do exist in the other two villages as well. Table 18 of Chapter V lists the number of persons in the various classes who have received benefits from various government programs in the last five years. In the Upper class the individual who has received the maximum amount in subsidies and grants--nearly Rs 6000--is a Scheduled caste person. He has also received indirect help in the form of agricultural training and advice, educational facilities for his children (at a minimum
level for his daughter who has finished high school and maximum level for a son who is studying to become a doctor in the Indian system of medicine) and a job for one of his sons. All these having occurred since his election to the Gram Panchayat ten years ago and his exposure to the possibilities available to him and others like him. His election did not play such a vital role as his awareness of the benefits. There are many more who have achieved something on their own, but such efforts are restricted to a few individuals only, slowing development as a result.

The other constraint at the recipient level, that is of the economic capacity to participate, was pointed out repeatedly in Chapter V. It is not enough for the governments merely to create an entire development infrastructure. It will not necessarily follow that the poorer households will be able to share the gains from it. It is clear that those belonging to the middle and upper classes receive the maximum with a progressive reduction as distribution is made down the social scale. The main reason was that the poor are not able to supplement the benefits, to come up with their own share or are so poor that they consume what they receive for personal needs, staying at the same level of poverty, if not sliding lower. There were instances in the two villages of Nagpur when certain beneficiaries received a large sum for constructing a much needed well, but did not utilize it for the designated purpose. Therefore it seems imperative to help such families to participate in development by making it economically feasible for them to do so through government intervention.

Constraints may be found, too, in the belief systems of the recipients. Some of these allow the continuance of the present social
system by endorsing it or not actively opposing it. Many tacitly accept inequality. The rigid caste system influences people's perception that some will always do better than others, or more specifically, better than themselves. Therefore, even when they realize that efforts to improve their condition are not reaching them, their ire is directed not at those who are in the upper echelons of the social structure, but at those from their own ranks who have successfully risen higher. Similarly, there seems a general acquiescence to the local status system. Within a caste and across castes, the hierarchy continues. The breakdown of this heirarchy can be expected only after economic equality is achieved. Leadership roles are generally assigned to the rich. At the district and State level such persons can devote more time and effort to politics and therefore reach prominence. Higher the prominence of the leader, greater seems the faith of the constituents in his ability.

These attitudes are reflected in the acceptance of the development strategy as well. There has been an emphasis on agricultural programs in the State and district plans. In the Integrated Rural Development programs, as well, the main activity is providing of subsidized cattle. The general program for the landless is also along the same lines. Therefore, the people think of the same type of programs and schemes as the only way out of their poverty-stricken condition. This was clearly brought out in the responses from the people of Pratham and Dwitiya when they were asked about their expectation from the government. Planning for the future development of these people has been so tailored by such a strategy, that they cannot think of alternatives. (That such a short-sightedness afflicts the planners as well is clear from the lack
of change in the type of policies being prescribed.) What the people, especially the small farmers, want is usually something to do with land or milch cattle. There is only one instance of a person deviating and wanting funds for the higher education of his son.

A Strategy for Development

Class conditions and the distribution of power and status are economically decided, while political and social factors are subsidiary though close behind. Creating new institutions in the hope of encouraging people's participation will not be successful unless the participants have some form of equality. Starting on an unequal footing, the most ambitious institutions will only help to maintain, even reinforce and exacerbate, the present inequalities. The panchayati raj of Maharashtra, lauded as the best of its kind operating in the country, has definitely made the people more aware of development activities, has modified their attitudes towards the administration, and made the political leadership and the administration more responsive to the people. But in all these respects the achievement falls short of the objectives set at the time of the adoption of the panchayati raj system. And the reasons have been seen operating in the two villages discussed in Chapter V.

Any strategy for development to be successful in removing poverty and inequality while keeping the twin goals of production and redistribution in mind, has to take all these realities into consideration. An attempt will be made here to forward one such strategy which might offer an alternative to the planners and policy makers. The present state of thinking at the highest levels of planning in the country
is reflected in the All India Conference on Regional Development Indicators and Plan Cooperation, held by the Planning Commission in April 1982. The Conference is said to be the aftermath of a Central Cabinet decision that standard indicators like G.N.P., do not accurately reflect the nation's development achievements and new indicators for measuring development should be introduced. The decision indicates the thinking process of planners and policy makers when made aware that a change is needed. It is still too early to tell the impact the new indicators will have, but the reverberations will be felt all over because 170 delegates, mainly high ranking officials and heads of various research institutions from all over the country, attended. This search for 'new indicators and development' turned out to be a way of determining the relative development of the different States that would ultimately be reflected in the allocation of Plan funds. The "new quantitative indicators of physical development could be used to assess the actual level of development of each State in such major areas as nutrition, clothing, housing, transport and communication, health, education, efficiency and productivity." However, all this effort remains at the aggregate level and "does not include the most important sector of all, the rural household . . . [because] thus far the relationship between macro-level planning at the national level and micro-level development at the village level is only very vaguely understood." And therefore a working group is being set up "to evolve a methodology for measuring the impact of the Plan programmes on actual development at the micro-level." Whatever the significance of the Conference and the follow-up action, to what extent this will change the Plan content can be
determined only after the Seventh Five Year Plan is inaugurated, but from the little information available about this exercise it is clear that the planners are still concerned with aggregates and averages which may show the discrepancies in regional development but will not reflect the conditions of the different classes in general or in any particular area. The only change is the sectors that will now be emphasized.

When we speak of the removal of poverty and inequality on the one hand and the furtherance of production on the other, the task becomes more complex. One cannot be rejected in favor of the other; therefore, what follows is just one part of the whole development effort, a part that concentrates only on one section of the society without forgetting that the rest cannot be and will not be neglected at the same time. It therefore contemplates the channelling of a part of the funds as a special effort on behalf of the poorer sections without halting the present programs, though reducing the high concentration of funds in the other sectors.

Long-term Strategy and Short-term Imperatives

Most scholars of the Indian scene who are concerned with the large numbers living in poverty and degradation invariably conclude with the formula of land reforms. Indian or foreign, all consider the implementation of stringent land reforms as the answer to all the problems of the poor. Some even recommend a ceiling limit. However certain problems reduce its importance for rural transformation. First, taking the socioeconomic and political realities into consideration, the implementation of land reforms all over the country, or lower ceiling limits and proper distribution in Maharashtra, does not seem likely in
the near future. Prescribing land reforms and a radical change in land relations presupposes that the social classes which have failed to bring about these changes so far, and have hampered their implementation as much as possible, will suddenly have a change of heart and give up their class interests. As far as land reforms are concerned, any satisfactory solution can take place only if it is prescribed by the power wielders who themselves are land based and whose power depends on the very land that is sought to be alienated. In both Kerala and West Bengal, a left wing government has been able to bring in better land relations, but such a possibility is as yet farfetched in Maharashtra. The reforms implemented till now have not been drastic enough to cut into the landholders' power base, even though some lands have indeed been redistributed. Secondly, making land reforms the central focus of development concentrates all hopes in just one sector and reinforces the traditional attachment to land. Waiting for land reforms before something is done to improve the economic condition of the poor might take a long time. And in Maharashtra the size of holdings cannot be compared to those of the paddy-growing Southern India, where small size makes it possible to accommodate many. In Maharashtra the owner of seven and a half acres is considered a small farmer and we have seen that such small farmers are not necessarily better off than those without land. Mere ownership of land may give a person status, even a sense of security, but not enough income. In the long run it would end up with the same situation that is being solved today. Taking the total land available in any of the villages, for instance, and dividing it by the number of family units in the respective village would at best be a short-term measure. Even if
there was sufficient land to be divided into viable plots, such a division would soon lead to fragmentation and the resulting poverty that occurs when partitions take place and more families have to be supported on the same piece of land. Thirdly, land reforms would put unnecessary stress on an already beleaguered factor of production. Land reform has not been the unavoidable choice in countries that have a surplus in agricultural production today. It is not the only option for development. The condition of those who have received land either from surplus or government lands has been explored earlier. There has been no dramatic change for such households who were faced with running a farm without any other form of help--no equipment, no draught animals, no funds for seeds, etc. A stringent land reform implementation will increase the number of such families and will affect not only the families themselves, but the whole production cycle. The point being made here is not to give up land reform, but to suggest that it is not necessarily the main option and one need not wait for land reforms before taking other steps.

Instead of converging all hopes and energy on land, a two-pronged approach is suggested: (1) make the present holdings--here reference is mainly to small and marginal ones--more efficient and cost-effective, and (2) absorb the surplus labor in agro-based and small technology industries in the rural areas.

The Approach and Its Consequences

From the study it is clear that the large number of small and marginal farmers find it beyond their means to make any improvement on their lands--whether it is upgradation of the soil, or digging
wells, or fixing pumps, or even taking a loan for good quality cattle to supplement income. In all these, such farmers find themselves unable to act, despite a strong desire to improve their condition. In the meantime, they see the better placed farmers moving steadily ahead, leaving them further and further behind. One solution to strengthen their bargaining power, their credit worthiness and their financial capacity would be for a number of such persons to come together and work on a cooperative basis. Cooperatives have gained a bad name in Maharashtra as they have strengthened the power position of the rich and wealthy who have used these institutions for their own interests. That danger can be avoided if persons from the same stratum come together for such specific purposes as ownership of equipment, use of more efficient machinery, creating and utilizing of irrigation facilities, fuel use through gobar gas plants, etc.25 depending on the greatest needs of the group. Most large cultivators have adopted the use of small technology thereby reducing the labor usage and increasing efficiency. This can be made possible for the smaller cultivators by cost sharing in the cooperatives. With the help given by the government to cooperatives, they can become self-sufficient without the help of the local elite. While as single individuals their approach to the officials perhaps would have been inhibited, the strength of numbers will help them get better and quicker information. The three basic ingredients, improved seeds, water for irrigation and credit, would be within their reach. Such groups should be small groups covering about a hundred acres so that management and personal relations would be within manageable limits. A rotating leadership will ensure better participation and training in management for every member of the group.
Another advantage of such an arrangement would be the release of some members of the household to pursue some other income-generating activity. The income figures for rural households are low enough. If these were to be calculated on a per capita basis, the extent of under-employment and under-utilization of human potential would be clear. If avenues to make use of this potential are provided, there would be fewer persons working on their land, without affecting the crop yield. They can always lend a hand, when required, as during the ploughing or the harvesting season. Mechanization has made its appearance in many parts of the country. While the richer farmers are able to use tractors, smaller cultivators are seen with sprayers and threshers. If given the chance, many small innovations will be used to reduce the strain on man and animal. The lower financial capacity and the availability of free or cheap labor have prevented the smaller and marginal farmers from using them. If they get together successfully, some amount of mechanization is bound to appear, thus rendering some of the labor redundant. This labor force can become the source of additional income. If they turn to agricultural labor, they can be assured of higher wages, due to a reduction in the number that will be available if the strategy discussed below for the landless in the village is followed, or they can become a part of the strategy itself.

The second part of the approach involves the agricultural landless laborers and the surplus labor that is mostly underemployed as family labor. As in the case of the cooperatives mentioned above, entry would be restricted to the rural needy; otherwise, it would be a repetition of the old story of the upper and middle classes benefitting more than the poor. This aspect would establish a training and education program
including the necessities to put the training to practical use. The program would consist of two types of on-the-job training: one for such traditional, village-oriented trades as cattle rearing, and the other for new trades, such as agro-based cottage industries and small technology industries.

It has been the experience in the villages that not all persons who have received government subsidized cattle can make a success of rearing these animals, whether they are cows, goats or sheep. One reason often given is that they do not have enough to feed and care for the animals. However, not all animals are stall fed. In fact, most of the cattle received in such programs are the local variety ones which can be grazed on the village lands. The second reason given for the failure of this program (failure in the sense of not resulting in any increase of income) is the poor care given to the cattle. Most of the beneficiaries are agricultural laborers, not necessarily knowledgeable about the rearing of cattle. In some cases, due to neglect, the animals have wasted away. Therefore, to make optimum use of the current program one step would be to impart information and training on various aspects of animal husbandry. At present, in Maharashtra, only three types of animals are included: cows, goats and sheep. It has been suggested by some that these can be varied to a greater extent. M. N. Srinivas, the well-known sociologist, has recommended the rearing of rabbits, which do not need any special care, breed at a very fast rate and are already eaten by many of the poorer sections in Southern India.\textsuperscript{27} New thinking is required to introduce and persuade the people to accept different types of animals.
With the animal husbandry department spread out in the rural areas, this should not be an impossible task.

While the preceding type of training would involve individual's talents alone, training of the second kind involves both the individual and society. Besides food crops, cash crops have a great potential for processing which at present takes place in urban centers. Examples of cotton ginning and orange processing come readily to mind. A more blatant example of this sort of deprivation occurs in a district inhabited by a large number of tribals. Much of the State's tendu leaf (used for making the country cigarettes, called beedies) is grown in this district. Picking these leaves provides employment to many of the tribals for a couple of months. These leaves are then transported to other districts where a flourishing cottage industry is handled by thousands of ill-paid women and children. The operators or contractors, as they are called, have become millionaires and wield considerable power in the political arena. In the meantime a number of plans have been devised to develop the tribal people who are probably living in one of the most backward regions of the State. Yet in none of these plans has it been suggested that the same tendu leaves could employ the same people for almost the whole year. The returns could also be assured if the government Marketing Federation took the responsibility of marketing this highly lucrative product. Thus often employment opportunities are staring the planners in the face and yet no changes are made, perhaps due to actual or potential resistance from vested interests.

Another avenue worth exploring deals with small technology industries. Many farmers travel to towns and cities to fulfill some
of their needs, especially those of a mechanical nature. The village craftsmanship is considered primitive with its lack of training and good equipment. Appropriate training programs producing more skilled persons in the villages could satisfy a greater demand for services of qualified persons. Instead of waiting for the demand to be created in and fulfilled by the towns and cities, or by qualified persons from the upper and middle classes, it would be preferable to prepare those who are interested in such skills to meet these demands in their areas. Minor repairs can be done by some of the educated among the poor after proper training. If such units are set up by the government with the ownership slowly passing into the hands of the workers and the government recouping its investment, it would not only free funds for further investment but put the ownership of production in the hands of the workers. The spurt in economic activity would entail the setting up of an infrastructure to fulfill the new needs and with some planning these needs can be satisfied by the persons from the lower class and groups below the poverty line. At every stage, however, careful monitoring of the beneficiaries is essential as it is easy for the persons from the upper strata to monopolize these new opportunities as well.

Tied up with the economic aspects of the approach is the matter of education or providing information. Its impact is expected not only on the economic, but social and political, development as well. Education through appropriate information can be seen as a catalyst in development. With a few exceptions it can make the difference between obtaining a benefit and not even being aware of it. Within the close-knit socio-politico-economic networks, with only a few
cracks open to the poorer sections, information becomes very important. Education has often been called basic to all development.\textsuperscript{28} With a large illiterate population it assumes special importance. To make any dent on this illiteracy a massive adult education program will have to be started, a program that will teach the people the basics in reading and writing. It will avoid the formal pattern of education and make their learning more related to their day-to-day work. The concept of adult education has been prescribed by government as well as non-government sources, but rarely followed on a mass basis.

The role of adult education in development as conceived by the Working Group on Adult Education (now abandoned) was that it "can contribute to the new development strategy in three significant ways. Firstly, by making a substantial part of the workforce literate and better skilled; secondly, by involvement of people in various development programs which would make it possible to achieve optimum potential and minimize wastage; and thirdly, by creation of awareness among the poor regarding the laws and policies of government whereby it would be possible to implement the strategy of redistributive justice."\textsuperscript{29} Thus besides enriching the human personality, education would empower the poor to gain and apply the information and knowledge imparted to them. As this could be simultaneous with the training program, the change in their condition would be quickened to that extent.

With increasing literacy one would see the emerging self-reliance so evident in Tritiya. The dependence on others to bring information, interpret it and help them participate in any program would be whittled
away, helping to break down the social constraints in rural life that are mostly supported by such self-deprecating attitudes.

Even the impact of the caste system can be reduced to the extent that people become assertive and able to help themselves. This is not utopian. These changes are seen in Tritiya and even more so in developed urban areas where distinctions are still less apparent.

As partners in production and income generation, the education of women will have to receive equal emphasis. In all cases, urban as well as rural, their level of illiteracy is higher than men's. Educating women will have great influence on the education of children. Considering the constraints besetting the education of women, it will require special consideration. Once educational goals are reached, other existing programs can then be linked with literacy: for example, establishment of Mahila Mandals (women's village-level organization), imparting social education, health education, parent education, providing employment in the houses, etc. In most of these activities the wives from the upper strata play leadership roles and the interest of the other women wanes. With the creation of consciousness among the women this can be avoided.

With increased knowledge and social awareness, the participation of people in development activities on a direct basis would naturally increase. Limited access has been one of the evils that has given unequal advantage to the dominant groups, and it is expected that with greater consciousness of their rights and the knowledge of government programs, the poorer sections will not allow it to continue for long. On its side the administration and the political leadership will
have to learn new lessons. The Ashok Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions set up in 1977 stresses the need for the officials and non-officials to attend training programs to divest themselves of the old prejudices and to work out better understanding of the problems of the poor.30

Improvement in income levels would allow the economic time and help to create the moral courage to make representation in the local bodies an actual fact. The secrecy, or more commonly the ignorance, that keeps the details of block and district plans limited to a few would be recognized by greater numbers. The notices that are usually just put up in the Gram Panchayat office without letting the people know what it is about, would be understood by the majority who would be able to decipher the intentions for themselves. There would be fewer chances to distort or conceal information.

The approach, therefore basically involves decreasing the pressure on land by providing people alternatives for income generation and giving them the knowledge and information to take on new occupations, or improve on their original ones. The two together are seen to improve social relations and participation in the political and developmental process. It would be essential, however, to restrict participation only to the truly needy. If specific provisions are not made regarding the eligibility of only the poor, this strategy, too, could result in a failure to benefit the poor. Even in the case of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes it would be necessary to make the economic criterion more binding than the mere caste-based one.31

The basic thrust of the training and information transfer would be to equip the people to make their own decisions and organize the
direction their lives will take. Though outside change agents are envisaged, their role would be not to direct the people, but to help them realize their own potentials. If too much reliance is placed on outsiders, another dependency syndrome could result and once the outsiders were removed, the local people would slide back to their old sense of helplessness and ignorance. There are already government agencies such as the regional development corporations in Maharashtra, that can assist the poor in the initial years. It is recognized that without government help no development will be possible on a large scale; even if the change agents are voluntary workers some form of government endorsement would be essential to encourage the existing agencies to extend all the assistance possible. Like the change agents the intervention of such agencies should also be temporary. It should be able to withdraw slowly and transfer the whole operation to the people involved. One lesson learned from the Community Development Program was that if the government takes too much initiative the participation of the people drops to that extent.

A pertinent question is the cost of such an operation. Installing a separate machinery or even getting the present one to take on additional work may be self-defeating. The first path would be too expensive and the second would result in merely mechanical reactions. It has to be remembered that during the time it would take the people to learn new skills, they would have to maintain themselves and their families. The new program can be imparted only when they are free from their work, as in the evenings or during the off-season. Therefore, an incentive scheme would be appropriate to attract willing and dedicated
workers, either from government agencies, like teachers from regular and technical schools, or from private institutions.

For greater success, the involvement of government agencies and voluntary organizations together is necessary. Many steps involved in the strategy would be possible only with the use of a far-flung machinery reaching every village. For instance, the first step might very well be to prepare the names of individuals who would participate in the program. Only a person working close to the villages would be able to carry out such a task.

There are drawbacks to be considered, too, such as using an administrative machinery built up of vested interests. Similarly, the need to involve selected voluntary agencies cannot be overemphasized, but while some are altruistic and selfless, there are others whose aim is to grow self-serving roots in the rural areas. Therefore, an open system, whereby the two--government agencies and voluntary organizations--can keep a check on each other, has many advantages. However, the role of each would depend on local conditions, such as availability of such organizations, or the existence of a government machinery that can take up the work in addition to its own.

In sum, because the causes of rural poverty and inequality are structural, policy options also have to produce structural change in social relations and they can be based on the kind of practical considerations which can create such a change.
CHAPTER VII--NOTES


3. This is from an interview with Mrs. Gandhi during her visit to the United States, Parade Magazine, July 25, 1982, p. 6.

4. Maharashtra has been considered a moderately progressive state or a state following reformist policies when compared to many other states of the country. Development policy followed in the state has emphasized land reforms as well as increasing production. Only those states run by the Communist Party of India or Communist Party Marxist, have more rigorous land reform laws than Maharashtra. The preponderance of Marathas, the major agricultural community has introduced a considerable amount of harmony into the rural society. The introduction of Zilla Parishad and panchayati raj set up by providing for popular participation in rural development policies has helped reduce the distance between the people and the government.

5. Even during times of scarcity the productive nature of the works is sought though not emphasized, as at that time the immediate need is more to provide work to the people than to aim at economic development. During acute scarcity conditions each district has to take care of as many as two hundred thousand people each day.


7. Nicos Poulantzas in State, Power, Socialism (London: Verso, 1980), observes, "The State constitutes the political unity of the dominant classes, thereby establishing them as dominant . . . With regard to the dominant classes and particularly the bourgeoisie, the state's principal role is one of organization . . . It represents and organizes the long term political interests of a power bloc . . ."

8. For a fuller exposition of this institutionalizing role of the government see Donald B. Rosenthal, The Expansive Elite (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and Aruna Nayyar Mitchie, Growth and Inequality: The Political Consequences of Agrarian Change in Rural India (East Lansing, Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1978). They discuss the effect of this institutionalizing roles in the States of Maharashtra and Rajasthan respectively, and claim that it only helps those already rich and in power and serves to increase inequalities among the classes.
9. As in the case of the Integrated Rural Development Program and Employment Guarantee Scheme, the grant of house plots and land was conceptually excellent. It was the implementation that went wrong because of the political implications that crept in. See Chapter IV for a discussion of the interest of the decision makers in the symbolic fulfillment of this scheme rather than the relief it brought to many rural poor.

10. See page 189 and 190 of Chapter V.

11. See page 213 and 214 of Chapter V.


13. See Chapter VI, Table 26, page 244.

14. The village leaders of Prathama and Dwitiya as well as the panchayati samiti representatives who belong to Prathama, are bit cultivators with fair amount of education and experience in politics. In administration as well, those who were able to afford education were usually the upper caste classes. It is only in recent days that others are also gaining access.

15. Public administration studies in the beginning concentrated on the organizational factors to explain the 'miscarriage' of government plans and the low acceptance of the administration by the general public. Later it centered on the class and caste background of the persons manning the posts. But with increasing politicization of development and the rising power of the local political bosses, this aspect has to be emphasized when evaluating the political and administrative roles in the policy process.

16. See page 207 of Chapter V.

17. The conference was the result of the Prime Minister's desire to reflect a better picture of development. The old indicators of development did not present the progress made on various fronts by the country and hence it was decided that in the planning of the Seventh Five Year Plan, new indicators would be emphasized.

18. As no details of the conference were directly available, the account here is mainly based on an article by Garry Jacobs in The Hindu, Madras, May 16, 1982.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. The Seventh Five Year Plan is to be for the period 1985-1990. However the thinking reflected in the conference will bear fruit only if there is no change in government at the Center. The Sixth Five Year Plan saw two very different drafts due to the change in the party in power before the Plan implementation started.

23. Just to mention two who have recommended ceiling limits, and pretty low ones at that, are Joan P. Mencher, *Agriculture and Social Structure in Tamil Nadu: Past Origins, Present Transformations and Future Prospects* (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 1978), and Gail Omvedt, "Capitalist Agriculture and Rural Classes in India."

24. Rural poverty in Maharashtra is less severe than it was in Kerala or West Bengal when the left wing communist parties came to power. Further the communist parties and their allies are fairly insignificant in terms of their representation in the legislature in Maharashtra. Radical movements are weak in the rural areas and have a very small following.

25. Gobar gas plants are of different sizes, from family to community units, that process dung and other waste products and produce methanol gas that can be used for lighting and cooking purposes. It has also been successfully used to power small engines. But that is still in the experimental stage. After the gas is produced the processed waste can be used as manure which is richer in nutrients than the original input. Though it is not very expensive and heavy government subsidy is available, it is still beyond the reach of many.

26. Aruna Nayyar Mitchie in her study of Rajasthan villages comments on the widespread use of tractors and other mechanized equipment. Even the smaller farmers with irrigation, who did not own these, rented them instead of depending on human labor. See *Growth and Equality* ...


Literacy in India," Shiviah, Behavioral Sciences and Community Development, Sept. 1974. A similar sentiment is echoed in most of the Five Year Plans.


31. This is becoming the general thinking among most classes especially the lower classes who feel affected by it and the intellectuals who see a few among the Scheduled castes and tribes getting most of the benefits. It is very well conceptualized by S. N. Mishra, "Reservations and Distributive Justice," Mainstream, New Delhi, April 18, 1981, pp. 18-20. He makes this demand as a means of avoiding caste violence and promoting distributive justice.
APPENDIX

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

A
1. District
2. Taluka
3. Village
4. No. of households in the village
5. Date of survey
6. Name of the Head of the family
8. Total number of family members:
   a. below 14 years
   b. between 14-59 years
   c. 60 years and above
9. Earning members in the family:
   a. below 14 years
   b. between 14-59 years
   c. 60 years and above.
10. Name of surveyor
11. Details of earning members of the family, including head of H.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of member</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Literacy level*</th>
<th>Main occupation/No. of days employed in a year</th>
<th>Subsidiary occupation/No. of days employed in a year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*If literate indicate the level of education as follows: (i) primary, (ii) secondary, (iii) higher education and (iv) professional or technical education.
12. Particulars of land owned (in acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lands</th>
<th>Irrigated</th>
<th>Un-Irrigated</th>
<th>Homestead</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Own (personal</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Given on lease</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Taken on lease</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Under actual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultivation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

13. Cropping pattern: 1975-76 to 1980-81:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Area (acre)</th>
<th>Gross yield (quintals)</th>
<th>Value (RS)</th>
<th>Cost of cultivation</th>
<th>Expenditure (Rs)</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Kharif</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Rabi</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. etc.</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.</td>
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<td>b. etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14. Income from livestock and birds: 1980-81 - '75-'76/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Current value</th>
<th>Gross income</th>
<th>Cost of maintenance</th>
<th>Net income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Bullocks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Cows</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Calves</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. He-buffaloes</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. She-buffaloes</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Sheep</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Poultry birds</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Goats</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Other (specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
15. Income from other property in the house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Gross income</th>
<th>Cost of maintenance</th>
<th>Net income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Land given on lease</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. House given on rent</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Bullock cart</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Other vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Pump</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Other implements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Insecticides</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Storage</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Milk cans</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Courtyard</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>k. Gobar gas</td>
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<tr>
<td>l. Flour mill</td>
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<tr>
<td>m. Other (specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

16. Income of the members of the family other than that earned on own land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No. of family members</th>
<th>No. of days working</th>
<th>Place of daily working</th>
<th>Daily wage rate</th>
<th>Net annual income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Cultivation done on lease</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agriculture labor</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Non-agricultural labor</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Service/salaried job</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Petty trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Self-employment</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Other (specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

17. Income from all sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of income</th>
<th>Net income</th>
<th>Number of members in the household</th>
<th>Income per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 13, A,B,C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. Category of household
   a. Agricultural laborer
   b. Rural artisan
   c. Non-agricultural laborer
   d. Small farmer
   e. Marginal farmer
   f. Big cultivator
   g. Service/business

19. Indebtedness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Year of borrowed</th>
<th>Rate of borrowing</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
<th>Balance if any</th>
<th>returned of loan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20. Benefits received from development schemes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of scheme</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Benefit received</th>
<th>Increase in income</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Benefit received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loan Subsidy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Land development
b. Irrigation wells
c. Irrigation pump
d. Agricultural implements
e. Insecticides
f. Bullock cart
g. Gobar gas
h. Dairy development
i. Sheep rearing
j. Poultry
k. Fishery/Piggery
l. Cottage industry
m. House construction
n. Other (specify)

21. What form of help would you need to increase your income:

Nature of need               Amount required.
COMMUNICATION FLOW

A  General Information:

1. Name
2. Occupation
3. Education level: Illiterate
   Primary Education
   Middle School Education
   Higher Education
4. Caste
5. Annual Income.

B
6a. From what government scheme did you get benefit?
   b. In what year did you get the benefit?
7. What was the source of your information about the scheme?
8. What new technique have you adopted in your occupation?
   - Irrigation
   - Water pump
   - Hybrid seeds
   - Insecticides
   - Agricultural Implements
   - Crossbred cows
   - Poultry
   - Improvement in cottage industry (technical)
   - Other cottage industry
   - Other (specify)

9. Who gave you the information about the above new techniques or improvements?

10a. Do you read newspapers
   b. Do you get any information of development activities from it

11a. Do you have a radio. If not do you listen to it elsewhere
   b. Do you listen to radio programs relating to agriculture and other matters related to your work
   c. Have you adopted any technique after listening to radio programs.

12a. Is there a Television in the village? Do you have one?
   b. Do you watch T.V. programs
   c. What programs did you find most interesting

13. Who are the officials looking after developmental activities in your village (patwari, gram sevak, group secretary, etc.)
14a. Who do you have to approach to get benefit from any developmental scheme (government, Zilla parishad, political party, etc.)
b. Of the above who gives you information of the schemes

15. Do any of the village leaders give you information about development activities

16. If you have any difficulty in your occupation, who do you contact

17a. Do you visit the Panchayat samiti, Zilla parishad, tehsil office or the Collectorate
b. For what
c. What help do you get from the members of the above institutions

18. Do you know the P.S., Z.P. member, MLA, MP, elected from your area

19a. If you want to contact the above people, do you contact them directly, or do you take the help of others
b. In the case of the latter, why do you take the help of others

C PERCEPTIONS

20. Who, or what is the government (to be filled in last).

21. Who represents the government at the village level
taluqua level
district level
state level
national level

22. To get benefit from governmental programs or to solve problems who will you approach at village level
taluqua level
district level
state level
national level

23. If you did not get the benefit, or if the problem is not solved, who will you approach at the village level
taluqua level
district level
state level
national level
24. Who is the main leader of your village
   of your taluqua
   of your district
   of your state
   of your country

25a. In your opinion what are the qualities of a good leader
   b. What is your opinion about the present leadership.

26a. Are the elections of the gram panchayat, village coop, society, etc. held (or was it a unanimous selection)
   bi. Are there groups in the village
   bii. Are these groups based on political, economical or social activities
   c. Is there any conflict between these groups
   d. What is your role in such conflicts

27a. Who are the prominent people in the village
   b. Which is the dominant class in the village
   c. Which is the dominant caste in the village
   di. Is it true that there are dominant and subordinate classes and caste in the village
   ii. Do you think that they should continue
   iii. If you think they should not continue, what is the remedy.

28a. Are you a member of any of the institutions--gram panchayat, cooperative society, etc.
   b. What part do you play in the development of the village
   c. Do you think the village develops with the development of individuals and their families

29a. Who are the government officials in the village
   b. Do they belong to this village
   c. If they don't, or if they belong to some other caste or community, does it come in the way of the working of the village

30a. Who are the main officers at the taluqua level
   b. Do you meet them often
   c. What is your opinion about them

31. Do you think voting is important (Yes, No, Don't Know)

32. In an election which of the following candidates will you prefer
   a. belonging to your caste
   b. belonging to your village
   c. belonging to your political party
   d. an honest and diligent worker
   e. an acquaintance or relative
   f. an educated person.

###
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