

**GOVERNANCE IN MADHYA PRADESH: A
STUDY OF PROGRAMMES FOR
THE WEAKER SECTIONS**

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation entitled Governance in Madhya Pradesh: A Study of Programmes for the Weaker Sections submitted by **NEELU ANITA TIGGA** in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy is entirely her own work and has not been considered for the award of any other degree either at this or any other university.

“We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation”

Prof. Sudha Pai
Supervisor

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Chairperson

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Tables

	Page No.
Box II : Differentials in Health Status Amongst States	58
Book III : Differentials in Health Status Amongst Socio-Economic Groups	59
Rural Allopathic Health Care Institutions required in Madhya Pradesh	65

Contents

Acknowledgement

Tables

Page no

Chapter 1 Governance in Madhya Pradesh: A framework of Analysis	1
Chapter 2 Socio-economic Condition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh: A Background.	25
Chapter 3 Education and Health Programmes in Madhya Pradesh.	45
Chapter 4 Land Distribution and Gram Swaraj in Madhya Pradesh.	70
Chapter 5 Conclusion	100
Bibliography	

Chapter- 1

GOVERNANCE IN MADHYA PRADESH: A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Introduction :

Since the early 1990's, there has been a growing interest among academics and policy makers in the concept of governance. Many western agencies particularly the World Bank, have put forward indicators of 'good governance' in the form of ; institutional components', essential prerequisite or inputs required for good governance through which the concept could be operationalised and its impact studied on development measured across countries, regions and time. The ongoing intellectual debate on what is governance and how can it be measured carries a variety of meanings often depending on the framework of analysis and the parameters of the study in which it is being employed. It is in this context, worth examining the role of political leaders who have put forward different paths for the upliftment of the weaker sections hoping to mobilize them and obtain their support. Against this background the congress model of governance adopted in Madhya Pradesh under Digvijay Singh provided for a more interventionist role to the state which it described as "developmental activism". More specifically, the needs of the weaker sections were given a central place in development plans and state intervention was meant for at least 3 Purposes : protection of weaker sections, economic upliftment through provision of land and state sponsored programmes based on diversity and democratisation, and education in order to provide social opportunity.

The Congress party in Madhya Pradesh placed the socio- economic improvement of the weaker sections i.e. Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes , poor, women and other disadvantaged groups at the heart of its development strategy which reveals a significant shift in the public pronouncements of the Digvijay Singh government from earliest Congress governments. After paying a ritual homage to Gandhi and his attempt to promote the welfare of the weaker sections government documents invoke the ideals put forward by Babasaheb Ambedkar. The Bhopal Document (BD) opens with " declaring our belief in Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideals of social Democracy." The report of Task Force (TF) set up by the government recalls the struggles that Ambedkar had waged for the emancipation of dalits and points to the continuation of social inequality while providing political

equality. Ambedkar's notion of state-socialism is invoked and the need for state-supremacy in order to overcome the traditional society.¹

The clearest enunciation of the Congress Agenda towards the weaker sections, thus, emerges in Bhopal Document of 2001. The Madhya Pradesh government organized the Bhopal Conference held in January 2001 in which a number of intellectuals were invited to discuss strategies for upliftment of weaker sections and gave full support to its recommendations for uplift of disadvantaged sections, particularly dalits. A Task Force with 6 committees was also established to work out the proposed strategies in detail.

Moreover, the role of the state was visualized as a 'conciliator' emphasis was laid on economic change through the combined help of state and civil society, through voluntary organizations. Also, in the 1990s with the onset of globalisation the retreat of the state from economic activities has particularly affected the weaker sections. It was also seen that, entirely state-centric economic models of development pursued so far have not been beneficial for the weaker section. For example, on education front, the governments earlier total literacy campaigns (TLC) had been a failure.

Another feature adopted to better the condition of the weaker sections was the mission approach, outside the sphere of the state through which it could target specific weaknesses such as low literacy, high infant mortality, lack of drinking water etc. It was an innovative scheme where central and state governments, particularly at the local level and NGOs have joined hands. At the level of primary education it was a community – based programme in which schools were set up on demand basis and the local people had control over the appointment and dismissal of teachers. This programme in Madhya Pradesh was part of a number of initiatives, putting it ahead of many other states.²

Another feature was decentralisation and greater people's participation particularly in local institutions. Here, the new panchayats under the 73rd Amendment act, which formed a third statutory level of federal functioning and have been provided with reservations for lower castes and women and more powers over local administration and development could play a seminal role.³ Thus in Madhya Pradesh panchayats in some districts in collaboration with the NGOs or in some

1:- Bhopal Document: Charting a new Course for Dalits for the 21st Century, January 2002, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

2: Anupreeta Das (2001) Chalking out The Future Indian Express, January 14, New Delhi.

3:- Planning Commission Government of India Report, 2002

areas alone, have taken up primary education and health as their focus areas. Accordingly, the state government supported the formulation of the Bhopal Document, established a Task Force and adopted the mission approach to implement a number of programmes for the weaker sections through state activism as well as multiple strategies involving voluntary associations in civil society and the market. The aim was therefore providing for the weaker actions education, greater participation and inclusion in the decision – making process in local bodies and opening up of new avenues of advancement through the principles of diversity and democratisation.

This thesis thus seeks to study the governance oriented development programmes of the Digvijay Singh Government in Madhya Pradesh, when it was in power during the 1990's. The main objective of the thesis is a critical analysis of the Madhya Pradesh model of governance by examining four major programmes of the Digvijay Singh Government: Education guarantee scheme (EGS); Health; Land Distribution and Gram Swaraj.

Education guarantee scheme :

This programme was introduced by the government of Madhya Pradesh on June 1st, 1997. the guarantee is : If there was no school within one kilometer of any habitation; if there were 40 children who wanted to go to school [25 in tribal areas]; if the gram panchayat after a meeting and discussion decides it wanted a school; if the panchayat was willing to provide space for the school to run; if it could identify a local youth who had at least passed the 10th class; if such a panchayat demanded from the government a school, then the government guaranteed that a school, with no compromise in the quality of education, would be set up within 90 days. But as the study reveals the major problem with the EGS has been that it was designed to raise the number of schools without a major increase in educational expenditure⁴.

Health :

Many new initiatives have been taken by the state government to increase the efficiency of the delivery mechanisms in the health sector. First, the formation of Village health committees (VHC) in each village were in one couple who was interested in health activities and was acceptable to the

4:- Francois Leclerg (2002), the Impact of Education Policy Reform on the School System: A Field Study of EGS and Other Primary School in Madhya Pradesh, Occasional Papery Number 5, CSH, New Delhi.

people of the village was selected from a neighbourhood of every 15-20 households, and these couples constituted the village health committees. This village health committee was responsible for the information, education and communication activities in the village thus becoming a lively link between the health worker and the village community and resulting in one VHC in each of the 71,000 villages of the state⁵. Another notable feature was the community voluntarily starting the cleaning campaign in Indore in the wake of the plague epidemic in Surat in Gujarat. This group called itself a Rogi Kalyan Samiti and began undertaking large improvements in the hospital including generation of funds through user fees. Another major step towards community centering of primary health was through initiation of barefoot doctors. This was an effort at capacity building in the community for basic health needs and not seen as an extended arm of the Health Department. Under this scheme, one person from each village was to be selected by the Panchayat and trained on basic health care at the Public health Centre for 6 months. The Jan Swastya Rakshak can then begin to impart basic health care in the village for which services the community could pay the person. In the two years since the scheme was in operation, over 20,000 Jan Swastya Rakshaks have been trained in the state⁶. However, the HDR admits that a number of problems remain.

Land Distribution :

Recognising that the large majority of the weaker sections, especially the dalits are landless labourers, the Madhya Pradesh government adopted a three- pronged strategy : distribution of land to dalits or help in buying land to make them independent cultivators; alternatively to move them into other occupations through capital formation with government assistance; and third, as many dalits are small cultivators or share- croppers, to provide them assistance through a policy package addressing seed, pesticides, irrigation and credit requirements. On March 4, 1998 the government of Madhya Pradesh issued an order to the district administration for redistribution of land gained by downsizing the area of ' Charnoi' (grazing) land from 7.5 per cent in each villages to 5 per cent, which it is estimated, can provide a surplus of about six lakh acres. This land was to be distributed among some

5:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995

6:- Ibid

four lakh Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes households. During this phase 1.54 lakh acres of land in the form of 80,470 pattas was distributed to 46,088 families. Following this on Sep. 19, 2001 the state government further reduced the charnoi land from 5 per cent to 2 per cent. Due to this, in the second phase a total of about 6 lakh acres of land was expected to be surplus of which 3.68 lakh acres it was claimed had already been identified and it was expected that another 2.5 lakh acres more would be available. In this manner the government claimed that a total of 1,04,496 acres had been distributed to 32,082 scheduled caste families. The scheme was expected to benefit 4 lakh families. The government pointed out that between 1972-1993 the total land declared surplus was only 3.23 lakh acres, but by taking Charnoi land it could provide much more land to the landless. A more recent report of the state government claimed that by July 2002, 2,48,000 hectares of land had been distributed among 3,03,000 landless individuals of whom Schedule Castes constitute 1,99,178 to whom 1,60,194 hectares have been given⁷.

Gram Swaraj:

Complementary to the above programmes for dalits has been the attempt by the Madhya Pradesh government, through its scheme of gram Swaraj introduced on Jan.26, 2001, to further involve disadvantaged groups in the new panchayats established after the 73rd constitutional amendment. Its main goal was to break the control of the locally dominant landowning castes over the panchayat and empower the village community as a whole, giving the lower castes a chance to play a role in decision making. As Digvijay Singh remarked he did not want 'panchayati raj' to become 'sarpanch raj'.⁸

The gram swaraj programme made it mandatory for every village to hold monthly meeting's with a quorum of 20 per cent, of which one-third must be women and members belonging to the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes community. All decisions were to be taken by consensus failing which, voting through a secret ballot was compulsory. The gram sabha was given considerable powers and responsibilities for village development such as roads, drinking water, maintenance of wells and school buildings, and was expected to evolve into a local government body based on the principle of inclusion of all excluded sections, particularly the Schedule Castes and

7:- Samarthan (2002) : Madhya Pradesh Me Panchayati Raj Ek Adhyayan 1995 – 2000, Report (In Hindi) of Samarthan, Centre for Development Support, Bhopal.

8:- James Manor (2001) Madhya Pradesh experiments with Direct Democracy; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 36, Number 9. PP715-16

Schedule Tribes. The rules allowed the gram sabha to involve voluntary agencies for the development of the village and not restrict itself to using the governmental agencies. Every gram sabha was to set up eight committees dealing with various developmental tasks such as agriculture health education, security, community welfare, etc. and more could be created if the necessity was felt. The committee are accountable to the gram sabha and not to the local bureaucratic agencies. The rules made provision for the establishment under the gram sabha for a gram bank, community labour, loan bank etc.

This study uses the framework of the concept of governance to analyse the four selected programmes making it necessary to study the concept of governance, how it has been conceptualised and the variety of meanings it carries depending on the framework of analysis and the parameters of the study in which it is being employed.

It is fair to say that until the late 1980s 'governance' was not a word heard frequently within the development community. Yet today it is difficult to find a publication on development issues put out by the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, academic or private voluntary organizations that does not rely heavily on its use.

The term 'governance' can be traced to the classical Latin and ancient Greek words for the 'steering' of boats. It originally referred mainly to the action or manner of governing, guiding, or steering conduct and overlapping with 'government'. For a long time, usage was mainly limited to constitutional and legal issues concerning the conduct of affairs of state and or to the direction of specific institutions or professions with multiple stakeholders⁹.

It has enjoyed a remarkable revival over the last 15 years or so in many contexts, meaning anything or nothing.¹⁰ The key factor in its revival has probably been the need to distinguish between 'governance' and 'government'¹¹ Anglo-American political theory uses the term 'government' to refer to the formal institutions of the state and their monopoly of legitimate coercive power. Government is characterized by its ability to make decisions and its capacity to enforce them. In particular government is

9:- Bob Jessop(1998) The Rise of Governance and The Risks of Failure: The Case of Economic Development; International Social Science Journal; Number 155, Balckwell Publishers , PP 29-45.

10:- Ibid

11:- Ibid

understood to refer to the formal and institutional processes which operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order and facilitate collective action¹².

Governance, on the other hand includes, beyond the governmental institutions and instruments, the participation of civil society and negotiations between the interest groups, networks and sectors. Governance thus fosters state- society interactions, as a mode of coordination between multiple and fragmented social agents such as public administration, private firms, semi-public bodies, lobbies, consultants, citizens and consumer associations, in order to render policy- making more effective. It puts emphasis on such pluralities and incoherence's as well as on the horizontal and vertical co-ordination of public policies in ways that are more sensitive to the societal environment than the traditional mode of governing. It is based more on concentration and negotiation than on hierarchy and imposition, as an effort to cope with public decision-making processes, in the context of plurality of public and private agents, some of which are powerful enough to challenge the central government. It is not characterized by specific bodies, but rather by procedures and practices. It is a process and not a structure.¹³

Governments began to take a serious interest in promoting good governance and democratic politics from the late 1980. At the core of Western thinking lies the assertion that good governance and democracy are not simply desirable but essential conditions for development in all societies. Taken together, good governance refers generally to a political regime based on the model of a liberal- democratic polity, which protects human and civil rights, combined with a competent, non- corrupt and accountable public administration. Proponents of this new orthodoxy claim that such democratic capitalist systems promote a prosperous and peaceful world because they are best able to generate economic growth and do not go to war with each other. As a whole, this view rests on the crucial but often unspoken assumption that although the formula is essentially Western in origin, it has universal development relevance for all cultures and societies in the modern world. However, what is new is the proposition that democracy is a necessary prior

12:- Gerry Stoker (1998) Governance as Theory :Five Propositions; International Social Science Journal, Number 155, PP 17-28.

13:- Ali Kazancigil (1998) Governance and Science; Market Like Modes of Managing Society and Producing Knowledge; International Social Science Journal, Number 155, PP69-77.

or parallel condition of development, not an outcome of it. In this respect, the new orthodoxy turns on its head to earlier claims of modernization theory that stable democracy presupposed prior economic and social development, as had been the case in much of the now developed world, where advancing industrialisation normally preceded democratization. Thus, the new orthodoxy assumes that there are no inherent tensions, conflicts or difficult trade offs over time between the various goals of development- such as growth, democracy, stability, equity and autonomy. It appears therefore to assume that no special preconditions are necessary for stable democracy and that can be instituted at almost any stage in the development process of any society, where it will enhance, not hinder, further development. Thus, four reasons has been highlighted for the emergence of this new orthodoxy.¹⁴

1. The experience of structural adjustment in the 1980s :

In the twenty years after the first oil crisis of 1973, economic progress in much of the developing world had been very poor. Western development institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and their major members attributed these poor records to the prevailing policies and strategies of development which had been pursued in the post-war era. The major flaw in these strategies they argued had been the degree of state involvement in economic affairs and the curtailment in free market and liberal trade regimes. Reducing the economic power and role of the state therefore became a central strategic objective. The means adopted by the West for achieving this in the 1980s was to develop a new breed of policy based loans, ' structural adjustment lending'.¹⁵ Structural adjustment is the generic term used to describe a package of measures which sought to persuade many developing countries to adopt during the 1980s in return for a new wave of loans. The aim of adjustment was to shatter the dominant post-war, state - led development paradigm and overcome the problems of development stagnation by promoting open and free competitive market economics, supervised by minimal state. The general pattern of structural adjustment programmes supported by the IMF and World Bank involved

14:- Adrian Leftwich (1993) Governance Democracy and Development in the Third World, Third World Quarterly, Volume. 14, Number 3, PP. 605-624.

15:-Adrain Leftwich(1995): On the Primarity of Politics in Development in Leftwich (ed) Democracy and Development, Polity Press, Cambridge.

two main stages, 'Stabilisation' and 'adjustment'. Stabilization meant immediate devaluation and often drastic public expenditure cuts. This was followed by adjustment which sought to transform economic structures and institutions through varying doses of deregulation, privatization, slimming down allegedly oversized public bureaucracies, reducing subsidies and encouraging realistic prices to emerge as a stimulus to greater efficiency and productivity, especially for export.¹⁶

2. The political influence of the neo-classical counter-revolution :

For the promotion of economic adjustment programmes in the Third World, and later Eastern Europe, signaled the political ascendancy of neo-liberal theory in Western economic theory and public policy from the late 1970s. Emphases on 'the market' deregulation, privatization, supply-side economics and encouragement of individuals and the enterprise culture were all part of the official Western theoretical and Ideological profile of the 1980s. This was reflected too in both the language and forms of economic conditionality associated with the adjustment programmes world-wide.

However, neoliberalism is not only an economic theory but has a strong political dimensions which involve both normative and functionalist theories of politics and the state. In normative terms the new liberalism celebrates individual economic and political freedom as representing the essence of the good life itself. Neoliberal position may be interpreted as radical in a number of important respects. Certainly, in its emphasis on individual rights and a minimal state, it is theoretically hostile to all forms of official discrimination on grounds of race, sex or creed. For it is central to neoliberalism that political and social discrimination imposes constraint on the rights and liberties of individuals, interferes with freedom of choice distorts the free play of markets and hence harms economic development.

But neo-liberalism also has a functional theory of politics which links its concern with markets and economic growth to its concern with

16:- Adrian Leftwich (1993) Governance Democracy and Development in the Third World, Third World Quarterly, Volume 14, Number 3, PP 605-624.

Also see Adrain Leftwich (1994) Governance the State and the Politics of Development, Development and Change, Volume 25, Number 2, PP 363-386.

democracy. For it assumes that democratic politics is also necessary for a thriving free market economic, and vice versa, for that two are inextricably implicated with each other. Neoliberal developmentalists claim that both poor records of economic growth and failures in adjustment programmes have often been the direct consequence of political factors such as authoritarian rule as deficient democratic practice arising from excessive state or political involvement in economy and society. It follows that neoliberal political theory holds that democratization in the context of a free economy would compel governments to be more accountable, less corrupt and hence more efficient developmentally, for they would be judged on their performance and thrown out if they did not deliver public goods effectively. For all these reasons, resurgent neoliberal theory has spurred Western governments to go on from promoting economic liberalization to insisting on political liberalization in the form of democratization.¹⁷

3.The Collapse of Communism :

The Collapse of Eastern European Communist regimes was an important strategic factor which helped to shape the emergence of Western interest in promoting good governance. This also meant that the West no longer feared losing third world allies or clients to communism in a competitive bipolar world. It also confirmed liberal economic theory that non- democratic communist states were unable to produce sustained economic growth and that their political structures prevented economic change. Corruption, economic mismanagement, inefficiency, stagnation and decline flowed directly from their lack of democratic and popular political participation. Political liberalization in the form of democratization was thus seen as a necessary condition for economic liberalization and growth.¹⁸

17:- Adrian Leftwich (1993) Governance Democracy and Development in the Third World, Third World Quarterly, Volume 14, Number 3, PP 605-624.

* Also see Adrain Leftwich (1994) Governance the State and The Politics of Development, Development and Change, Volume 25, Number 2, PP 363-386.

• Adrain Leftwich(1995) : On the Primary of Politics in Development in Leftwich (ed)Democracy and Development, Polity Press, Cambridge.

18:- Ibid

4. The impact of pro- democracy movements :-

The indigenous pro-democracy movements in Latin America , the Philippines and latterly Eastern Europe in the 1980s stimulated similar movements elsewhere. In Africa, between 1989-92, internal and external pressures prompted steps in the direction of democratization in a host of countries, from Nigeria to Zaire and Guinea to Angola, though seldom without profound resistance from the incumbent regimes, for example- has advanced in the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Bangladesh and even Nepal. The West has drawn legitimacy for pro-democracy policies from these movements around the world and can thus claim to be supporting genuinely popular and intellectual demands in those societies.¹⁹ Having thus traced its path of development now it becomes imperative to look into what has good governance come to mean in practice.

The first contemporary public appearance of the notion of good governance came in a 1989 World Bank report on Africa, which argued that “Underlying the litany of Africa’s development problem is a crises of governance”²⁰

World Bank defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources.²¹ and good governance, for the World Bank, was synonymous with ‘sound development management’ and four main dimensions or indicators of good governance put forward by the Bank were: public sector management, accountability, legal framework for development and transparency and information.²²

The World Bank report of 1992, in order to reverse the ascertained deficiencies, developed a positive strategy of good governance and thereby positively endowed the initially value free concept of governance with the adjective ‘good’, i.e. it implemented a normative concept. Thus the state institutions and structures, the decision-making process and the capabilities

19;- Ibid

20:- World Bank, Sub-Saharan Arica : From Crises to Sustainable Growth, Washington DC: The World Bank, 1989.

21:- World Bank 1992: Governance and Development, Washington, DC.

22.:- World Bank (1994) : Governance : The World Bank Experience: Washington DC.

relating to their implementation, as well as their relationship between the government – or the administration- and society, became the focus of attention. At the same time, the implication is that public institutions have an indispensable and constructive function in the emergence of an economically advantageous environment and is establishing the distribution of assets and benefits. Conversely, there is suggestions of the possibility of the welfare of the community being diminished by the more or less selfish action of an elite (phenomenon of corruption and rent seeking). The fact that from time immemorial societies have endeavored to form governments which serve the public interest, only at the same time to have to realize time and again that common property is being set aside for private purposes and power is being misdirected by force and despotism, is constantly stressed in the literature²³ on the other hand, the World Bank identified ‘ poor governance’ as – the failure to make separation between public and private, thereby facilitating the appropriation of public resource for private gains, failure to establish a framework of law and government rules impending functioning of markets; non- transparent decision making.²⁴

Thus the intellectual genealogy of the concept lies with the World Bank. The presence of a crises of governance²⁵ stemming from the questioning of the role of the state, in both advanced and developing world is undeniable. Yet, the ongoing intellectual debate on what is governance and how can it be measured, there is little consensus, for the concept of governance carries a variety of meaning often depending on the framework of analysis and the parameters of the study in which it is being employed.

For example, those who feel strongly that the role of the state in economic and social affairs has grown too encompassing and should be reduced, have been able to shift part of the discussion of public affairs from

23:- Christain Theobald (1999) : The World Bank : Good Governance and The New Institutional Economic ; Law and State; Volume 59, Number 60, PP 17-37.

24:- Niraja Gopal Jayal (1997) The Governance Agenda : Making Democratic Development Dispensible ; Economic & Political Weekly Volume 32, Number 8, PP 407-412

25:- See Neera Chandhoke (2003) Governance and The Pluralisation of The State: Implication for Democratic Citizenship ; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 38, Number 28, PP 2957-69.

the realm of 'governance'²⁶. The relative novelty of the term 'good governance'. The relative novelty of the term 'good governance' in international circles has also facilitated attempts to reform state programmes and bureaucracies in many countries through appealing to an apparently more technical and less political standard than that evoked by calls for the reform of the state²⁷. At the same time, many people who may have no strong interest in reducing the range of activities of national government have found the concept useful in dealing with problems that require joint action in areas where the state does not or cannot play a leading role. These are as are to be found at many levels of society, from the most local to the supra-national. Considering problems of 'governance' is relevant in strengthening civic cultures promoting voluntary action and thus improving the societal basis of democracy. It is also increasingly important in considering how the international community can construct the institutions required to promote order and justice in the context of globalization²⁸.

Again, western aid agencies and international organizations have conceptualised 'governance' in diverse ways- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines it as- governance is viewed as the exercise of political economic and administrative authority in the management of a countries affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their objectives and mediate their differences.²⁹

Organization for economic cooperation and Development (OECD) states that – The concept of governance denotes the use of political authority and exercise of control; in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development. This broad definition encompassing the role of public authorities in establishing the environment in which economic operators function and in determining the distribution of benefits, as well as the nature of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled³⁰.

26:- Cynthia Hewitt de Alcantara (1998) Uses and Abuses of The Concept of Governance; International Social Science Journal; Number 155; PP 105-113.

27:- Ibid

28:- Ibid

29:- Planning Commission : Government of India, Report 2002.

30:- Ibid

Again there are six uses of governance as stipulated by R.A.W. Rhodes³¹ :

1. As a minimal state – This definition redefines the extent and form of public intervention and the use of markets and quasi – markets to deliver “public services”. The size of government was reduced by privatization and cuts in civil services, thus the ideological preference for less government was stated loudly and often.

2. Government and corporate governance:

It recommends openness or disclosure of information integration or straightforward dealing and completeness , accountability or holding individuals responsible for their action by a clear allocation of responsibilities and clearly defined roles reminding us that private sector management practice has an important influence on the public sector .

3. The New Public Management-as having two meanings managerialism and new institutional economics. Managerialism refers to introduction of private sector management methods to public sector. It stresses- hands on professional management, explicit standards and measures of performance; managing by results, value for money; and more recently closeness to customers. While, New Institutional economic refers to – introducing incentive structures (such as market competition) into public service provision. It stresses on- disaggregate bureaucracies, greater competition through contracting out and quasi- markets; and consumer choice.

4. Governance as ‘ good governance’ as defined by the World Bank as the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs and ‘ good governance’ involving an efficient public service an independent judiciary, legal framework to enforce contracts, accountable administration of public funds, independent public auditor, responsible to representative legislature, respect for law and human rights at all levels of government and pluralistic institutional structure and a free press.

5. Socio- Cybernetic system- Governance seen as pattern or structure that emerges in a socio-political system as “ Common” results or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all Involved actors. This patterns

31:-R.A.W. Rhodes (1996) : The New Governance without Government, Political Studies; Volume XL IV; Number 4, PP 652-667.

cannot be reduced to one actor or group of actors in particular. In other words, policy outcomes are not the product of actions by central government. The center may pass a law but subsequently it interacts with local government, health authorities, the voluntary sector, private sector, in turn they interact with one another, all actors in policy area need one another, each contributing relevant knowledge or other resources. Central government is no longer supreme. We live in 'Centreless society', in the policy center state characterized by multiple – centers.³²

6. As self-organizing networks- Inter-organizational linkages are a defining characteristics of service delivery and Rhodes uses this term network to describe the several interdependent actors involved in delivering services. Governance is about managing networks. Networks are a widespread form of social co-ordination and managing inter-organizational links is just as important for private sector management. So networks are an alternative to, not a hybrid of market and hierarchies and they span boundaries of the public, private and voluntary sectors. This form of government highlights reputation, trust, reciprocity and mutual interdependence. They are self-organising i.e. are autonomous and self-governing. This governance refers to self-organizing inter-organizational networks.

After studying the various definitions, meanings and uses put forward by academicians, intellectuals and policy makers it now becomes useful to look into some of the major works done by the scholars at the World Bank who have through their work tried to translate the concept of governance into some degree of measurability. They aimed at developing comparable indices of governance across a range of countries which were reflected in the two major works entitled as "Aggregating Governance Indicators³³" and "Governance Matters³⁴".

The paper entitled 'Governance Matters', defines governance as the traditions and institutions that determine how authority is exercised in a particular country. This includes the processes by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced. The capacity of the government to manage resources, formulate, implement and enforce sound

32:- Jan Kooiman(1994) Modern Governance: New Governmental Society Interaction, Sage Publication.

33:- Daniel Kaufman, Aart Kraay and Pablozoido – Lobation (1999) Aggregating Governance Indicators: Policy Research Working Paper 2195, Washington.

34:- Daniel Kaufman, Aart Kraay and Pablozoido – Lobation (2000) Governance Matter: Policy Research Working Paper 2196, Washington.

policies and regulations. To aggregate governance indicators according to this definition across a large no of countries, it focused on six indicators classified into 3 clusters : voice and accountability, political instability and violence, government effectiveness, regulatory budget, rule of law etc.

This paper presents the dataset derived from 13 different organizations covering 178 countries and demonstrates a co-relation between each of these six aggregate governance indicators and development outcome. The source of data for these indicators are a poll of experts and cross – country survey of residents carried out by international organization and NGOs.

The second paper entitled ‘ Aggregating Governance Indicators’, continues the focus on rule of law, government effectiveness and corruption and utilizes 31 different indicators from the data set forth in the first paper to aggregate the indicators for countries.

The exercise conducted by these two papers is massive and is first of its kind. These studies not only attempt to develop tools for cross- country comparisons for the six dimensions of governance, but also provide perhaps the only source of data for a time series analysis for the same set of countries.

Another research monograph written by a team from the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD),³⁵ the World Bank and the London School of Economic and Political Science (LES) has tackled the limited question whether’ corruption is fundamentally a problem of governance’³⁶. It contends that corruption thrives when the state is too weak to control its own functionaries, protect property and contract rights and provide for institutions that underpin an effective rule of law. This study depends on a 1999 Business Environment and Enterprise Survey (BEEPS) conducted in 21 transition countries of Eastern Europe and central Asia by the World Bank for its primary dataset for studying the level of governance in these countries. The study construes the lack of corruption and a business environment conducive to private enterprise as good governance.

35:- Joel’S Hellman, Geraint Janes and Daniel Kaufmann (2000) *Seize The State Seize The Day: State Capture Corruption and Influence in Transition*; World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2444, Washington, World Bank /EBRD.

36:- Joel’S Hellman , Geraint Janes, Daniel Kaufmann and Mark Schankerman (2000) *Measuring Governance Corruption , and State Capture: How Firms and Bureaucrats Shape the Business Environment in Transition Economic*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2312, Washington

Thus the above discussed studies reveal that the World Bank's efforts to measure the level of governance within and across countries is confined to central Asia and Eastern Europe. No concerted effort has been made on its part to study or measure the level of governance in South Asia or South East Asian countries.

Moreover, the indicators adopted by such studies have been extremely limited. They should be derived from an understanding of the needs, priorities and consensual choices of the people at a given time and situation and not prescribe by agencies such as World Bank. This means that research to identify indicators of governance must begin by first examining the needs and challengers facing a state, its social fabric and institutional structure and cannot be derived from abstract notions of what is 'good' for it.

A significant problem with the existing studies attempting to measure governance is the fact that they ignore that governance is a concept which has a significant political and context specific context. Policy initiatives without attention to such political context are often meaningless. Such economic essentialism in these studies is rooted in the conceptual understanding of governance of the World Bank / UNDP/ international donor agencies, which are constrained to translate political issues into economic trends due to its mandate restrictions³⁷ Possibly the most significant critique of this kind has been developed by Adrian Leftwich, over several important essays (1993, 1994,1995). Leftwich argues that what matters for development is not the system of government, but the type of state, irrespective of whether it is democratic or not. It is in this sense that development is political rather than administrative or managerial as the World Bank and IMF assume it to be. This is also the reason why the success and failure of structural adjustment programme has varied across different countries.

-----Good governance and democracy are not mere components which can be inserted into any society at any point in its development like a sprocket or valve. On the contrary both good governance and democracy depend crucially on the character and capacity of a state which, alone, can institute and insist on it. And the capacity of a state to deliver good governance and protect democracy is in turn a function of its politics and its developmental

37:- Ali Kazancigil (1998) Governance and Science: Market Like Modes of Managing Society and Producing Knowledge; International Social Science Journal, Number 155, PP 69-77.

determination..... The only social process that can both institute and sustain both good governance and democracy is the process we know as politics which was defined as consisting of all the processes of conflict, cooperation and negotiation involved in the use, production and distribution of resources.³⁸

Thus, this calls for an alternative conceptualisations of the concept of governance. In recent years the change in the discipline of Development Economics and a redefinition of relationship between state and market- have introduced a fresh thinking on the concept of governance, different from that of the World Bank discussed above.

Sen and Dreze (1995)³⁹ argue that economic development should not be equated with expansion of the gross national product alone, and that it is necessary to take note of non-economic factors and their impact on enhancement of capabilities that can produce human capital vital for development. 'Social Variables' particularly education and health are posited as important ' promoting factors in the expansion of human capability defined as the alternative combination that a person can choose from, and which provide the real freedoms of citizens. Of intrinsic importance in themselves they are also described as instrumental in promoting employment, expansion of income, capabilities and in case of disadvantaged groups can help increase their ability to withstand oppression, organize politically and achieve empowerment. Poverty thus emerges as a matter of capability deprivation due to lack of education, health care and resulting lack of opportunities in life, and therefore governance policies and institutional functioning must be judged by the impact they have on the capabilities of individuals.

On the debate on the competing virtues of the state and market in development, Sen and Derze argue that both are context – dependent i.e. it depends on the kind of state and the nature of the market, which determine their ability to introduce change, second they are thoroughly interdependent upon each other : markets require legal rules, regulations and security, and in many cases their effective performance has been due to the state initiating and facilitating growth; similarly states require markets for production and

38:- Adrain Leftwich(1995) : On the Primary of Politics in Development in Leftwich (ed)Democracy and Development, Polity Press, Cambridge.

39:- Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen (1995) , Economic Development and Social Opportunity, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

transaction of goods and services. It is precisely here, Sen and Dreze argue that governance plays a significant role and makes a difference. Distinguishing between market excluding and market complementary policy interventions they plead at the same time both for more market institutions and for going more beyond the market. The state has a negative and positive role; the former consists of preventing bad developments such as monopolistic arguments, while the latter consists of supporting constructively the efforts of the citizens to help themselves such as arranging public education, re-distribution of land or protecting the interests of disadvantaged groups, actual systems they argue, have a mix of both. Thus, for governance combining the functioning of market and government can be critically important, market complementary interventions can have favorable effects in a way that neither market excluding intervention, nor non-intervention can achieve.

The Human Development Perspective and Governance

Parallel to this shift in thinking on development has been the emergence of the Human Development Perspective (HDP) out of the basic needs Concept first used by Mahbsb ul Haq and Paul Streeten⁴⁰ when working with the world bank. Mahbunb ul Haq Human Development centre states it as -- Human governance is governance dedicated to securing human development. It must enable the state, civil society and the private sector to help build capacities, which will meet the basic needs of all people, particularly women, children and the poor. It requires effective participation of people in state, civil society and private sector activities that are conducive to human development.

Developed by Haq some central aspects of this perspective are. First, rather than universal principles of governance it puts specific choices and conditions of people at the centre of all attempts at policy formulation and development. The state is expected to take cognisance of this aspect in all policies of governance. Second, while the neoliberal school focuses on economic growth and expansion of only one choice – income, the HD school of thinking embraces the enlargement of all human choices – economic, social, cultural and political. It believes equality, sustainability, productivity and empowerment are essential components of human development that competitive market forces cannot provide, which require active policy

40:- Mahbub ul Haq (1999) Reflections on Human Development, Oxford University Press Oxford.

intervention. Third, central to this perspective is the Human Development Index (HDI); a composite index which measures the basic concept of living, to be gainfully employed, to breathe clean air, to be free etc. many of which cannot be quantified. It is an alternative to conventional economic measures of growth that take into consideration the GNP and reflect market prices in monetary terms, but not the distribution of growth. It comprises of three components- the GDP per head calculated at the real purchasing power ; literacy rates and since 1991 the mean years of schooling ; and life expectancy at birth. The index hides many differences and can be disegregated by region, sex, and even ethnic groups, revealing discrepancies that the total figures may conceal. A basic advantage would be that all development plans begin not with a concern for production, and figures for the total production, but would reflect a 'human balance sheet.' Finally, the HDP puts the state at the heart of its governance strategy for the developing countries. It argues that markets alone cannot deliver balanced patterns of growth and there has to be a judicious balance of the state and market. The state is not meant to replace markets but has a major role in improving the access of people to market opportunities. Public policy is the tool to ensure a more equitable pattern of growth, if necessary through redistribution of income and assets, because there is no automatic link between economic growth and human progress, it has to be constructed through active, conscious and deliberate public policy, expansion of income can be uneven in a society preventing large sections of the population from benefiting from the fruits of development. Therefore, the most pertinent governance issue concern the exact process through which growth translates into human development under different development conditions.

Governance means managing the affairs of the public by maintaining law and order, resolving conflict, rendering services according to the established rules and procedures by using power. Good governance according to the World Bank means accountability, legitimacy, efficiency, transparency, no executive excesses, as well as protection of rights of minoritie groups like women, tribals etc. Since, 1990's the idea of governments has gained importance, and good governance in emphasized to achieve economic reforms. Also, international agencies like World Bank, UNDP, OECD, etc. gave aid to these countries where basic features of good governance were found , stating that success of economic reforms depend on good governance as they create a positive environment for economic reforms to give effective outcome. This became more relevant due to unsuccessful economic reforms in Latin American and African Countries. In

recent times the World Bank, too has been advocating localisation as its major thrust to achieve development. This is why good governance is very important in India where economic reforms are being implemented. States in India are both powerful economic actors and also carry much of the onus of development. Economic reforms can be meaningful when accompanied with societal reforms. In other words, reforms have to encompass political, social and economic sphere to become meaningful.

Against this background the present thesis attempts to understand the nature and pattern of governance adopted in Madhya Pradesh by Digvijay Singh when the Congress was in power throughout the 1990s. According to Digvijay Singh, the essence of reform is the enlightenment of the concept of freedom. Any reform should enlarge opportunities for all, not for a select few⁴¹. If a reform cannot provide a people with better education, health care, and job opportunities, it will belie its very name. For this, what is needed is to make democracy full-blooded through revitalising structures of participation⁴². Participation implied that people are educated, mobilized and organised to participate in planning, implementing, monitoring of developmental programmes, policies and projects. Central idea of participation implied participation by all, including the minorities and weaker sections thus empowering them, so that they can voice their opinion in public policy discussions that effect their lives. Thus reducing poverty and enhancing equality among all groups⁴³. Greater participation again could be best achieved through the Institution of panchayati Raj which means devolution of power from central government to local bodies. Bottom-up approach to planning is essential to promote people's participation meaning people deciding their own lives and development⁴⁴. The first, state reforms agenda, therefore, according to Digvijay Singh was decentralization. His agenda being of "People First"⁴⁵ which was again seen in his pronouncement that his government would promote 'People Centric' development policy through grass root democratization decentralized governance and

41: Digvijay Singh (2001) : Beginning of a Human Development Movement in India, Radical Humanist, Volume 64, Number 11, PP 12-14.

42: Ibid

43:- P.K. Bajpai (1998) People's Participation in Development: A Critical Analysis in S.P. Srivastava (ed). The Development Debate: A Critical Perspective: Rawat Publishers, Jaipur.

44 :S.Sam Roy (2001) Restructuring of Panchayati Raj Institution for People Central Planning: Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Sciences: Volume 6, Number 2, PP 108-124.

45: Digvijay Singh (2001) : Beginning of a Human Development Movement in India, Radical Humanist, Volume 64, Number 11, PP 12-14.

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community participation⁴⁶. The chronology of panchayat legislation in present Madhya Pradesh includes : Madhya Pradesh panchayat Act. 1962, Panchayat Act. 1981, Panchayat Act. 1990, and finally the Panchayati Raj Act. 1993. All the Panchayat Acts of Madhya Pradesh have had provision for a three-tier panchayat structure with a gram panchayat, for a village or a group of villages, a Janpad Panchayat at the block level and a Zila Panchayat at the district level⁴⁷. Moreover, the enactment of the constitutional 73rd Amendment Bill, 1992 has paved the way for the creation of statutory institutional structures for realizing the goals of self-governance under the panchayati Raj system⁴⁸. Thus, the new panchayat under the 73rd Amendment Act, provided for reservations for lower castes and women and more powers over local administration and development so that they could play a seminal role⁴⁹. The Panchayat in Madhya Pradesh in some district, in collaboration with the NGO's or in some areas alone, have taken up primary education and health as their focus areas. The state government has empowered the panchayats to set up new schools in response to community demand. Appoint and dismiss teachers and locate land for the schools. Education committee comprising Janpad Panchayat and district panchayat members over see all matters of school education, such as location of new schools, staffing and training of teachers. The gram panchayats also managed all schools set up under Education Guarantee Scheme⁵⁰. Thus its main goal was to break the control of the locally dominant landowning castes over the panchayat and empower the village community as a whole, giving the lower castes a chance to play a role decision-making⁵¹. As Digvijay Singh himself remarked that he did not want

46:- CII News (2001) Digvijay Singh Unveils Madhya Pradesh New State Economic Development Policy at The India Economic Summit.

<http://www.ciionline.org/news.pressret/2001/dec/3dec07.htm>

47: Status of Panchayati Raj in The States and Union Territories of India (2000) Institute of Social Sciences: Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

48: Planning Commission Report, 2002

49: Amitabh Behar (2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy: Economic & Political Weekly Volume 36, Number 10, PP 123-126.

50 : L.C. Jain (2000) Unbundling of the State; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 35, Number 41, PP 3647-3652.

51: Amitabh Behar (2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy: Economic & Political Weekly : Volume 36, Number 10, PP 123-126.

“ Panchayati Raj to become Sarpanch Raj.⁵²” It has been variously described as an attempt to move from representative to direct democracy at the grass roots⁵³ and as a bold experiment in local self government which if successful would introduce a new era of governance.⁵⁴

Hypothesis:-

1. The onset of liberalization and globalisation in the 1990s meant the state yielding to the market and the civil society in many areas where it, so far, had a direct but distortionary and inefficient presence. This retreat of state from economic activities would particularly affect the weaker sections who rely on the state for its welfare as retreat of state would mean drastic public expenditure cuts, privatization, slimming oversized public bureaucracies, reducing subsidies and encouraging realistic prices to encourage greater efficiency and productivity. Thus this required the role of the state to be conceptually repositioned stating that state can neither be a completely minimalist role nor an entirely proactive one. It has to be directed at building personal capabilities and community capacities for human development through the use of all the means at its command.
2. Examination of the four indicators shows that although policies such as Bhopal Document, report on Task Force and the mission approach were well conceived but their implementation was poor thus leading to no substantial improvement in condition of the weaker sections.

Chapterisation :-

The first chapter examines the Congress model in Madhya Pradesh from the 1990's under Digvijay Singh which provided for a more interventionist role to the state describing it as “ developmental activism”. The needs of the weaker sections were given a central place in development plans and state intervention was meant for at least three purposes: protection of weaker sections, economic upliftment through provision of land and state sponsored programmes based on diversity and democratisation, education in order to provide social opportunity. The chapter also examines the ongoing intellectual debate on what is governance, how can it be measured and the

52: James Manor(2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy: Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 36, Number 9, PP 715-826.

53: Ibid

54: Amitabh Behar (2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy: Economic & Political Weekly: Volume 36, Number 10, PP 123-126.

variety of meanings it carries depending on the framework of analysis and the parameters of the study in which it is being employed.

Chapter two provides the overall background of the state of Madhya Pradesh, its demography, the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes population, their socio-economic status making it one of the backward states in India in terms of a considerable backlog in areas like literacy, basic education, levels of nutrition, basic health and poverty all these aspects concerning human development.

Chapter three studies the various education and health programmes initiated by the state together with people participation especially at local levels. While in some districts panchayats in collaboration with the NGO's or in some areas alone have also taken up primary education and health as their focus areas.

Chapter four deals with the empowerment of the weaker sections through the distribution of land among them and through the new panchayats under the 73rd Amendment Act, providing with them reservation and more powers over local administration. Thus, its main goal being to break the control of the locally dominant landowning castes over the panchayat and empower the village community as a whole, giving the lower castes a chance to play a role in decision making.

The fifth chapter concludes with the analysis of the four indicators stating that although the Bhopal Document, report on Task Force and mission approach were well conceived but their implementation was poor leading to no substantial improvement in the conditions of the weaker sections.

Chapter 2

SOCIAL – ECONOMIC CONDITION OF SCHEDULED CASTE AND TRIBES IN MADHYA PRADESH: A BACKGROUND

This chapter provides a background to the analysis of developmental programmes for weaker sections in Madhya Pradesh. It enables us to examine the impact of these programmes on the weaker sections. Historically the question of weaker section in society, i.e., removal of discrimination, socio-economic improvement and share in political power, has occupied center stage in Indian politics. Since the colonial period political leaders have put forward different paths for the upliftment of the weaker sections hoping to mobilize them and obtain their support. In recent years the political remobilization of weaker sections has emerged as one of the most significant factors affecting politics in the Indian States. All political parties are attempting to gain the support of these social groups which in some states have emerged as a “third force”¹ that holds the electoral balance between all – Indian parties in both assembly and national elections.

The social and economic conditions of the people belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes had been the concern of political and social movements even before Independence. The mainstream political and social movements were profoundly influenced by the Gandhian approach of raising the masses of people from poverty and degradation, while Babasheb Ambedkar emphasized the imperative need to transform the economic and social status of the poorest of the poor, particularly the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. As the chairman of the Drafting Committee, he was actually aware of the iniquitous forces embedded in the social systems, economic institutions and political organizations in India in relation to the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society and therefore, considered it necessary to provide for specific corrective measures and mandates in the constitution in their favour. Dr. Ambedkar eloquently expressed that political democracy could not last unless there lies at the base

1:- Yugendra Yadav (1999); Electoral Politics in The Times of Change: India's Third Electoral System, 1989-99; Economic & Political Weekly; Volume 34, Number 35; PP 2393-2399.

of its social democracy which means a way of life that recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. While stating this he emphasized that in Indian society what was lacking was equality and fraternity. Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood which gives unity and solidarity to social life.²

As per the growth from 1991 - 2001 census, (+) 21.34% persons inhabited India, that is, males (+) 20.93%, females (+) 21.79%. of which the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (SC/ST) comprised 35.34 percent of country tribal population of Madhya Pradesh.³ Eight States namely Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka account for more than 75 per cent of the total scheduled castes population of the nation.⁴ While six states- Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan- account for about 75 per cent of the total tribal population.⁵

The scheduled castes live mostly in rural areas, with only about 14 per cent of them found living in urban agglomerations. While some of them are small and marginal farmers, most of the scheduled castes families in rural areas work largely as agricultural labour. Almost all primary worker in the leather industry come from scheduled castes. Fishermen belonging to scheduled castes are found in the eastern region of the country. There are a large concentration of weavers belonging to scheduled castes in Western India. In the urban areas, a large proportion of unorganized workers are from the scheduled castes. The scavengers and sweepers constitute one of the most vulnerable sections among the scheduled castes. The scheduled castes suffer from the inhuman practice of untouchability, which is the most extreme form of the denial of human dignity and social oppression. The proportion of the scheduled castes among the poverty groups is high and they are among the poorest of those below the poverty line. The scheduled tribes, on the other hand, were identified on the basis of certain well defined criteria including the traditional homelands of a definite geographical area,

2:- S.R.Sankaran(2000): Welfare of Scheduled Sastes and Scheduled Tribes in Independence India- An Overview of State Policies and Programmes; Journal of Rural Development; Volume 19; Number 4; PP 507-533.

3:- Census of India 2001: Madhya Pradesh, Series 24, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001

4:- S.R.Sankaran(2000); Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Independence India- An Overview of State Policies and Programmes; Journal of Rural Development; Volume 19; Number 4; PP 507-533.

5:- Ibid

distinctive culture including shyness of contact, occupational traits such as pre-agricultural modes of cultivation and general lack of development. Two-third of the bonded labourers identified in the country are from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes.⁶

Thus a variety of initiatives have been undertaken by the state for the socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes. they include an array of constitutional commitments and the enactment of a number of special legislations such as, reservations in public employment and in elected representative bodies, planned development programmes, budgetary allocations and in general, according of high priority in all the government activities. The series of land reform legislations, the land allotment rules and the myriad developmental programmes known as poverty alleviation programmes, the scheme of reservations not only in public services but in various other fields including the allotment of land and housing- all these constitute positive measures intended to secure livelihood opportunities and enhance the well being of these sections of the community. The most important step was the reservation in public services and reservation in educational facilities along with the introduction of scholarships for studies. Reservation in public services as well as the sanction of post matric scholarship for the scheduled castes was introduced as far back as in the year 1943 and these were strengthened, enlarged and continued after Independence⁷.

While addressing the SC/ST development questions, one must first and foremost find out as to where the SC/ST stand today in India's economic life and for this one must prepare the economic profile of the community⁸. India is an Agrarian Economy with majority as its people still depending on agriculture for sustenance. Indian economy can be understood by its: primary sector, (mainly agriculture); secondary sector,(Manufacturing); and tertiary sector (mainly services..... govt. jobs, hotel industry, transport, entertainment etc.) According to the Bhopal Document⁹ there are several indices of development and they become more crucial if a society is made up of diverse social categories. If in an economy, the expansion of

6:- Ibid

7:- Ibid

8 :- The Bhopal Document : Charting a New Course for Dalits for the 21st Century; 2002;
Government. of Madhaya Pradesh.

9:- Ibid

manufacturing and service sector is faster, that would be indicative of the faster rate of growth. But if in a given economy, a particular social category is slow or faster, in shifting away from agriculture sector to other two sectors, that would be indicative of slow or faster rate growth of that particular category. For instance, if a high proportion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes main workforce has moved away from the agriculture sector to the other two, that would mean that the community is on a high path of economic progress. However, amongst all the three sectors, those who are engaged in the latter two, on an average, are considered more advantageous than those in agriculture. Those in the service sector are considered in the best category in terms of income job security, living standards and liberal space.

Thus, according to the Bhopal Document, out of every 100 Scheduled Castes main workers in primary sector, 63.54 and out of every 100 Scheduled Tribes main workers in primary sector, 36.32 were landless agriculture labourers. But out of every 100 non- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes main workers in primary sector, only 31.62 are landless agricultural labourers. Thus showing that a majority of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes (52.65 SC/STs, both combined) in the primary sector have no agricultural land of their own, and derive their sustenance by selling their labour.

An overall economic sketch of the community reveals that out of every 100 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes in India, only about 51 per cent of them can claim to be eating at least two meals a day, who can afford to send their children to schools, who enjoy a bit of independence and who can exercise their franchise as per their conscience. In these 51 per cent, not all are government servants or business people. In fact, 70 per cent are cultivators, most with small and marginal landholdings, and another 7.85 per cent are factory workers, whose average per month earnings may be less than Rs.2000/-. And the number still includes cobblers or sweepers who may live on their own but suffer from occupational indignities. These are not well to- do Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes, although the list includes a few Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes who are MPs/MLAs/IAS or other group-I offices; but what about the rest 49 per cent Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes who, in all probability, do not get two-meals a day, can not afford schooling of their children, depend totally on already collapsing government. health services, always live under threat and can not exercise the right to vote as per their choice? And it is this section which faces atrocities,

human rights abuses and, in other words, lives in sub-human conditions¹⁰.

In almost all Dalit movement, the issue of reservations has been an overriding phenomenon and is seen as the most decisive tool of progress. Apart from reservations in government jobs and in legislature, and some support in education in the form of scholarships and free slips, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes have not got anything worth the mention from the state or the society. The schemes such as poverty alleviation or empowering the community through micro-loans such as cow, goat, pig-rearing etc. or opening small road-side shops did not result in anything substantial. Thus, the total reliance on reservations as a tool of progress continued to shape the consciousness of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes masses. The excess belief in reservation is propelled from the fact that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes quota in most departments of state remains unfulfilled. This phenomenon further re-enforced the belief that since the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes quota remains unfulfilled, the Dalits progress too remains halted.¹¹

On the education front, it is quite disheartening to note that, even today, dalit men and women are at the bottom of the educational pyramid, despite the repeated claims and counter claims of the government and the political establishment on their efforts to uplift this disadvantaged group. If we look into the sphere of higher education, there is no doubt, a considerable improvement has been made in terms of promoting diversity in administration after the introduction of reservation policy. However, this is not adequate in view of the proportion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes population still outside the fold of higher education. For instance, the percentage of share of scheduled castes students in higher education is only 7.7 percent and that of scheduled tribes is 2.33 percent of the total enrolment in 1996-97. This is negligible in terms of the expected levels of enrolment of dalits in higher educational institutions. Further, there has been a far lesser participation of dalits in prestigious subjects/courses of study which are in demand for high salaried jobs. In 1996-1997, a majority of dalit students

10:- Ibid

11:- Ibid

who enrolled themselves in the Arts Subjects were (56.5 per cent among SCs and 77.7 per cent among STs.), followed by Science (13.3 per cent among SCs and 8.7 per cent among STs) and Commerce (13.2 per cent among SCs and 9.4 per cent among STs) at the undergraduate level. The enrolments at the post-graduate levels also show similar signs. The proportion of dalits in the professional stream is very low – 79 per cent among Scheduled Castes and 2.1 per cent among Scheduled tribes are in professional courses like engineering and medicine taken together. Therefore, the share of dalits in those courses that are market-friendly are from satisfactory. The emerging areas of software, bio-technology, bio-informatics, etc. are almost beyond the reach of dalits. Again the proportion of dalits in the IITs is appalling. The shortfall in admission ranges from 45.65 per cent in the case of scheduled castes and 87.92 per cent in the case of scheduled tribes in almost all the IITs in 1994-95. This reveals a serious dilemma of equality versus excellence and merit versus reservations that prevails in the contemporary society and the education system¹².

So far as diversity in workforce is concerned, the gap between the representation of dalit and other castes is so wide that only a state policy can remedy it at least to a certain extent. The reservation policy is implemented, to a large extent, in recruitment made by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Even the state run public sector autonomous bodies do not comply with constitutional directives. Take for instances the representation of dalit in teaching positions in central universities, which are less vulnerable to regional politics and are also reputed for maintaining good academic standards. In 1993-94, the percentage of Schedule Caste faculty was 8.30 in university of Hyderabad, 3.70 in Jawaharlal Nehru University, and 1.30 in Benares Hindu University. Similarly, the percentage of Schedule Tribes faculty in these three university were 0, 3.70 and 0 per cent respectively. This is the state of employment of dalits in the public sector.

12:- S.Srinivasa Rao (2002) Dalits in Education and Workforce Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 37, Number 29, PP 2998-3000.

Again, the economy in recent years has emerged as a service oriented economy- consisting of sectors like trade, commerce, transport, construction, communications, banking, insurance, public administration and all professional services- which contributes more than half of the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The representation of dalits in the workforce of these emerging sectors is virtually non-existent. Thus, if there were no prospects for a government job as also private sector, where would the large chunk of disadvantaged go?¹³

According to the report of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes, of the total group A services, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes comprise 13.04 per cent, and in group B services, they comprise 15.35 per cent. Similarly, in the central public service enterprises, for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes account for 8.41% and 2.27% respectively in group A- category. In Public Sector banks, they comprise 11.11% and 3.65% respectively in officers grade. In grade C in central government services, they together comprise 21.84%¹⁴. Therefore, it is a proven fact that education has been the most powerful and reliable tool of Dalit empowerment. But, the scenario has changed. Matriculation or plus-2 education had relevance till early 1980s. Also graduation or Post-graduation in humanities or social sciences in general had relevance till 1990s. Now, unless the Dalits make a formidable foray into areas of pure sciences, management, technologies and in particular the emerging newer branches of IT, they cannot find a respectable place in the evolving global economy.¹⁵

This section looks at the status of the weaker sections in Madhya Pradesh and it also becomes imperative to look at its geography. Although, being constituted as a linguistically uniform entity, in geographical terms, Madhya Pradesh can be divided into Malwa Plateau, VindhyaChal and Satpura ranges, the Sone – Narmada drainage region, the Bastar plateau and Chhattisgarh Plains, there is a clear division in terms of agriculture between the rice growing Chhattisgarh belt (which survives largely on rain-fed irrigation and is therefore chronically drought - prone) and the wheat growing Malwa and Gondwana regions.¹⁶

13:- Ibid

14:- The Bhopal Document : Charting a new course for Dalits for the 21st century; 2002; Government. of Madhya Pradesh.

15:- Ibid

16:- N.C. Saxena (2002) Forests and the People : Policy Issues in Madhya Pradesh in Parveen K. Jha (ed), Land Reforms in India: Issues of Equity in Rural Madhya Pradesh, Sage Publication.

In 1947, Madhya Pradesh was an amalgamation of the pre-independence central province (whence the name), and the principalities of the Chhattisgarh feudatory states, Surguja, Raigrah, and Baster. Coterminous with this unit were the category "B" states of Madhya Bharat (comprising mainly of the Gwalior and Indore kingdoms, their feudatories and states of the central India Agency), the category "C" state of the Vindhya Pradesh and the chief commissioner's province of Bhopal. In the reorganization of state in 1956, these were merged and the Sironj tehsil transferred from Rajasthan. The Marathi speaking districts of Nagpur, Wardha, Chanda, Bhandara, Akola, Amaravati, Yeotmal and Dhule were transferred to what is now Maharashtra. Nimar was divided into East Nimar (Khandwa) and West Nimar (Khargone). On November 1st 1956, the state of Madhya Pradesh with its current boundaries was reconstituted, and the state government assumed office under the chief ministership of Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla. Originally, the state comprised 43 districts. In 1972, Bhopal and Rajnandgaon districts were created (increasing the number of districts to 45)

Taking cultural, historical factors into consideration, Madhya Pradesh can be seen as having not only one history but many histories: of those of the Malwa people, of the Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bastar and Gond regions. Politically the state is an amalgam of Madhya Bharat, Mahakoshal and Bhopal, Vindhya Pradesh, the Chhattisgarh states, Bastar, and the Gond principalities.¹⁷

In geographical terms, Madhya Pradesh can be divided into the Malwa Plateau (Malwa is rich farmers territory with high rates of agricultural production. The Western and Southern regions of the state have substantial tribal population especially the tribal belt of Jhabua, which still retains some of its forest cover and practices primitive agriculture. The adivasis have been in the clutches of the forest department for years because all their needs have been linked to the forest and they are ignorant of their legal rights.¹⁸ Thus commercial exploitations is rife and the depletion of natural resources has led to migration of labours. Struggle here are largely grouped around forest issues, displacement and identity.¹⁹

17:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

18:-Dunu Roy (2002) Land Reforms People's Movements and Protests in " Land Reforms in India; Issues of Equity in Rural Madhya Pradesh, (ed) by Praveen K. Jha , Sage Publication.

19:- Ashutosh Kumar (2003) State Electoral Politics Working for the Larger Picture; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 38, Number 30, PP 3145-3147.

The Vindhya and Satpura Ranges and the Sone-Narmada drainage region:- Mahakoshal situated north of the Narmada included Sagar and Damoh and is administratively centred in Jabalpur. While the region south of the Narmada has been generally referred to as Madhya Bharat. The lands are fertile and were targeted by the colonial rule for annexation and expansion of the wheat-growing areas. The Vindhya Pradesh, on the other hand, was constituted in 1948 with the merger, of 35% princely states in the region, known as Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand located on the Vindhya plateau.²⁰ They still have elements of feudalism with considerable caste oppression of dalits and economic subordination. However, agricultural production is not very high which means that the upper castes look for opportunities away from agriculture.²¹

The Bastar Plateau :-

This district of Madhya Pradesh alone, has an area larger than the area of the entire state of Kerala. It is a tribal dominated area with the maximum density of forests. Its economy largely depends on trading of richly available forest produce, also a major source of livelihood of tribal population. About 750 types of Minor Forest Produce are found in its dense forests. It has been called the island of sal forest. However, one of the most backward areas, Abujhmar, which literally means 'unknown Hills', is also in Bastar. It is a geographically unapproachable tribal region, so the overall question of physical accessibility which is vital for delivery of health and family planning services, has been largely overlooked by our planners and policy makers²².

Finally, the Chhattisgarh Plains :

Chhattisgarh is the region of the upper basin of the Mahanadi river as it flows Westwards of the Vindhyas towards the Eastern ghats before descending on to the Coastal flood plains. The word "Chhattisgarh" means the land of 36 forts. The word may also be a corruption of Chedi's garh, a reference to the Chedi Kings who once ruled over the area.²³ It is a region consisting of 7 districts, namely, Bilaspur, Raipur, Durg, Rajnandgaon,

20:- Dunu Roy (2002) Land Reforms People's Movements and Protects in " Land Reforms in India; Issues of Equity in Rural Madhya Pradesh, (ed) by Praveen K. Jha ; Sage Publication.

21:- Ashutosh Kumar (2003) State Electoral Politics Working for the Larger Picture; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 38, Number 30, PP 3145-3147.

22:- Ashish Bose (1994) Demographic Zone in India B.R. Publishing Corporation.

23:- Dunu Roy (2002) Land Reforms People's Movements and Protects in " Land Reforms in India; Issues of Equity in Rural Madhya Pradesh, (ed) by Praveen K. Jha , Sage Publication.

Raigash , Sarguja and Bastar. According to 1991 census, its population was 1.76 crore. More than 80 % of its population lives in its villages and only 12% of the regions agricultural land is irrigated. Nearly 37% of the total area is covered by forests. The little irrigation available is limited to the plains region. An overwhelming large section of the population is dependent on the agricultural sector. Not surprisingly, thus, underemployment and disguised unemployment is rampant, this is in spite of the fact that migration of workers from Chhattisgarh is a major phenomenon. Industrialisation in the last 50 years has managed to engage only about 16 lakh persons in urban centers. That is a major 8 % of the total population. Thus, land continues to be the major provider of livelihood.²⁴ Thus stating it to be one of the most backward states in the country.

Again, the planning commission in 1964, came out with a document which divided the Indian continent into 15 Agro-climatic Sub-divisions. This document was again revived in the 1990s during the Seventh Five year plans with renewed interest on regionlisation. According to the document, the planning commission came out with a list of backward districts for special consideration in regard to allocation of financial resources. This list consisted of 21 districts of Madhya Pradesh, all of them being tribal areas (Jhabua, Dhar, Khargone, Chhindwara, Betul, Seoni, Balaghat, Mandla, Shahdol, Surguja, Raigarh, Bilaspur, Bistar, Raipur, Morena, Ratlam, Khandwa, Hoshangabad, Sidhi, Rajnandgaon, Durg). The document also listed the draught prone districts of Madhya Pradesh (Betul, Dhar, Jhabua, Khargone, Shahdol, Sidhi) and industrially backward districts- including the list of districts of Madhya Pradesh with no industries as (Balaghat, Bhand, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Datia, Dhar, Guna, Jhabua, Mandla, Narsimhapur, Panna, Raigarh, Seoni, Shivpuri, Sidhi, Surguja and Tikamgarh).²⁵

The state of Madhya Pradesh which came into being in 1956, is the 7th largest state population-wise whereas it is 2nd in terms of its geographical spread and contributes 9.38 percent to the country's total area of 3,287,263 sq. km. It comprises of 9 revenue divisions, 45 districts, 259 tehsils, 313 community development blocks, 55393 villages and 394 urban centres.

24:- Anoop Singh (2002) The Land question in Chattisgarh in Land Reforms in India; in Praveen K. Jha (ed) Issues of equity in Rural Madhya Pradesh; Sage Publication.

25:- Ashish Bose (1994) Demographic Zone in India, B.R. Publishing Corporation.

India's population according to the Provisional Totals of Census of India 2001 at the 00.00 hours of 1st March 2001 was 1,027,015,247, out of which the population of Madhya Pradesh is 60,385,5118, state thus contributing 5.87 percent share to India's total population.²⁶

Madhya Pradesh, the second largest state next to Rajasthan of the Indian Union, contains the largest concentration of tribal population in India. The state contains almost all the major ethnic groups of central India and its total tribal population, numbering about 9.67 million according to 2001 census, is more than twice as large as the tribal population of any of the largest states of India. Tribals constitute 19.94 percent of the total population of Madhya Pradesh which is 22.7 percent of country's tribal population. 33.6 percent of total geographical area is notified as scheduled area with 40.63 percent of total geographical area under tribal sub-plan (TSP). Due to cultural and social differences the tribal area of the state could be broadly divided into five cultural regions: western region, central region, north-eastern region, eastern region, and southern region.

The western region is predominantly inhabited by Bhil and Bhilala tribal communities. The concentration of tribal population is higher in Jhabua, Dhar, West Nimar-Khargone, East Nimar-Khandwa and Ratlam districts respectively. The natural resources in this region are almost completely depleted.

The Central region is predominantly inhabited by Gonds, Korku, Baigas and Barias confined in the 12 villages of Patalkot of Chhindwara district. The major concentration of tribal population is in Mandla, Balaghat, Chhindwara and Seoni districts. It has comparatively richer natural resources in the east.

The North-Eastern region is predominantly inhabited by Gonds; Kol is another backward tribe inhabiting this region. The heavy concentration of tribal population is in Shahdol and Sidhi Districts.

The Eastern region is rich in forests and mineral resources. The predominant population is that of Oraons, Gonds and Pahari Korwas. The region is sparsely populated. The three districts Surguja, Raigarh and Bilaspur have higher concentration of tribal population.

The Southern region of the State is popularly known as Maria-Muria track, with a sizeable population of Gonds, Murias, Marias Halbas, Abujmaria, kamars, and Dorias.

26:- Census of India (2001) Madhya Pradesh, Series 24, Provisional Population Total, Paper 1 of 2001

The number of scheduled tribes residing in the State is 46. These tribal groups are further divided into 161 subgroups on the basis of lingual, social, economic and ethnic identities. The socio-economic conditions of these tribal communities are not less advanced educationally and economically as compared to non-tribal, but amongst themselves also they are at various levels of development, Gonds, Bhils and Kanwars are the three largest tribal groups of the State.

Kamar is the only tribe having extremely slow growth rate of population. Besides, there are seven tribal communities, which are economically backward and their standard of living is no better than those declared primitive tribes; they are Kol, Dhangar, Binjwar, Agaria, Pando and Dorias.²⁷

The total scheduled caste population of the state comprising 47 groups is 74.79 lakh i.e. 15.40 percent of the total population of Madhya Pradesh, at divisional level highest concentration of se population is in Sagar divisional having 12.02 percent of the total scheduled caste population of the state, followed by Ujjain division 11.82 percent Raipur 10.56 percent, Bhopal 10.45 percent and Bilaspur 10.37 percent. At district level the percentage of scheduled caste population to the total scheduled caste population of state is highest in Bilaspur district i.e. 7.14 percent followed by Raipur 5.85 percent Sagar 3.61 percent Ujjain 3.53 percent Moreena 3.53 percent, Jabalpur 3.53 percent Durg 3.18 percent and Indore 3.18 percent, Datial district has the highest proportion of scheduled caste population i.e. 24.67 percent of the district population followed by Ujjain 24.56 percent and Chhatarpur 23.70 percent.²⁸

The community wise traditional occupation distribution among the scheduled caste revealed that five scheduled caste communities viz., Audhelia, Banchada, Dhanuk, Muskhan and Rujjhar are mainly engaged in cultivation and an agricultural labour. Four Scheduled caste communities viz. Dahait, Kotwal, Khangar and Chitar work as a willage chowkidar. Five communities viz. Beldar, Silawat, Chitar, Bagri are engaged in stone working and other artisans works; nine communities viz., Bahna; Balai, Chidar, Ganda, Katia, Kori, Mehra, Mehgal Jhamral are engaged in

27:- V.K. Shrivastava (1997) Tribes in Transition : The Tribe – Cast Continuing Process of Social Change(A case study of Padhya Pradesh); Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Science ; Volume 2, Number 2, PP 1-25

28: V.K. Shrivastava (1999) Development of Scheduled Castes, Intention, Realities and Task Ahead in Madhya Pradesh: Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Science: Volume 4; Number 1, PP 15-43

weaving; three communities; Chamar, Holia and Mang are engaged in the occupation of leather. Five communities i.e. Barhar, Bargunda, Bansor, Dohar and Dom are engaged in Bamboo craft and allied activities; six communities i.e. Bedia, Kanjar, Nat, Dewar, Sansia and Bhanumati are earning their livelihood through dance and music, prostitution, and as Bajigars. Four communities viz. Chalkwa, Khatik, Moghia and Pardhi are engaged in small scale hunting of animals and trapping the birds etc.; Passis are engaged in distillation of liquor and at last Bhangi and Ghasi are working as Safai Krmacharis (sweepers).²⁹ The land holding position among the Scheduled Castes is also deploring. Thus, the Scheduled Castes were largely seen as being engaged in primitive agriculture for sustenance. Moreover, the land holding among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes is also deploring. 40.46 percent of Scheduled Castes and 34.39 percent Scheduled tribes constituted landless agricultural laborers. The sectoral distribution of the main workforce in Madhya Pradesh according to Bhopal Document shows that 74.62 percent of Scheduled Castes and 94.45 percent Scheduled tribes were in primary sector; 13.67 percent Scheduled Castes and 2.41 percent of Scheduled tribes in Secondary sector ; and 11.62 percent of Scheduled Castes and 3.12 percent of Scheduled tribes in tertiary sector. This data thus reveals high proportion of scheduled Casts and Scheduled tribe main workforce in agricultural sector indicates the slow rate of growth of these groups.³⁰

On education front, it was found that Madhya pradesh accounted for 50 percent of illiterate population in the country. The literacy rate for overall, male, female, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribes population in the state were 44.20 percent, 58.40 percent, 28.40 percent, 35.1 percent and 21.5 percent respectively before the implementation of District Planning Education project (DPEP) and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS). The literary rate thus been far below the national average for these sections of population.³¹

Madhya Pradesh has been called one of the backward states in India in terms of a considerable backlog in area like literacy, basic education, levels of nutrition, basic health and poverty all these aspects concerning human

29:- Ibid

30:- The Bhopal Document : Charting a New Course for Dalits for the 21st Century; 2002; Government of Madhya Pradesh.

31:- District Planing Education Programme, Madhya Pradesh, State Plane 1997 – 2002, Rajiv Gandhi Prathmik Siksha Mission, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

development. To respond to some of these issues, the government of Madhya Pradesh conceived of missions in selected areas, centering on the themes of education, health and livelihood security. It was thus, the first to put together the first sub-national Human Development Report in the world in 1995³², seeing people as its solution³³ it committed itself to an agenda of gram swaraj. Its main aim to bring out the Human Development Report was not to high light its success but it was an instrument to share concern regarding the failures and mobilise collective action for the unfinished agenda on education, health and livelihood security.³⁴ The Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995 defined the concept of “ Human Development “ as the combination of people’s entitlements and attainments relating to education, health and livelihood. These three arenas, taken together, formed the everyday experience of ‘development’ for the people as individuals and as members of a community, state and nation. Human Development is then, the sum of outcome relating to schooling (both access to schools and quality of schooling), health services (both access to hospitals and medicare experts, and quality life- chances such as life expectancy and nutrition) and income (both access to a secure and adequate livelihood and the quality of consumer choices, that flow from it³⁵.) The first report was followed by the second in 1998. The second report stated what had been done about the identified failures.³⁶ Thus, while the first document gave a broad overview of the major social and economic sectors that are considered crucial for judging human development levels, the second report was built almost totally around the theme of environmental degradation and community management of land, water and forest resources- that is basically joint forest management and watershed development.³⁷ The third MPHDR, for 2002 was released on Feb. 7, 2002 in Bhopal laying emphasis on creating access to elementary education as the notable achievement of the state. It stated that the education guarantee scheme (EGS) launched in Jan. 1997, helped the state to eliminate a backlog of about 30,000 habitations without access to schools in two years. The report showed literacy to be catching up

32:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

33:- Anupreeta Das (2002) Interview with Digvijay Singh, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh; Seminar 519, November, PP 45-49.

34:- Digvijay Singh(2001), Beginning of the human development movement in India; Radical humanist, Volume 64, Number 11, PP 12-14

35:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

36:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1998.

37:- Renuka Viswanathan (1999), Human Development for Madhya Pradesh: some hidden truths; Economic & Political weekly, Volume 34, Number 22, PP 1314-1315.

with the national average. While, the literacy rate of Madhya Pradesh in 1991 was 18% below the national average, today, it stood at 64% close to the national average of 65%. The Human Development Report, however admitted the delivery of effective public health services as the most daunting task facing the state. However, a positive signal that emerged from census 2001 was that for the first time, the growth of population had shown a declining trend³⁸ as population growth rate in 2001 has come down to 24.34 percent from 26.75 percent in the 1991 and is even less than 24.73 percent growth rate of 1961 census.³⁹ In addition to the Human Development Reports, the clearest enunciation of the Congress agenda towards weaker sections emerges in the Bhopal Document of 2001. The Madhya Pradesh government organized the Bhopal conference held in Jan. 2001 in which a number of intellectuals were invited to discuss strategies for upliftment of the weaker sections and gave full support to its recommendations for uplift of disadvantaged sections, particularly dalits. A task force (TF) with committees was also established to work out the proposed strategies in detail.⁴⁰ The Madhya Pradesh government laid emphasis upon the role of the state to carry out its mission programs outlined in Human Development Reports and to fulfill the recommendations laid down in the Bhopal Document. Moreover, in the 1990s with the onset of liberalization and globalisation, it was only expected that state yields to the market and the Civil Society in many areas where it, so far, had a direct but distortionary and inefficient presence. It therefore meant extension of the market and civil society at the expense of the state in some areas. It also implied an increase in the area of their respective overlaps.⁴¹ But it was seen that with the retreat of the state from economic activities has particularly affected the weaker sections, as through the structural adjustment meant immediate and drastic public expenditure cuts, privatization, slimming oversized public bureaucracies, reducing subsidies and encouraging realistic prices to encourage as a greater stimulus to greater efficiency and productivity.⁴²

38:- The Child's Rights Bulletin : New and Review of Politics and Programmes Concerning Children; (2003); Volume 6, Number 9, PP 5-6.

39:- Census of India (2001) Madhya Pradesh, Series 24, Provisional Population Total, Paper 1 of 2001

40:- The Bhopal Document : Charting a Course for Dalits for the 21st Century; 2002; Government of Madhya Pradesh.

41:- Planning Commission; Government of India Report, 2002

42:- Adrian Leftwich (1994) Governance, the State and the Politics of Development; Development and Change; Volume 25, Number 22 PP 363-386.

Thus, this required the role of the state to be, conceptually repositioned stating that state can neither be a completely minimalist role nor an entirely proactive one. It has to be directed at building personal capabilities and community capacities for human development through the use of all the means at its command.⁴³ Moreover, it was also seen that entirely state-centric economic models of development pursued so far have not been beneficial to the weaker sections, For example, on the education front the governments earlier, Total literacy campaigns (TLC) had been a failure. Bhopal Document also recognized for the first time that there were limits to reservation as it was found that in the emerging areas of software, bio-technology, bio-informatics, etc. were almost beyond the reach of the dalits. In the IIT sector the proportion of dalits was appalling. The shortfall in admission ranging from 45-65 per cent in the case of Schedule Castes and 87-92 per cent in the case of Schedule tribes. This revealed a serious dilemma of equality versus excellence and merit versus reservations that prevailed in the contemporary society and the education system⁴⁴. Against this background the Congress model under Digvijay Singh provided for more interventionist role of the state, which it described as “Developmental Activism” More specifically, the needs of weaker sections were given a central place in development plans and state intervention was meant for at least 3 purposes: protection of weaker sections, economic upliftment through provision of land and state sponsored programmes based on diversity and democratization; and education in order to provide social opportunity. Within this model education is given central importance as it is the path which the weaker sections can come out of traditional occupations which are related to the caste hierarchy and thereby enter a new phase of life.⁴⁵

Another feature adopted to better the condition of the weaker sections was the Mission Approach, outside the sphere of the state. In Madhya Pradesh, the Rajiv Gandhi Mission was set up on August 20, 1994 by Digvijay Singh government which could target specific weaknesses such as low literacy, high infant mortality, lack of drinking water etc. It was an innovative scheme where central and state governments, particularly at the local level and NGOs have joined hands. At the level of primary education it

43:- Planning Commission ; Government of India Report; 2002.

44:- S. Srinivasa Rao(2002) Dalits in Education and Workforce, Economic & Political Weekly Volume 37, Number 29, PP 2998-3000.

45:- Sudha Pai(2004) Dalits Question and Political Response : Comparative Study of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya pRadesh; Economic & Political Weekly Volume 39, Number 11 PP 1141-1150.

was a community based programme in which schools were set up on demand and the local population had control over the appointment and dismissal of teachers. The Adult – literacy programme have become a demand driven and people centred programme in which a large number of women have joined. This programme in Madhya Pradesh was part of the number of initiatives, in Human Development that seeks to improve the lives of the people rapidly putting it ahead of many other states.⁴⁶ Another feature was not merely the state institutions outside the state, but also decentralization and greater people's participation particularly in local institutions. Here, the new Panchayats under the 73rd amendment Act, which form a third statutory level of federal functioning and have been provided with reservations for lower castes and women and more powers over local administration and development could play a seminal role.⁴⁷ Thus, in Madhya Pradesh panchayats in some districts, in collaboration with the NGOs or in some areas alone, have taken up primary education and health as their focus areas. The state government has empowered the panchyats to set up new schools in response to community demand. Appoint and dismiss teachers and locate land for the schools. Education Committee comprising Janpad Panchayats and District panchayat members oversee all matters of school education such as location of new schools, staffing and training of teachers. The gram panchayats also manage all schools set up under EGS⁴⁸ Thus its main goal was to break the control of the locally dominant landowning castes over the panchayat and empower the village community as a whole, giving the lower castes a chance to play a role in decision-making⁴⁹. As Digvijay Singh herself remarked he did not want ' Panchayati Raj to become sarpanch Raj'⁵⁰. It has been variously described : as an attempt to move from representative to direct democracy' at the grass roots⁵¹ and as

46:- Anupreeta Das (2001), Chalking out the Future " The Indian Express" January 14, New Delhi.

47:- Planning Commission ; Government of India Report; 2002.

48:- L.C. Jain (2000), Unbunbdlng of the state; Economic & Political Weekly Volume 35, Number 41, PP 3647-3652

49:- Amitabh Behar(2001), Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy, Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 36, Number 10, PP 823-826.

50:- James Manor (2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy, Economic & Political Weekly Volume 36, Number 9 PP 715-826.

51:- Ibid.

a bold experiment in local self- government which if successful would introduce a new era of local governance⁵². But some have argued that it was based on a mixture of 'Gandhian idealism' a concern for effective development and hard nosed political calculations⁵³.

The move was meant to serve the political interest of the Madhya Pradesh government in a number of ways: by demonstrating that a congress-led government is more people oriented than other state government led by rival parties; pleasing the party's state legislators who were unhappy with the assertiveness of panchayati leaders in their constituencies; and reducing the power of the sarpanches in order to give a better share to the lower castes.⁵⁴

Another feature was land distribution recognizing that large majority of the weaker sections were landless labourers, Madhya Pradesh government adopted a 3- pronged strategy: distribution of land to them to help them in buying land to make them independent cultivators; alternatively to move them into other occupations through capital formation with government assistance; and third, as many dalits were small cultivators or share croppers, to provide them assistance through a policy package addressing seeds pesticides, irrigation and credit requirements. On March 4, 1998 the government of Madhya Pradesh issued an order to the district administration for distribution of land gained by downsizing the area of 'Charnoi' (Grazing) land from 7.5 per cent each to 5 percent which it is estimated, can provide a surplus of about six acres. This land was to be distributed among some four lakh Schedule Castes and Schedule tribes households. A more recent report of the state government claimed that by July 2002, 2,48,000 sectors of land had been distributed among 3,03,000 landless individuals of whom SCs constituted 1,99,178 to whom 1,60,194 hectares have been given. The process of identifying surplus land and redistributing it among the landless continued during 2003 in the state.⁵⁵

52:- Amitabh Behar(2001), Madhya Pradesh Experiments With Direct Democracy, Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 36 Number 10, PP 823-826

53:- James Manor (2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy, Economic & Political Weekly Volume 36, Number 9 PP 715-826.

54:- Ibid.

55:- Samarthan (2000): Madhya Pradesh Me Panchayati Raj Ek Adhyayan 1995 – 2000, Report (In Hindi) of Samarthan, Centre for Development Support, Bhopal

However, the policies such as Bhopal Document, report on Task Force were well conceived their implementation was poor. On the education front major problem with the EGS has been that it was designed to raise the number of school without a major increase in educational expenditure. The results has been as Leclercq's study points out low cost schooling characterised by low teacher – student Ratio; few teachers with low salaries, little formal training, multigrade teaching leading to absenteeism, few school hours, little commitment or a new work culture; poor infrastructure and teaching inputs. In short, the EGS, schools have reproduced all the well known negative features of the existing government schools. Hence the “guarantee is incomplete the extension of the system is more notable than its reform “. ⁵⁶ On the Health front, the HDR admits that the delivery of effective public health service is the most daunting task facing the state. Resource constraints has resulted in a situation where the government is not in a position to propose new scheme nor continue the old ones. As per the norms the state needs 15,821 health institutions, against which 13,967 are sanctioned leaving 1,854 more to be sanctioned. Moreover, there were no doctors in 375 of the 1,841 state Primary Health Centers (PHC) and, approximately 50 doctors on unauthorised leave. Apart from this, there were complaints that many health workers did not stay at their headquarters and the reason for this was there were no houses for them. Another major malaise was the authority in a district being over centralized in the CMHO which resulted in Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) being over loaded with unproductive work, and a lack of initiative in other officers.⁵⁷ Regarding the programmes of Land distribution, a significant number of Dalits obtained land, but the backlash from other groups especially the numerically powerful OBCs, poor implementation in some areas, and unintended outcomes in others actually depressed dalit leading to widespread dissatisfaction.⁵⁸ On the issue of gram swaraj some studies showed a disappointing picture. No large-scale attempt was made by the

56:- Francois Leclercq (2002) The Impact of Education Policy Reforms on the School System: A Field Study of Education Guarantee Scheme and Other Primary Schools in Madhya Pradesh, Occasional Paper, Number 5, CSH, New Delhi.

57:-Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

58:- James Manor (2001) Madhya Pradesh Experiments With Direct Democracy, Economic & Political Weekly Volume, 36 Number 9, PP 715-826.

government to inform the people about the very significant changes that it had introduced. In most parts of the state, villagers particularly the weaker sections were not aware of the programme, new power and responsibilities given to the gram Sabha and the new committees constituted. Another important reason has been the lack of local leaders to initiate meaningful participation in the gram sabha.⁵⁹ Thus, the Congress succeeded in raising people's aspirations, but this entailed political dangers if aspirations were not met.⁶⁰

59:- Yatinder Singh(2002); Decentralised Governments in Madhya Pradesh Experiences of the Gram Sabha in Scheduled Areas Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 37, Number 40, PP 4100-04.

60:- Yugendra Yadav and Sanjay Kumar (2003) Behind an Electoral Wave in Madhya Pradesh; The Hindu, Wednesday, December. 10, PP 12, New Delhi

Chapter 3

Education & Health Programmes in Madhya Pradesh

Education and Health are recognized to be the two distinct influences which can promote the freedom and capacity of individuals to make use of available opportunities (Derze and Sen : 1995) The programmes thus initiated by Digvijay Singh in Madhya Pradesh laid special emphasis on Education as it is the path through which the Weaker Sections can come out of traditional occupations which are related to the Caste hierarchy and thereby enter into a new phase of life.

The education guarantee scheme :

Education can help people to live in a safer healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance and international cooperation. More than 40 years ago, the nations of the world through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserted that every one has the right to education. Despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, it has been found that more than 100 million children including at least 60 million girls have no access to primary education.

Universalisation of elementary education (UEE) has been one of the goals of educational development of our country. Article 45, of our constitution envisages for compulsory education for children in the age group 6-14 which could not be achieved even after 50 years of independence. As the size of the country being very vast, and a large number of people living below poverty line, it is difficult for large no of parents to spare their children for whole time educational activities.

It has now been accepted that the goal of UEE cannot be achieved through formal system of education. Timings of the formal schools do not suit the children involved in the profession of their parents to supplement family income. In many cases formal schools are not available in the activity of the needy children. Rigidity of timings and curriculum and unhealthy environment of many schools force many children to leave the schools even before completing their elementary education. Keeping all this in view, the deliberations and discussions held by academicians gave rise to a new concept of Non-formal education (NFE) as an alternative approach for achieving the target of UEE.

The Government of India has launched the programme District Primary Education Projects (DPEP) for achieving universal primary

education (UPE) in the educationally backward district of the country. DPEP's focus is on systematic planning, organizing monitoring and evaluating a 3 pronged approach to UPE, namely providing access for schooling, optimizing public participation raising the quality of classroom instructor and allied activities for achievement of mastery level learning upto 80% by at least 80% of pupils. Madhya Pradesh is one of the states selected under DPEP scheme ¹.

Madhya Pradesh accounts for 50.0% of illiterate population in the country. The literacy rates for overall, male, female, SC and ST population in the state are 44.20%, 58.40%, 28.40%, 35.1% and 21.5% respectively, which are for below the national average for these sections of population.

Several initiations were undertaken by the state following the recommendations of the New National Policy on Education (1986 revised in 1992). The major initiatives prior to DPEP interventions have been : non-formal education (NFE), operation blackboard (OB), Minimum levels of learning (MLL), teacher education, total literacy campaign (TLC), integrated education of disabled children, integrated child development services (ICDS) and incentives to disadvantaged groups. About 34, 080 NFE centers are currently operational in the state covering 9-14 age group children. The panchayats manage these centers, appoint instructors and monitor their performance. OB materials have been provided to 50% of the schools in the state. The MLL project was implemented in Vidisha district jointly by NCERT, SCERT and DIET. Teachers have been trained along the lines of MLL to make teaching learning child-centered and activity bases ².

However despite these major initiatives it was found that still the UPE had not been realized so far, high drop out rates and low achievement level continued to mitigate against the realisation of the goal of universalisation.

DPEP as a major intervention for UPE was sanctioned in Madhya Pradesh in December 1994. The Major difference between DPEP and other educational schemes were- devising contextual solutions to identify local needs. The basic unit of planning being the district. Districts identify their

1:- Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India (Final Report) (1993) External evaluation of centrally sponsored scheme of non formal education in MP state, regional college of education (NCERT), Bhopal

2 :- District Planning Education Programme, Madhya Pradesh State –Plan 1997-2000, Rajiv Gandhi, Prathmik Siksha Mission, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

needs bottom up, rather than top down. Needs emerge through deliberations between district education functionaries, communities, Gram panchayats and the Zila panchayats. Three-and- a half years into programme, the state is now set to go in for DPEP-II in 15 more districts³.

The working panchayati Raj System came into existence in 1994 which facilitated structure for district community action. The Government connected selected programmes of which primary education was one, into a mission- mode. The task of univerisalising Primary Education and total literacy were combined to form the Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission in the State.

Panchayati Raj created the opportunity to undertake door-to –door survey through elected people’s representatives capturing the names of children in and out of school. This Lok Sampark Abhiyan (LSA) transformed into a mobilization process for primary education redefining the role of the community in primary education from objects of survey to actors who could make the difference. The results of LSA helped to demolish the myth of near universal access to primary education in the state. It became clear that specificities of tribal demography where people lived scattered in several hamlets created Major gaps in access. The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) was an effort, to respond to this finding o the LSA. The EGS in addition to becoming a practical method of ensuring the right to learn also reasserted the role of the people in the management of primary education⁴.

An EGS was introduced by the Government of Madhya Pradesh on 1st June 1997. The guarantee is : If there was no school within one kilometer of any habitation – tola, falia, dharna etc., If there were 40 children who wanted to go to school [25 in tribal areas] If the gram panchayat after a meeting and discussion decides it wanted a school. If the panchayat was willing to provide space for the school to run, if it could identify a local youth who had at least passed the 10th class; if such a panchayat demanded from the government a school, then the government guaranteed that a school, with no compromise in the quality of education, would be set up within 90 days.

A request from the panchayat would be made to the next higher level of local Government- the janpad panchayat. If the claims made were found to be correct, then a school would be approved. The teacher recommended by the sarpanch would be sent for training in the District Institute for

3 :- Ibid

4 :-Amita Sharma and R. Gopalakrishana (1998), Bringing the people back in from Lok Sampark Abhiyan to Education guarantee scheme in MP.

Educational Training with a specially developed package known as the seekhna/sikhana package. All this would be completed in 90 days. At the end of 90 days, a school would be working in the tola. In the very first year 18,000 schools came to be set up validating the EGS⁵.

The key factor on which the EGS hinges are community demand and Government guarantee. EGS by putting community demand as a start-up point, addresses the twin issues of enrolment and retention. In EGS, teacher (called guruji) is intended to be a local resident appointed by gram panchayat and this ensures community control as well as reduces teacher absenteeism, a chronic malady of rural, schools. Such a community demand also redefines identification of an educational need thus indicates a growing awareness in the community itself. Thus acceptance of a local school as its own responsibility. It is this understanding of educational need primarily as an internal impulse for growth that permeates EGS's definition of school as a qualitative transactional process⁶.

The state government has claimed that by July 2001, 23854 schools had been established, 11,30,219 students enrolled and a total of 28435 teachers employed under the EGS in the State of total children enrolled 92% are from the SC/ST/OBC category of whom 16% are SC's⁷. In this context the sharp increase is visible in literacy rates for males and females aged seven and above since 1991, from 58.5% to 76.8% and 29.4 % to 50.3% are significant⁸.

While initiation of EGS has led to much discussion about its functioning and the role of the state in primary education⁹ few studies exist on the actual functioning of the EGS and particularly its impact in dalit children. Two studies based in the districts of Betul and Dewas which has a large population consisting of weaker sections. Show that EGS has dramatically increased access to them; but there has been little reform of the system as a result of which quality remains very low¹⁰ on the first finding

5 :- L.C. Jain (2000), Unbundling of the State; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 35, Number 41, PP3647 -3652

6 :- Amita Sharma and R. Gopalakrishana (1998), Bringing the people back in from Lok Sampark Abhiyan to Education guarantee scheme in MP.

7 :- The Bhopal Document : Charting a new Course for dalits for the 21st century, (2002); Government of Madhya Pradesh.

8 :- Francis Leclercq (2002); The impact of Educational Policy reforms on the school system : A field study of EGS and other Primary schools in MP CSh occasional paper.

9 :- Amita Sharma and R. Gopalakrishana (1998), Bringing the people back in from Lok Sampark Abhiyan to Education guarantee scheme in MP.

10 :- Francis Leclercq(2002) ; The impact of Educational Policy reforms on the school system : A field study of EGS and other Primary schools in MP CSH occasional paper.

there is little dispute among scholars that this has been the major success of the scheme.¹¹ It is on the second that there has been criticism much of which is relevant for children belonging to Schedule Castes community.

A major problem with the EGS has been that it was designed to raise the number of schools without a major increase in educational expenditure. Leclercq¹² study develops the results of fieldwork on the state of Primary School system conducted in the rural areas of 2 districts of M.P. Betul and Dewas, from Dec.2001 to March 2002. The point is to understand the impact of recent education policy reforms on the school system of areas which may be thought of as typical of the most deprived settings of rural M.P., namely Adivasi village and Dalit hamlets located at the outskirts of mainstream villages. The fieldwork conducted in Shahpur block of Betul district, was a predominantly Adivasi area and had been a part of the first phase of DPEP's started in 1995. While, the Tonk Khurd block of Dewas was a dalit populated area including in the second phase of the programme, started in 1994. The study comprises of 4 villages of shahpur block and 3 villages of Tonk Khurd block.

Betul shahpur is an entirely rural Adivasi block, and villages selected are small and quite isolated, with a simple school supply limited to a public school. The district is hardly urbanized, not being very large in size with 37.5% of advice population, most of them Gond or Korku. Agriculture is largely devoted to self-consumption. Many households supplement their income doing wage labour, which implies temporary migration to more prosperous areas such as Hoshangabad.

The educational situation before DPEP, EGS and other reforms were implemented was dismal, with literacy rates of 45.0% for males and 18.6% for females ages seven and above in 1991. According to Lok Sampark Abhiyan data, the block had reached 76.3% enrolment among girls in 1996 by which time it had 124 primary school and one alternative school. Since then the educational supply has improved in the block with 130 government. School's 53 EGS schools and a few private schools.

11.:- Amita Sharma and R. Gopalakrishna (1998) Bringing the people back in from Lok Sampark Abhiyan to Education guarantee scheme in MP.

12 :- Francis Leclercq (2002); The impact of Educational Policy reforms on the school system : A field study of EGS and other Primary schools in MP CSH occasional paper.

Tonk Khurd block of Dewas is a well-connected block located in western M.P. on the Agra-Bombay road. It is influenced by the proximity of major Urban and industrial areas. Although the district has Adivasi parts (ST represented 15% of the population in 1991), most of it belongs to the Malwa region and has a mainstream population including a large proportion of Schedule Castes (18.2% in 1991), and villages selected are rather large, average size is 900 persons with a diversified school supply in which EGS school play a relatively minor role.

EGS was designed to quickly extend the public school system without a radical increase in government expenditure. EGS does not include the provisions of a school building per se. The group of parents demanding a school is expected to provide a 'space' for teaching learning. Very often the schools had to start in previously existing rented building such as godowns or farm building as was the case in Tonk Khurd villages. Further equipments were limited to a bare minimum. None of the schools had electricity, however, as the classes were held during day time no electricity powered equipment were used. The supply of water however is important, and is only partly adequate. Some of the schools had hand pumps while others did not, and water had to be brought from a long distance for example, at 500m in Shahpur. The installation of hand pumps in schools were announced by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in February 2002. This is indeed a priority for both teacher and pupils – however hand pumps are no guarantee to drinkable water as most of the pumps had dried by the end of March 2002, and especially during summer hot months. None of the schools have proper toilets, though there was some structure in Shahpur that was vaguely usable by children.

The main complaint has been the shortage of funds to meet the requirements and delay in the delivery of text books. All schools have the same, very limited furniture i.e. one or two desks, a chair register and teaching/ learning materials, a clock, children sat on mats. All schools have a chalk and one blackboard, sets of maps of Madhya Pradesh and India, Charts representing fruits and vegetables, portraits of India's freedom fighters or letters of Devanagari and the Latin scripture.

EGS teachers earn only Rs.1000/- per month, apart from being very low, salary payment are irregular and delays of 2 to 3 months are frequent. Even teachers receive limited training of only 21 days before starting to teach. Thus working conditions of EGS teachers are indeed intrinsically difficult, as they have to handle children from different deprived social backgrounds, who are usually first-generation learner's and whose families

can thus do little to supplement teacher's activities. Most future EGS teachers are young higher secondary school graduates. Multi-grade teaching is systematic, and shifting back to a graded approach, definitely creates additional difficulties. Teachers often lacked skills and motivation, a situation which calls for intensive additional training.

A problem no teacher failed to mention is the lack of proper training for teaching English. Compulsory English classes were introduced in July 2001, officially from class 1.

Teachers and parents exert decisive control over the translation of official school timings into reality, the latter through their own regularity with which they send their children to school. As a result, the quality of teaching actually available is much shorter than what the above description suggests school year is often shorter than 10 months. Many children start attending the school only by mid-or late July—so the school is not fully functional in the beginning of August. Seasonal factors like weddings, local melas can result in attendance dropping very sharply among teachers as well as pupils.

Again, low and irregular attendance by teachers and people alike is the second factor limiting the quantity of teaching happening in the EGS schools. Often schools had only one teacher, so it was more difficult for them not to turn up, since it would mean the school does not open at all often, rather than teaching, supervising pupils seems to be teacher's most frequent activity. When being thus supervised, pupils are left to do very basic exercise. Some of them, especially the younger ones, write the letters of the Devanagari script of number 1 to 100 again and again. Others do basic computation in their note books, while many try to read some page from their textbooks. As a result, there seems to be very little progression from one day to another; consecutive days observed looked like an endless repetition of each other.

Another striking feature was the rarity of activities involving children to interact with each other. Similarly, teachers were seen never to organize games or sports.

Another feature observed was lack of teacher's attention towards the pupils. Teachers, consider their relationship to children as a hierarchical and authoritarian one. They keep shouting at children instead of talking, and tend to be quite aggressive when addressing their pupils individually. All teachers were observed to hit children several times a day, in case they had been too noisy or a dispute had broken out.

In Shahpur, many pupils were Adivasis who spoke Gondi or Korku at home, rather than Hindi. If teachers do not speak their mother tongue it becomes difficult for them to make children understand especially the pupils of class 1. However, the problem did not arise in Tonk Khurd block which has extremely few Adivasis. Children speak either Hindi or Malwi and thus seem to have no problem shifting from the latter to the former.

If we study the achievement levels among children we find that – class 5-pupils ‘achievements’ revealed that most of the pupils could not read fluently and would often pause after one word rather than the sentence. More fluent children would read as quickly as possible without any pause clearly not understanding what they were reading.

To sum up, in 2001/02, the activity of 4 EGS schools resulted in only 15 class-5 children being able to read well enough to hope pass class 5 exam and study beyond the primary level. Children made numerous spelling mistakes structure construction is often absurd, and the basic sentence structure of the Hindi language is not mastered. On the whole, results for numeracy are better, and almost all children master simple addition, subtraction and multiplication. However, much more complete operations of divisions is not mastered by many children, even without carry –over’s. Thus in most visited EGS, a majority of children of class –5 children, while having picked up some basic literacy and numeracy, cannot be considered as being truly literate and numerate i.e. for example as being able to read a text, understand it, and comment or answer questions on it.

These findings are repeated in the second study of primary education under the EGS in the three villages of Khategaon block in Dewas District of M.P ¹³. The demography of Khategaon block reveals it to be a part of Malwa plateau, which is mostly hilly, hardly urbanised , small and quite isolated with pockets of villages scattered in the region , with no proper road which again virtually became inaccessible during monsoon. Out of 171 villages only 16 were linked with ‘ Pakka’ roads opened for transportation throughout the year. The 3 villages of Khategaon block- Motipur was 26 km from Khategaon and constituted mainly of tribals, Badiyali 26 km from Khategaon comprised mainly of scheduled castes white kamblipur, 20km from khategaon a village mixed communities.

13 :- Hasiye ke Samudaya Aur Niehikriya school’ Local Education Report, Eklavya. A study conducted by the National Institute of Advanced studies Bangalore, 2002.

There were not only stark difference in their economic status but of social and cultural as well. There was little communication between different communities with practices of untouchability against some of the scheduled castes communities.

If we compare their educational achievements we find that in 1991, literacy rate was 33% which was less than state average of 44.67% and districts 44.08%. The literacy rate amongst Schedule Castes was 30% and among Schedule Tribes was 15%. Improvements were seen in the year 2001, with literacy rate rising to 61.04% and among men 76.07% and among women 44.90%. With the initiation of EGS programmes every villages had a school with 61% of the children admitted to schools. However, the study revealed a very high dropout rate of 18% among Schedule Castes and 17% among Schedule Tribes. But the large no of dropout was detected among the ST girls (40%).

The study provided a graphic descriptions of poor infrastructure,-the schools have barely too rooms one of which is used for panchayat meetings or a store; few teacher's and high absenteeism; short school houses and quality of teaching very low/poor.

It was noted that panchayats were often not aware of the educational programmes. Badiyali village had a women sarpanch from SC community and the main issues taken often were house building and drinking water. Many were not ware of education committee. In October 2000 a meeting was held with regard to 'Padhna-Buldhna' but nothing substantial came out of it.

In Kamblipur the education committee consisted of 12 members and the sarpanch was a graduate. In 2000 only 3 meetings were held on issues of education. The Sarpanch goes to school, but has never thought of checking the register for the number of enrolments and attendance.

While in Motipur the education committee consisted of 12 members, 6 were illiterate 4 were primary pass and another was 8th pass. Most of them never attended the meetings. They asked the teacher to do the paper work and would just sign it without any knowledge of the contents.

The national calendar followed by the school was inappropriate as it was found that national holidays such as Buddha Jayanti, and others were of little importance to the local people and schools remained closed during these holidays. Very often the months of July and August was marked with high absenteeism due to it being sowing season and also due to many festivals falling during this period. Often also this was the time when new session were to begin. Again months of September and October were months of harvesting and most of the poor children were found to be absent as they helped their parents in field and at home take care of younger

brothers and sisters or look after other chores. Thus, this called for a preparation of a separate calander to ensure maximum attendance.

The EGS also led to the appointment of 'Shiksha Karmis' who replaced all primary school teachers. Thus was successful in bringing about the appointment of a local teacher and more so in promoting the one who was rural based. However, one anticipated consequence was that fewer women have joined as Shiksha Karmis, thus study reveals depressing results, as women teachers are often seen as crucial in motivating girls. There is often a trade off between the local and rural on the one hand, and female on the other, as women teachers are usually urban who spend little time at schools.

Again a trade – off between the 'local' and ' rural' on the one hand and the 'trained' on the other, therefore cannot be ruled out – as is indicated by the study that more rural based Shiksha Karmis has fewer opportunities for acquiring teacher training degree, since these institutions usually exist in urban areas . Lower salaries of Shiksha Karmis do not attract trained candidates. There is also an indication of higher representation of Schedule Tribes among the Shiksha Karmis, but fewer appointments, this again is important for Madhya Pradesh where education of tribal people as well as their small number in formal employment are problematic.

Apart from teaching, the teachers perform many other official tasks such as pulse polio drive, below poverty level line survey, general official work, women's literacy drive, updating the voters list and various kinds of surveys.

They are often not adequately remunerated for these tasks and then absenteeism, on the other hand, proves to be detrimental for the universal primary education projects ¹⁴.

Health:

Health is one of the vital indicators reflecting quality of human life. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights unequivocally states that healthcare for the preservation and promotion of health is one of the most basic human right¹⁵. World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as more than just the absence of disease but a state of complete

14 :-Rashmi Sharma (1999) What Manner of Teacher : Some Lessons from Madhya Pradesh ; Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 34, Number 25,PP1597-1607.

15:Deepa Sankar and Vinish Kathuria (2003), Health Sector in 2003-04 : Budget ; Economic & Political Weekly ; Volume 38, Number 15; PP.1443-1446.

physical, mental and social well-being. UNDP defines the concept of human development as resting on the three pillars of knowledge, health and livelihoods. The notion that people's life chances or their health and longevity are central to their socio-economic states, is now accepted as a necessary component of development and planning. Thus, making good health a basic objective of any development effort and a goal in its own right¹⁶.

India despite being a signatory to the Alma Ata declaration (1978), which aimed at "health for all" by 2000, is still lagging quite far from realising their dream even in the year 2003¹⁷. A national health policy was last formulated in 1983 and since then, there have been very marked changes on the determinant factors relating to the health sector. Some of the policy initiatives outlined in the NHP-1983 have yielded results, while in several other areas, the outcome has not been as expected. The noteworthy initiatives under this policy were eradication of certain diseases such as – small pox, guinea worm, (were eradicated from the country). Polio was on the verge of being eradicated. Leprosy, Kala Azar, and filariases can be expected to be eradicated in the foreseeable future. However, morbidity and mortality levels on the country are still unacceptably high. These unsatisfactory health indices are, in turn, an indication of the limited success of the public health system to meet the preventive and curative requirements of the general population. Out of the communicable diseases, which have persisted over history, incidence of Malaria has staged a resurgence in 1980s before stabilising at a fairly high prevalence level during the 1990s. In respect of TB, the public health scenario has not shown any significant decline in the pool of infection amongst the community, and, there has been a distressing trend in increase of drug resistance in the type of infection prevailing in the country. Another, new extremely virulent communicable disease – HIV /AIDS has emerged on the health scene since the declaration of the NHP-1983¹⁸. Even the Human Development Report

16: The Madhya Pradesh, Human Development Report, 1995.

17: Deepa Sankar and Vinish Kathuria (2003), Health Sector in 2003-04 : Budget ; Economic & Political Weekly ; Volume 38, Number 15; PP.1443-1446.

18: Draft National Health Policy – 2001, National Documentation Centre – National Institute of Health and Family Welfare.

Also See, Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India, March 2002 (Issued by Infrastructure Division Department of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

based on survey (2003) estimates of the world bank stated, India's inadequate performance in improving health, life expectancy, promoting education and tackling, hunger. In the health front, the key words were widespread under – nutrition poor infrastructure, high mortality rates among the poorest sections and rural scheduled caste population. The Report revealed that diseases like HIV /AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria continue to plague the population and more than 90 percent of the world's polio cases exist in India¹⁹. A survey conducted by national nutrition monitoring bureau (NNMB) on diet and nutrition again revealed about 40% percent of the undernourished children in the world are in India although India accounts for less than 20 percent of the children in the world. The percentage of moderately and severely malnourished children in 1998-99 varied between 27.4 on kerala and 55.7 in Madhya Pradesh among major states. NNMB data also showed that 37.4 percent of adult males and 39.4 percent of adult females in 2000-01 suffered from chronic energy deficiency (CED) in rural areas which was largely a result of poor diet and infection during childhood. The CED was found to be lower in kerala (22.4 percent for males and 18.7% for females). However, higher in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal (about 40%). Malnutrition among women in Madhya Pradesh was accounted to about 39%)²⁰.

If you look at the factors conditioning its inability to execute or fulfil the declaration, we find that one of the factors is public allocation of funds for the health sector which has been abysmally low at less than one percent of the GDP²¹. The public health investment in the country over the years has been comparatively low, and percentage of G.D.P. declined from 1.3 percent in 1990 to 0.9 percent in 1999. The aggregates expenditure in the health sector is 5.2 percent of the GDP. Out of this, about 20 percent of the aggregate expenditure is public health spending, the balance being out of pocket expenditure. The central budgetary allocation for health over this period, as a percentage of the total central Budget, has been stagnant at 1.3 percent, while that in the state's has declined from 7.0 percent to 5.5 percent. The current annual per capita public health expenditure in the country is not more than Rs.160 Given these statistics, it is no surprise that the reach and quality of public health services has been below the desired standard. Under the constitutional structure, public health is the responsibility of the state. In the framework, it has been the expectation that the principal contribution for the funding of public health services will be from states' resources, with

19: Human Development Report – 2003

20: R.Radha Krishna and C.Ravi (2004), Malnutrition in India : Trends and Determinants ; Economic & Political Weekly ; Volume 39, Number 7; PP 671-676.

21: Deepa Sankar and Uinish Kathuria (2003) Health Sector in 2003-04 : Budget Economic & Political Weekly ; Volume 38, Number 15; PP 1443-1446.

some supplementary input from central resources. In this backdrop, the contribution of central resources to the overall public health funding has been limited to about 15 percent. The fiscal resources of the state government are known to be very inelastic²². The state, on the other hand, has over the years, committed not more than 3.5 percent of the resources to the health sector. Infact, during the 70s itself a declining trend is perceptible and this has become more marked during the 90s. The budget expenditure for 1994-95 at 2.63% of total government expenditure was the lowest ever. The most declining trend has been on expenditure for hospitals and dispensaries, especially since the 80s. The expenditure on disease programmes and medical education have been less affected. Family planning expenditure has grown rapidly up to 1991-92 and since then slowed down. Similarly, the maternal and child Health (MCH) programme reached a peak during 1991-94 while the mission approach was active to meet targets for immunisation.

The state's share in the health spending has increased from 71.6% in 1974-82 to 85.7% in 1992-93 and that of the grants from centre declined drastically from 19.9% in 1974-82 to 3.8% in 1992-93. Further, the break down of central assistance to states reveals that central programmes or centrally sponsored programmes are the most severely affected. The share of central grants for public health declined from 27.92% in 1984-85 to 17.17% in 1992-93 and for diseases programme from 41.47% in 1984-85 to 18.50% in 1992-93²³.

Another factor being the vastness of the country with very marked inter-regional, differences – linguistic, ethnic, historical, geographical, economic and political²⁴. A wide gap between rich and poor has always been a matter of concern in India. It is now widely accepted that the issue is not just confined to economic inequalities but the wider issue needs to be addressed, that is, of the “inequality of opportunities”. This dimension again assumes special significance recently in the context of New Economic reforms. There is a fear that inequalities will be further intensified as the poor and the weak are likely to be marginalised in this process because the expanded opportunities are difficult to be used if a person is handicapped by ill-health and illiteracy. Policies for universal literacy and “Health for All” can go a long way to increase the individual capabilities but even here the utilisation of services by the disadvantaged sections of the society is limited

22: Draft National Health Policy-2001, National Documentation Centre – National Institute of Health and Family Welfare.

23: Ravi Duggal, Sunil Nandraj and Asha Vadair (1995); Health Expenditure across states – Part I: Economic & Political Weekly; Volume 30, Number 15, PP 834-844.

24. Ibid

due to rural urban divide and socio-economic constraints²⁵.

The statistics clearly indicates that the attainment of health indices has been very uneven across the rural urban divide.

BOX II : Differentials in Health Status Among States

Sector	Population BPL (%)	IMR/Per 1000 Live Births (1999 - SRS)	<5Mortality Per 1000 (NFHS II)	Weight For Age- % of Children Under 3 years (<2SD)	MMR/ Lakh (Annual Report 2000)	Leprosy Cases Per 10000 population	Malaria + ve Cases in year 2000 (in thousands)
India	26.1	70	94.9	47	408	3.7	2200
Rural	27.09	75	103.7	49.6	-	-	-
Urban	23.62	44	63.1	38.4	-	-	-
Better Performing States							
Kerala	12.72	14	18.8	27	87	0.9	5.1
Maharashtra	25.02	48	58.1	50	135	3.1	138
TN	21.12	52	63.3	37	79	4.1	56
Low Performing States							
Orissa	47.15	97	104.4	54	498	7.05	483
Bihar	42.60	63	105.1	54	707	11.83	132
Rajasthan	15.28	81	114.9	51	607	0.8	53
UP	31.15	84	122.5	52	707	4.3	99
Low Performing States							
Orissa	47.15	97	104.4	54	498	7.05	483
Bihar	42.60	63	105.1	54	707	11.83	132
Rajasthan	15.28	81	114.9	51	607	0.8	53

25:T.K.Roy, Sumati Kulkarni and Y.Vaidehi (2004) Social Inequalities in Health and Nutrition in Selected States ; Economic and Political Weekly, Volume 39, Number 7, PP 677-683.

The statistics brings out wide difference between the attainment of health goals in the better – performing states as compared to the low performing states. It is clear that national averages of human indices hide wide disparities in public health facilities and health standards in different parts of the country. Given a situation on which national average in respect of most indices are themselves at unacceptably low levels, the wide inter - state disparity implies that, for vulnerable sections of society in several states, access to public health services is nominal and health standards are grossly inadequate²⁶.

Again, access to, and benefits from, the public health system have been very uneven between the better-endowed and the more vulnerable sections of society. This is particularly true for women, children and the socially disadvantaged sections of society²⁷.

Book –III Differentials in Health status Among Socio-Economic Groups

Indicator	Infant Mortality / 1000	Under 5 Mortality / 1000	% Children Underweight
India	70	94.9	47
Social Inequity			
Scheduled Castes	83	119.3	53.5
Scheduled Tribes	84.2	126.6	55.9
Other Disadvantaged	76	103.1	47.3
Others	61.8	82.6	41.1

The principal consequence of the declining quality of public health system during the 1980s and of concurrent increases in population was the boom in the use of private health practitioners in both rural and urban areas. The private sector accounts for about 80 percent of health expenditure in the country. About 75% of all consultations are with private practitioner, only 25 percent go to the government health sector while the better off patronize private services almost exclusively, even the poorest 20 percent choose private practitioners in about 70% percent of illness episodes²⁸. Most of these patients do not have the means to make out of pocket payment for

26: Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India, March-2002 and the socially disadvantaged sections of society.

27: Ibid

28: Meera Chatterjee (1993) Reaching Health for All, (ed) Jon Rhode

private health services except at the cost of other essential expenditure for items such as basic nutrition²⁹. The reasons given most frequently by respondents in household level health services are the time and cost of travelling to a primary health centre or a district hospital is too great. The long waiting hours and government workers rude treatment and above all the thinking that government medicines are no good makes them avail private services³⁰.

Status of health in Madhya Pradesh:

Now, if we focus on the status of health in Madhya Pradesh we find that inspite of difficulties in socio-economic development, Madhya Pradesh has made some impressive progress in the last few years. It was estimated that 28 percent of Madhya Pradesh highest infant mortality, was on account of easily preventable diarrhoeal diseases. Every child under 5 suffered from one or two episodes of diarrhoea every year. Non availability of safe drinking water and unsanitary conditions were the two main factors responsible for such a high prevalence of diarrhoea. The state government launched the Rajiv Gandhi mission for the control of diarrhoeal diseases on August 20, 1994. The directives of mission being reduction in mortality due to diarrhoea by 70 percent and reduction in cases of diarrhoea by 70% by 2000 AD³¹.

The mission undertook a series of campaigns on the theme of safe water and health. In 1995, through a major state –wide societal mobilisation on Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT), the mission brought into its fold the entire range of panchayat leadership on the state. ORT depots were created in over 60,000 villages through this mobilisation. This was followed by a detailed mapping of high – risk villages, which frequently reported cases of water-borne diseases. 11086 such village were identified for target action.

The second phase of the campaign on 1997 was directed to these villages. Using water quality testing kits, an intensive communication exercise was

29: Bulletin on Rural Health statistics in India, March-2002, Issued by Infrastructure Division Department of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

30: Meera Chatterjee (1993) Reaching Health for All, (ed) Jon Rhode

31: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995

done in all the villages. This included ensuring adequate points of safe water supply, health education on prevention of water borne diseases, domestic management of diarrhoea, etc. In the third phase of the campaign done in 1998, this exercise was scaled up to cover all the other seventy thousand villages in the state and urban shanties in 6 major cities of the state³².

Another issue, that of micro-nutrients malnutrition is equally important. The three most important macronutrients being iron, vitamin 'A' and iodine. Iodine deficiency has received greater attention in the state. The state government launched the Rajiv Gandhi mission for the elimination of Iodine deficiency disorders on August 20, 1994. The mission conducted a survey of the entire state. According to the survey, iodine deficiency is prevalent in the entire state, but was significantly higher on the eastern part of the state and in the two western districts of Dhar and Jhabua. The goals of this mission were to eliminate iodine deficiency in the state by 1997, ensure availability of iodised salt in all villages by mid-1995, ensure that by 1997 all salt sold in the state is iodised, i.e. 90 percent of salt samples show >.15 PPM iodine³³.

The mission intervened at both supply and demand levels. A major communication campaign with focus on school children and panchayat leadership was organised. Simultaneously, the salt traders of the state were mobilised to commit themselves through a public declaration that they would trade only in iodised salt. The civil supplies department of the government also introduced iodised salt to be sold through the public distribution system. The intensive campaign helped the mission to achieve its target of universal use eleven months ahead of schedule³⁴. Many new initiatives have been taken by the state government to increase the efficiency of the delivery mechanisms in the health sector in the last 3 years, which have resulted in improved functioning of the sector some of these new initiatives are as follows :

(1) Village health committees :

Village health committees have been constituted in each village. One couple who is interested in health activities and is acceptable to the people of the village is selected from a neighborhood of every 15-20 households, and these couples constitute the village health committees. The village health

32: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report 1998

33: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995

34: Madhya Pradesh Human development Report, 1998

committee is responsible for the information, education and communication activities in the village. The committee also motivates the village accept the relevant state-sponsored programmes of the department. The committee is lively link between the health worker and the village community. Thus, this led to one VHC, in each of the 71,000 villages of the state³⁵.

(2) Monitoring :

Improvement in monitoring has resulted in timely problem solving and better performance. Due to regular meetings held every month all programmes are regularly monitored. The department of public health brings out a monthly health bulletin giving the progress in all programmes. Monitoring is followed by feed back with constructive suggestions about how to bring about changes if any³⁶.

(3) The single most important defect in primary health care has been the near total lack of community involvement and it is here that some stirrings of change have happened in Madhya Pradesh in the last 4 years which can lead to a paradigm shift in the delivery of health care.

The first major step at involving the community began at the district hospital in Indore where the local administration involved the community to do a massive cleaning campaign of the hospital on the wake of the plague epidemic in Surat in Gujarat. The community came forward to support that campaign and soon a nucleus of community volunteers was created for hospital management. This group called itself a Rogi Kalyans Samiti (RKS) or patients welfare committee and began undertaking larger improvements in the hospital including generation of funds through user fees. The funds so generated were used for improving hospital amenities. Impressed with the model of community management the state government institutionalised this arrangement and motivated other districts to follow the example. The funds received from the RKS through user charges do not get deposited in the state exchequer but is at the disposal of the executive committee. The RKS are registered as autonomous NGOS and have complete control over funds. By the end of 1996, a total of Rs.8 crores had been collected all over the state and different hospitals³⁷.

35. Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995

36. Ibid

37. Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1998

Another major step towards community - Centering of primary was through initiating the Jan Swastya Rakshak Scheme of barefoot doctors. This was an effort at capacity building in the community for basic health needs and not seen as an extended arm of the health department. Under this scheme, one person from each village was to be selected by the panchayat and trained on basic health care at the public health centre for 6 months. The Jan Swastya Rakshak can then begin to impart basic health care in the village for which services the community could pay the person. In the two years since the scheme was in operation, over 20,000 Jan, Swastya Rakshaks have been trained in the state³⁸.

(4) Another major player providing for health services in India are the non-governmental and voluntary organisations.

They have been very successful in implementing health – related Programmes especially concerned with basic health management, reach remote and inaccessible area and motivating the people through extension and communication. Through Madhya Pradesh does not have a very strong tradition of NGOS and voluntary effort, unlike neighboring Gujarat and Rajasthan, there are some good examples in the state such as the Sanjivani Abhiyan in Satna, the Ramakerishna Mission in Raipur, the Rural Development Services Society (RDSS, Silvani) in Raisen³⁹.

Health : The continuing challenge :

Despite state governments initiative and community involvement there are areas which continue to pose a services challenge to the effective implementation of health services. The problems of the government health system may be grouped under 3 headings.

- Financial Problem
- Managerial Problem
- Gender issue is health

Madhya Pradesh's progress in reducing the infant mortality from 196 per thousand live births in 1950 to 97 by 1996 is significant. However, health improvements have lagged behind All-India average and as of 1995 the state had the highest crude birth rate and the second highest infant mortality rates in the country⁴⁰.

38: Ibid

39. Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report. 1995.

40. Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report. 1998

Now, if we focus on financial problems we find that the health budget is just about 4.2 percent of the state budget. Since almost 35 percent of the money in the health budget comes from government of India, the Health Department gets only about 3 percent of the state's resources. This is also true of the 8th plan in general. The allocation for health department being only 2.69 percent of the total 8th plan for the state. More disturbing is the fact that revenue expenditure on health as a percentage of total expenditure by the state has been continuously decreasing resulting in diverse effect on the delivery of health services in the state. Again, within the resources available in the health budget, very little money is used for the programmes which have been outlined above as the most important public health programmes of our state. Only 0.57 percent expenditure is on maternal and child health, and 9.34 percent on national disease programmes. This resource constraint has resulted in a situation where the government is not in a position to propose any new scheme. Even the continuation of old scheme is difficult. It is difficult to properly maintain the existing health infrastructure and to deliver services effectively, due to fiscal constraints for example, only Rs 0.50 is spent per out door patient and Rs 2.50 per indoor patient on medicine and this needs to be more than doubled. To provide at least one ambulance for each of the 42 district hospitals, 77 civil hospitals, 190 CHCS, and 269 block PHCS, 414 new ambulances are needed. For purchasing new equipment and maintaining existing equipment and building, an annual cost of Rs 6.75 crore is necessary. The maintenance and replacement of furniture, beds, linen in the hospitals according to the prescribed replacement schedule requires Rs 750 crore every year. Because the provision for their replacement is only Rs75 Lakh per year, these items in the hospitals are of very poor quality, leading to problems of sanitation, and public dissatisfaction. The state needs to staff all Sub-Health centres, to achieve the desired results in rural health programmes. This would imply creation of 485 posts of LHV, and 1,820 posts of male MPWS. As per norms, the state needs 15, 821 health institutions (SHC, PHC, and CHC), against which 13, 967 are sanctioned leaving 1, 854 more to be sanctioned. Just to ensure that all sanctioned institutions (13, 967) have a building the total cost would be in excess of Rs 500 crore⁴¹.

There have been a rapid expansion of health infrastructure especially in the rural areas in Madhya Pradesh although they still fall short of

41. Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

desirable norms. The norms for development of infrastructure have been a Sub-Health centre for every 5000 population, a primary health centre for every 30,000 population and a community health centre for every 80,000 population.

Rural Allopathic Health care Institutions required in MP

Institutions	No. Currently in existence	No. Required in		Gap	
		1998	2001	1998	2001
Sub-Health Centre	11,938	17,506	18,674	5,568	6,736
Primary Health Centre	1,814	2,245	2,395	431	581
Community Health Centre	197	561	599	364	402

Source : Strengthening Primary Health Care in Madhya Pradesh, P.K. Mehrotra and Alok Chaurasia, 1998.

Thus, the table indicates the gap in facilities which calls for considerable additionality of resources to be made available for health sector expansion.

Managerial Problems :

There are no doctors in 375 of the 1,841 state PHCS, whereas many urban hospitals have surplus doctors. Apart from this, approximately 50, doctors are on unauthorised leave at any given time resulting in poor quality of services in the rural health institutions. Apart from this, there are complaints that many health workers do not stay at their headquarters. The reason for this, is based on the fact that many health workers face difficulty in staying at their headquarters, as there are no house for them. Most of these health workers are women, many of whom are unmarried and find it difficult to stay under these circumstances. Another major malaise of the health set-up is over centralisation of authority. All the authority in a district is centralised in the chief medical and health officer (CMHO). Which results in the CMHO becoming over-loaded with unproductive work, and a lack of initiative in other officers.

Gender Issue in Health :

A comparison between the index of women's advancement (WDI) calculated by adding of percentage of female literacy, percentage of women gain fully employed, and percentage of unmarried women in the age group (15-19), and infant mortality rates of districts of Madhya Pradesh in spite of some fluctuations shows the general trend that wherever index of women advancement is low, the IMR is high.

This becomes clear when we compare the districts at either end of the spectrum. Thus, Morena, Bhind and Shivpuri, which have a very low index of maternal development, have a high IMR. On the other hand, Indore, Bhopal and Durg have a high index of maternal development and a low IMR⁴².

Now, here if we examine the status of health in Kerala we find that education and health care work synergistically to influence Kerala's demography.

The state had long had education policies which favoured the poor majority instead of the privileged few. After independence, while other states in India spent 3 to 6 percent of their budgets on education, Kerala apportioned 15 percent, allocating it preferentially to primary and secondary schools in contrast with other parts of the country which spent more on higher education. These policies resulted in universal primary education and mass literacy by the 1970s. By 1991, Kerala was 100 percent literate, education increased political conscience leading people to demand their rights, including services from the government such as, health care, successive state government responded and well-distributed and functioning public health system was built in the state. The state has the most extensive infrastructure in the country about four times as many hospitals and nearly twice the number of hospital beds per 100,000 people as the Indian average.

The more favourable situation with regard to social services in Kerala is also reinforced by the higher status of women. Kerala is the only state in India with more women than men i.e. a 'female-favourable' sex ratio, which is found in most parts of the world. Women's education has been associated

42: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

with a higher age at marriage – the average among females in Kerala being 23 years, compared with 17 years nationally. A high proportion of women, particularly those from poor households, are in the work force, which in turn enhanced household income. By 1991, its life expectancy was 70 years, comparable with 75 year in the United States. Moreover, family planning has been successful in Kerala without the compulsion applied in other parts of India. Its infant mortality rate was 21, significantly lower than the Indian average of 86 and the average of all low income countries, 106. During the 1981-91 decade, Kerala's annual population growth rate was 1.31% well below the national rate of 2.11 percent.

If we now compare the status of health in Kerala with the four large northern states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, almost 40% of India population lives, birth and death rates persisted at unacceptably high levels, for example, IMR over 90 per 1000 live birth; crude mortality over 10 and the crude birth rate over 33 per thousand population. Less than half of the population over 7 years of age in these states are literate and less than 30 percent of their females⁴³.

This co-relation can be explained on the basis of many hypothesis, important being : Better education leads to greater role in decision –making in the household by women, such as, better marriage, better spacing of children, better income, better utilisation of available resources and services, better nutrition, health related knowledge and better care during sickness.

Traditionally, health has generally been considered the responsibility of women. Thus almost 80 percent sterilisation operations are performed on women, it is women who take care of the child during illness and brings it to the health care institutions for immunisation, etc., women are responsible for the drinking water and nutritional needs of the family. This has resulted in women getting overburdened with the task of providing good health to the community. Thus, women are at the centre of the complex web of factors which lead to better health for the community⁴⁴.

43: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

44: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995.

Conclusion :-

The guarantee is however “incomplete”⁴⁵ what is secured is the existence of an institution that opens almost every day for a small and variable number of hours with some pupils and at least one teachers who spends much time in supervising rather than teaching. The teachers can be pass out from class 10 and in case of women, class 8. They qualify to be ‘teachers’ after receiving training for 30 days. The definition of attendance is rather ambiguous. A child who has attended school even for one day in a year is likely to be included in the category of ‘Children attending school’.

The exercise for recognizing these institutions is that they are meant for children in backward areas. This not only legitimizes low- quality education for poor children, most of whom are dalits, tribal and minorities the scheme is anti-girl too, for gender parity is merely a ratio of enrolment of girls and boys. It indicates neither participation in school nor any learning achievement. It is also unclear that whether those who are enrolled attend regularly and whether those who do acquire basic literacy. What is not secured is access to school which would impart the skills and knowledge that constitute the primary curriculum to a large majority of their pupils, who could use them outside the school system or as a crucial input into further schooling.

Moreover, this EGS and alternative schools lower the standard of ‘regular schools’. According to ‘ Operation Blackboard’ 1986, the minimum requirement was three teachers and three class rooms per school. The norm proposed in these school include two teachers and one room per teacher. Thus, with plans like these, the scope for education in backward areas seems break.

On the other hand, the health sector is an important social sector with direct implication for the quality of life. It also indirectly assists in development and productivity. With the recent constitutional introduction of gram panchayats in the state, people’s participation will not be merely passive acceptance of health care but would progress towards the ideal of an active partnership and a dynamic decision – making role for the community. However, it has been found that India has not been able to fulfill goal for “Health for All” by 2000 and its inability to execute the

45 :- Francis Laclercq (2002). The impact of educational policy reform on the school system : A field study of EGS and primary school in MP: CSH occasional paper.

declaration could be traced to the factor that allocation of funds to the health sector being low the reach and quality of public health has been below the desired standard. Over the years the state's share in the health spending has increased while the grants from centre has declined drastically. Thus the state in its effort at quickly closing the gap to keep up with national norms has resulted in the system expanding by compromising in some parts on infrastructure, staff and facilities. Another factor is that the system retains its curative bias has affected efficient delivery of primary health care. Yet, another major drawback is the low population density and wide spread of villages in Madhya Pradesh where a Sub-Health centre for 3000 population covers as much as 6 villages over an area of only 7 square kilometres. Thus, by way on conclusion, it must be said that Madhya Pradesh's balance-sheet of outcomes related to health is not yet satisfactory and the goal of "Health for All" remains a challenging one for the state.

Chapter 4:

LAND DISTRIBUTION AND GRAM SWARAJ IN MADHYA PRADESH

Land Distribution:

The struggle for land is the straggle for life for the comprehensive concept of land includes water, forest, Mountain and mines, and all that is there in.¹ Also, India being an agricultural country the primary source of livelihood for a vast majority of people living in rural and tribal areas, land continues to be the pivotal property in terms of both income and employment around which socio-economic privileges and deprivations revolve. Though the members of scheduled Castes and scheduled tribes mostly reside in the countryside and derive their livelihood by working on land, they are the most disadvantaged in respect of land. The incidence of landlessness is more pronounced among these groups, the bulk of whom are agricultural labourers having minicule holdings or are sharecroppers or other types of insecure tenants. A majority of scheduled castes (77 %) and scheduled tribes (90 %) are landless. Around 87 percent of the land-holders of scheduled caste and 65 percent of scheduled tribes in the country belong to the category of small and marginal farmers. The poorest among the poor in Indian society are largely from these groups. Moreover, as per the estimates of the Planning Commission, 48 percent of population of scheduled castes and tribes are below the poverty line.²

In recognition the basic suggestion that landlessness poor land ownership position of the scheduled groups accounts largely for their poverty and makes them vulnerable to all forms of social and economic exploitation, governments both at the Centre as well as at the state level have made systematic endeavors to protect and promote their rights with regard to control and use of land. However, land being a state subject, the legislative and administrative responsibility in regard to the whole issue of land (be it in relation with reforms, land distribution or any other), lies with the state governments, with the central government laying down the general guidelines for implementation of principals, in tune with the socialistic spirit of the constitution. Thus there are variations to be found in the nature of legislative measures undertaken and their implementation. Also, the socio-cultural as well as the political forces that are region specific contribute immensely towards difference in state policies on land.³

1:- Rajendra K. Sail (2002) : Peoples Struggle for Land- A Case Study, in Praveen K. Jha (ed) 'Land Reforms in India: Issues of Equality in Rural Madhya Pradesh'; Sage Publication.

2:- B.B. Mohanty (2001) Land Distribution Among Scheduled Castes and Tribes; Economic and Political Weekly; Volume 36, Number 40, PP 3857-3868.

3:- Harsh Mander (2004) Land Revenue Code, 1959: Article by Mr. Harsh Mander Titled " Tribal Land Alienation in Madhya Pradesh" Published by NCAS, Pune.

The chapter thus seeks to study land rights of the scheduled castes and tribes and the various acts and policies that have been enacted and implemented in the state of Madhya Pradesh with special emphasis on provision of Land Distribution among the scheduled castes and tribes under the Congress ruled government of Digvijay Singh in the 1990's.

Land reforms in India have a long history. The concerns expressed in the thirties (30's) during the struggle for Independence and later in the report of the Kumarappa Committee on Agrarian reforms led to the evolution of the comprehensive land policy embodied in the first and the second five year plans. The policy, reflecting national thinking at the time, was arrived at jointly by center and the state, and became the basis of extensive legislation in the states. In the fifties (50's) two phase of land reform were envisaged. The first phase involved action in four main directions: abolition of intermediary tenures, security of tenants leading on for the greater number among them to accrual of ownership; regulation of rent, and enforcement of ceilings on land holdings and distribution of surplus land. These measures were considered essential for freeing the rural economy of its feudal and semi-feudal vestiges and creating conditions for steady growth of agriculture and agricultural productivity. The vision here was of eventually attaining a just rural society in which differences between those who held land and those who were without land, which had also a strong association with caste, could progressively disappear.⁴

As, Indian society is hierarchical and iniquitous, and enmeshed in feudal ethos. In such a society, to be born into a particular social group is to be the bearer of specific rights and obligations and to be involved in a specific pattern of relationship with members of other groups. Inequality and domination are treated as the basis of social relationship. The lower castes, as per their place in social hierarchy, are supposed to serve the dominant castes and remain loyal to them. To sustain their aristocratic status the dominant castes stay aloof from the subject population and its ascribed duties. This has been the practice as far back as the history of Indian society can be traced. The tribals, who were initially within a relatively egalitarian and homogeneous social order with a separate socio-cultural and ecological milieu of their own, come under the subservience and dominance of the rich non-tribals in due course through the 'civilising' and 'modernising' effects of colonialism and planning. Viewed in this perspective, scheduled castes and tribes are the historically deprived and backward section of Indian society who languish at the lower portions of the social and economic pyramid. In a society of this kind, where inequality and domination are deeply frozen in the social structure and in the psyche of the people, it is

4:- Land Reform and Rural Change (1992); Indian Association of Social Science Institutions Quarterly; (Part One) Volume 10, Number 3.

difficult to uplift and empower the deprived groups through legislative measures because any attempt to exercise the rights created by law is often to challenge the existing order of relations. The modes of living, working and the ideology that make up this stratification constitute very real inhibitions and obstacle, and the strength of the system is evidenced by the unwillingness of the under privileged and exploited lower strata to challenge them. Their submissiveness, tolerance and survival mindedness, the ruling minorities who find the existing social order beneficial remain apathetic or lukewarm towards issues concerning the upliftment and empowerment of the people at the lower rungs as it tends to challenge their spectral dominance.

Similarly, Land Distribution in India closely follows social hierarchy. While the large landowners invariably belong to the upper castes, the cultivators belong to the middle castes and the agricultural workers largely to the scheduled castes and tribes. Land being the important socially valued asset, its unequal distribution helps maintain the hierarchical structure and strengthen the bases of dominance of the privileged groups by perpetuating inequality and deprivation in various socioeconomic spheres. Seen from this point, the idea of fair distribution of land directly strikes out the roots of such social relations. Therefore the upper castes landed interests have opposed the legislative measures with respect to land redistribution through various methods.

Another point of considerable importance is, in an insensitive Democracy like India, state action is identified with people's action and people's empowerment rests on their collective resistance and agitation. The measure to promote and protect the interests of the deprived are not usually expected without persistent demands and protracted struggles. Land reforms in India have been launched in response to compelling demands expressed through agitation, struggle and movements. British colonialism, through its land revenue policy and elaborate exploitative bureaucratic structure, made land alienable on a large scale especially in tribal areas. The tribal who were cultivating land by cleaning forests within their customary norms and practices without any experience of landlessness, were compelled to work as laborers in their own land and subjected to various kinds of oppression and exploitation. Gradually it generated into strong discontentment and the simmering tensions culminated in rebellions one after another. Resistance of this nature made the British Raj conscious of the rebellious potentialities of the tribal and ultimately compelled them to initiate some measures to pacify tensions in the tribal areas. As a result of this, the Chotanagpur tenancy Act, 1908; Central provinces Land Alienation Act, 1916, Bihar tenancy Act, 1885, and Bombay Land revenue code (section 73A) were enacted. Despite these provisions for prevention of land transfers from tribal and non-tribal's, land alienation through debt mechanism, tenancy and other dishonest

practices continued unabated in many parts of tribal India. Besides, the social reform movements with anti-Brahminical overtones led by E.V. Ramaswamy periyar in Tamil Nadu, Narayan Guru in Kerala, Jyotoba Phule and Ambedkar in Maharashtra and Sant Ramadas in Uttar Pradesh provided the lower castes with a distinct identity and awakened the government to recognize the rights of these deprived groups and to undertake measures for the removal of social injustice and exploitation. As a consequence land reforms became a necessary part of the process of national planning for the emancipation of these deprived people. All states without exception started showing interest in land redistribution, and formulated their own legislative measures to allot land as well as to protect it from being transferred to non-scheduled groups⁵. Thus, the land reforms envisaged in the 50's may be divided into two parts. One as abolition of intermediaries like the zamindars, the other is tenancy reform and ceiling on holdings.

The first is essentially abolition of agrarian feudalism and it has to be the first step for agricultural development under democratic conditions. The tiller must be liberated from the feudal hierarchy. Tenancy reform included tenancy legislation giving security of tenure and regulating rent, and in some cases, making the tenant the owner of the land. The purpose was to promote owner cultivation. Owner cultivation has to be promoted by legislation because, with the traditional agricultural technology, cultivation was not forfeitable and landowners preferred to lease out their land, rack-renting the tenant and otherwise exploiting him through trading and money lending as allied activities. For the same reason, a non-agriculturalist was prohibited to purchase agricultural land. In the conditions of agricultural technology then prevailing, the nexus of absentee ownership, trading and money lending had to be broken, on the other hand the purpose of land ceiling reform was to acquire the ceiling surplus land and to distribute it to marginal and sub-marginal farmers. However, one must admit that this has almost totally failed; that it has been circumvented by various means such as sub-division and benami transactions.⁶ Another point worth noting about ceiling is that the law stipulates that the land owners will be free to declare the land of his choice as surplus. Large land owners have invariably some land which is of very inferior quality or almost barren and unfit for cultivation. The Agricultural census has noted that 75 per cent of the operated area in the country is unutilized and that 4 percent of the unutilized land is in the size

5:- B.B. Mohanty (2001) Land Distribution Among Scheduled Castes and Tribes; Economic and Political Weekly; Volume 36, Number 40, PP 3857-3868.

6:- V.M. Dandekar (1992): Land Reform and Agricultural Development ; Indian Association of Social Science Institutions Quarterly; Volume 10; Number 3; PP180-183.

category of 10 hectares and above. The landowners naturally surrendered the worst land which required substantial investment to make it fit for cultivation. Distributing such inferior land to absolutely resourceless persons may not be of much use unless it is backed by some provision for improving it.⁷

Now, we turn to the various land legislations enacted and implemented in the state of Madhya Pradesh especially the enactment of land distribution under the Congress rule of Digvijay Singh in the 1990's. Madhya Pradesh comprises of five district regions- Mahakoshal, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh and Sironj. Four districts are identified as tribal district, more than 60 percent of their population consisting of scheduled tribes. These are Mandla, Bastar, Jhabua and Sarguja. In 35 out of the total 45 districts, tribal sub- plan areas have been marked out. Because of the varied historical background of different regions, there was a great deal of heterogeneity in the land rights of different sections of the population.

Before the abolition of the intermediary rights in 1951, Madhya Pradesh had two main land systems. In 1936, the report on land revenue administration in the central provinces showed that 97% of the area was under Malguzari tenures and three percent under Ryotwari tenures. Since Malguzars owned their own forests, there did not exist forest village in the Malguzari land system.

In 1981, Madhya Pradesh had a tribal population of about 12 million or 23 percent of the total tribal population of the country. The tribal population comprises 46 main tribes, the Gond groups of tribes being predominant among them. Tribals represent the bulk of subsistence farmers in the state. For the most part they practice settled cultivation, but some forest villages also practice shifting cultivation.

The Malguzari system was taken over by the East India Company from the former Maratha rules. Until 1883, when the Bengal tenancy Act, 1881 was adopted, the Central Provinces had no revenue code of their own and the arrangements in force were based on circulars and notifications issued from time to time. From being collectors of revenue, for the first time, in 1853, Malguzars were declared as owners of land. Under the Malguzars the cultivators had varying degrees of occupancy rights and Kadimi Jotedar or Kashtkar, while the Malguzars became full proprietors of lands held directly by them. No distinction was made between tribal and non-tribal villages. In 1854, occupancy tenants who had held land continuously for 12 years since 1840 were given the right to full ownership with the enactment

7:- Kripa Shankar (1992): Land Reform : The Next Step ; Indian Association of Social Science Institutions Quarterly; Volume 10; Number 3; PP158-162

in 1951 of the Madhya Pradesh abolition of Intermediary Rights Act, Malguzari tenants came to an end⁸. Thus, the great variety of ownership and occupancy, tenures which historically came to exist in different parts of Madhya Pradesh have been consolidated under the Madhya Pradesh land Revenue code, 1959, into two categories namely, Tenure Holder (Bhumiswami) and occupancy tenant. Tribals obtained Bhumiswami rights on new lands allotted to them on the same lines as others. Under legislations enacted in 1916, non-tribals cannot buy land from tribals. Except in forest villages, leases of government land cannot acquire Bhumiswami rights.⁹

Another important measures in the code to protect the economic interests of Scheduled Tribes were section 165(6) and 165(7). Prior to its amendment in 1976, section 165(6) of the code imposed a ban on transfer of agricultural land owned by a “ Bhusmiswami” belonging to such a tribe, without the prior permission of the collector, who must specify the reasons for such permission in writing. Another important amendment in 1981 added the subsection 6-C to this section, which laid down the principles and facts which are to be considered by the collector while granting or refusing to grant permission. These were : Whether or not the person to whom land is being transferred is a resident of the scheduled area; the purpose to which land shall be or is likely to be used after the transfer; whether the transfer serves or is likely to serve or prejudice the social, cultural and economic interest of the residents of the scheduled area; whether the compensation being paid is adequate enough; whether the transaction is spurious, fictitious or Benami; ect.

It can thus be inferred from the various legislations that the authorities have kept the interest and welfare of tribals in forefront and have tried to ensure that they are protected. But the extent to which they have been successful cannot be stated. The likely reasons for their not being as effective as they should have been can be summarized as; the lacunae in the laws; Ignorance of the tribal people; the complicated legal procedures involved.¹⁰

Some significant conclusions of the study conducted in the tribal areas of Jhabua, Sarguja etc. by the Tribal Research and Development Institute; Bhopal in the year 1973, to assess the impact of protective legislation in the context of Madhya Pradesh were that: on the one hand section 165(6) of the

8:- M.L. Patel (1992): Land- Rights of Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh ; Indian Association of Social Science Institutions Quarterly; Volume 10; Number 3; PP106-109.

9:- Ibid.

10:- Harsh Mander (2004) Land Revenue Code, 1959: Article by Mr. Harsh Mander Titled “ Tribal Land Alienation in Madhya Pradesh” Published by NCAS, Pune.

Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code, 1959, prohibits transfer of land from aboriginal, the later part of the same section permits it under certain conditions such as the the decision of the collector being final in granting or refusing to grant permission for the transfer.¹¹ Moreover, in many states (for example, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kerala) it was seen that transfers could be made with the prior permission of the competent authority (collector, Sub- divisional officer, among others) which ultimately left the implementation of these measures to the discretion of the bureaucrats and also made them more powerful. It has also been pointed out that the rich upper castes do not find any difficulty in getting the permission of the concerned officials, and sometimes the members of scheduled groups are required to spend a certain amount for this purpose.¹² Thus all other clauses in the interest of the aboriginal seem to be overshadowed by this and transfer of the land from the tribal to non-tribal is a regular feature. The other findings of the study prove the futility of the legislations to protect the tribals. For example, in Sarguja districts between 1966-67 and 1871-72, out of the total 538 cases in which permission was given to dispose off land, 225 that is roughly 42 per cent were for just repayment of loans. Another interesting finding was the fact that out of these 225 cases of repayment of loans, 102, about 45 per cent were for repayment of government dues. In the same study, in Sarguja, it was found that out of 538 sanctions, 184 sanctions resulted in residual holdings ranging from 0-4 acres with the sellers and out of this 184, 91 were such that have become totally landless. In other words, out of the 538 cases, 91 have become landless, 41 have one acres of land left while 25 have only 2 acres of land left after the sale.

The Jhabua study again revealed that out of the 184 cases of land transfer that was permitted by the collector, 86 cases were such where the permission was sought by the tribal and owner for the repayment of government loans. The study reports that indebtedness is the main cause of land alienation. What happens is that tribals mortgage their land to non-tribals and take loans. They would then take a loan from government and use it for repayment of the private debts. Having failed to pay the loan due to government, they apply for permission to sell land, which is granted.

Thus despite imaginative legislation to protect the tribals from land alienation, the Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code, 1959, both legal and illegal transfers continued. There were firstly a large number of cases in

11:- Ibid

12:- B.B. Mohanty (2001) Land Distribution Among Scheduled Castes and Tribes; Economic and Political Weekly; Volume 36; Number 40, PP 3857-3868.

which the collector permitted transfers without apparent application of adequate caution in protecting the interest of the tribals. They also misused provisions of section 169 and 190 of the code according to section 169, if any Bhumiswami allows her or his land to be cultivated by another for a period of more than three years continuously, the rights of an occupancy tenant will accrue to them and they would then automatically become Bhumuswami by virtue of section 190. These measures were incorporated to check absentee landlordism and protect the interests of scheduled tribes of actual tillers of the soil. But these measures were misused to facilitate illegal and exploitative transfers of land from tribals to non-tribals. A powerful effort to plug legal loopholes and to secure social justice to tribal was made in Madhya Pradesh by sections 170(A) and 170(B) which were introduced in the code by important amendments in 1976 and 1980 respectively¹³.

The greatest significance of the section 170(A) is that, for the first time it empowered a revenue officer to take suo-motto or on an application of the tribal transferor, for annulment of a transfer made in contravention of sub-section (6) of 165. There is no ban of limitation either on an application by the tribal or on a suo-motto action by the Sub-Divisional Officer(SDO).

Section 170(B) in many ways goes even further than section 170(A) as it does not merely empower the SDO to enquire into the bonafide of a transaction of agricultural land from a tribal to non-tribal. It places a mandatory obligation on the SDO to enquire into the Bonafide of all transactions in which agricultural land on 2nd October 1959 was owned by a person declared to be an aboriginal tribal and which on the 24th October, 1959 was in possession of a non-tribal. It further requires a person in possession of agricultural land purchased from a person and who was not a member of the notified aboriginal tribe to give information regarding transfer in the form prescribed to the Sub-Divisional Officer within two years if 24th October 1980 that is up to 23rd October 1982.

If the person in possession of the type of land described in Sub-Section (1) fails to notify up to 23rd October, 1982, the law now provides that it shall be deemed that such person was holding the land without lawful authority and the land shall revert to the person to whom it originally belonged and in case he or she is dead, the land shall revert to their heir.¹⁴

If we look at the implementation of sections 170(A) and 170(B), according to the latest available official statistics, we find that, up to September 1997, a total of 39, 710 cases were registered under section

13:- Harsh Mander (2004) Land Revenue Code, 1959: Article by Mr. Harsh Mander Titled "Tribal Land Alienation in Madhya Pradesh" Published by NCAS, Pune.

14:- Ibid

170(B) involving 45,729.792 hectares of land of these, 34,489 cases have been decided involving 41,963.053 hectares of land. In other words, 17 years after the legislation, 13.15 percent cases still remain pending in various courts. Among the 34,489 cases in which final orders have been passed, 14,395 or 41.73 percent have been decided in favour of the tribal landowners and 38.48 percent of land area has been ordered to be restored to the original tribal owners.

The situation is much less satisfactory with regard to ensuring actual possessions to the original tribal landowners of the 16149.997 hectares decided in favour of tribals, although in theory, restoration is automatic, official statistics report only possession given of 5787.557 hectares or 35.83 percent. The ground realities are likely to be more distressing because the tribals are likely to be in actual possession of only a tiny fraction of the total land ordered by courts to be restored to tribals. Given the socio-economic realities of tribal region, it is unlikely that tribals, even after receiving formal legal possession of even this small proportion of their erstwhile lands, would have the local administrative and political muscles to ensure that they would retain possession in opposition to their powerful non-tribal opponents. Findings with regard to Benami transaction revealed that the land nominally owned by tribal Bhumiswami were in practice, cultivated by non-tribals. Though such cases are a common knowledge in the village, they are rarely reported to the Patwaris and other local revenue officers or by the non-official committee, which were set up for such local investigation by the state government. Usually, such cases are restricted to those in which the tribal himself or herself applies for relief. In other words, the suo-motto responsibility of SDOs to enquire into all transactions from 1959 to 1980 in which agricultural land has changed hands from tribal to non-tribal, has very frequently not been fulfilled. Disposal of cases tends to be slow and the large majority of cases tend to be decided mechanically in favour of non-tribals. The 1983 study of 8 districts by the tribal research institute, Bhopal, reported that of the 4118 cases registered in these 8 districts, only 1782 or 43.20 percent cases were disposed. Of this, 64.5 percent of the cases were decided against the tribals.

Also, it has been reported that out of a total of 39710 cases registered in the whole state up to September 1997 under section 170(B), 13.15 percent remain pending for decision even 17 years after the legislation was enforced.

Analysis of many of the cases decided in favour of non-tribals show that disposal has been mostly in contravention of the law. Permission to sell by the collector to usually taken as final evidence of a bonafide transaction, without examining whether a fair price of the land holding was enquired into and whether the due price was actually paid to the tribal land-owner. Securing local evidence through a field inspection can prove the existence of

Benami holdings. However despite administrative instruction recommending recourse, it is rarely resorted to cases involving Benami holdings tend to fall by default or due to lack of evidence. Revenue officers also frequently overlook the shift in the burden of proof to the non-tribal transferee of land, to establish that the transaction was legal and bonafide.

Implementation has been found to be weakest at the level of restoring possession to the original tribal land- owners. It is clear that even according to official figures, out of a total of 16149.997 hectares of land decided in favour of tribals, possession has not been restored of 10,362.440 hectares or 64.17 percent of such cases. The 1983 study carried out by the tribal research Institute, revealed that in majority of cases decided in favour of tribals, they had not secured actual possession because of threats and violence by the non-tribals in possession of land and delays and complicity of local revenue functionaries.¹⁵

Another observation has been that the fundamental cause of tribal land alienation is chronic indebtedness. No law to protect the tribals can be successful unless it is complemented by measures to meet their credit needs. Besides the above mentioned, the legislative measures that have been undertaken in Madhya Pradesh to prevent tribal land alienation can succeed only if the oppressed people intended to benefit from these provisions of the law are convinced about their legitimacy. There is need to provide them, knowledge about the legal provisions, to educate and mobilize them to benefit from these provisions.¹⁶ A step towards this was initiated by the Madhya Pradesh government by making free distribution of the 'land right and loan books' (Bhu Adhikar Aur Rin Pustikayen) to the farmers. So far the books have been distributed to 1236139 scheduled caste farmers and 1529093 scheduled tribe farmers.¹⁷

The latest decision that has been taken by the Madhya Pradesh government pertaining to upliftment of the scheduled castes and tribes is the decision to allot Charnoi land patta to these sections of society. On March 4, 1998 the government of Madhya Pradesh issued an order to the district administration for redistribution of land gained by downsizing the area of 'Charnoi' (grazing) land from 7.5 percent in each village to 5 percent , which it is estimated, can provide a surplus of about six lakh scheduled castes and tribes households. During this phase 1.54 lakh acres of land in the form of

15:- Ibid

16:- Ibid

17:- Bhopal Declaration (Bhopal Ghoshana Patra): Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

<http://www.mp.nic.in/tribals/bhopalghoshana/English/freedistribution.htm>.

80,470 pattas was distributed to 46,088 families. Following this on September 19, 2001 the state government further reduced the Charnoi land from 5 percent to 2 percent. Due to this in the second phase a total of about 6 lakh acres of land was expected to be surplus of which 3.68 lakh acres it was claimed had already been identified and it was expected that another 2.5 lakh acres more would be available. In this manner the government claimed that a total of 1,04,486 acres had been distributed to 32,082 scheduled caste families. The scheme was expected to benefit 4 lakh families. The government pointed out that between 1992 and 1993 the total land declared surplus was only 3.23 lakh acres, but by taking over Charnoi land it could provide much more land to the landless. By this in the post divided state of Madhya Pradesh, out of the 11.42 lakh scheduled castes, 4 lakhs or 15.35 percent of them could become independent cultivators.¹⁸ Attempts were also made to remove encroachments on land allotted to Dalits. According to the land records as of November 2001, 1,416 scheduled castes were found to be dispossessed of whom 523 were restored possession and another 888 cases were pending. A more recent report of the state government claimed that by July 2003, 2,48,000 hectares of land had been distributed among 3,03,000 landless individuals of whom scheduled castes constitute 1,99,178 to whom 1,60,194 hectares have been distributed. The process of identifying surplus land and redistributing it among the landless continued during 2003 in the State.¹⁹

Another important feature of Charnoi land distribution was the issuing of joint patta for the distributed land. This is the first time that government has taken administrative decision to this effect, understanding the impact that ownership of land would have on the status and general overall well being of women. Patta that have been issued for Charnoi land state combined ownership of both man and woman over the allotted land.²⁰

However, the anomalies reported in land distribution are large in number. The findings of “ Bhoomi Sudhar Aayukt’ office and not of any voluntary organization revealed that in the Gwalior and Chambal region about 70 percent people who had been given pattas did not know where the allotted land was and the land allotted had not been measured; in some places, even after land had been measured and given to the allottees, they did

18:- the Bhopal Document (2002): Charting a New Course For Dalits For the 21st Century, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

19:- Samarthan(2002):Madhya Pradesh Me Panchayati Raj Ek Adhyayan 1995-2000, Report(in Hindi) of Samarthan, Centre for Development Support, Bhopal

20:- Harsh Mander (2004) Land Revenue Code, 1959: Article by Mr. Harsh Mander Titled “ Tribal Land Alienation in Madhya Pradesh” Published by NCAS, Pune.

not get its ownership; the quality of the land was poor and very often the land belonging to the scheduled communities was under the possession of people from other communities.

Findings of Ekta Parishad in the Shivpuri region of Madhya Pradesh revealed a dispute between the revenue and forest departments as a result of which 11 thousand people were suffering and the land in question was about 21 thousand hectares on which these people were settled and of which, Pattas had been issued to them in the past. Revenue department forced them to pay rent for it while the forest department prevented them from cultivating the land, thus forcing them to vacate the occupied land.

Large scale violence as a result of distribution of land in Rajgarh district and regions of Shivpuri and Ujjain were reported where in atrocities in the form of destruction of standing crops in the fields of scheduled castes and tribes by the dominant communities (by leaving their animals in the fields to graze) came to the fore.²¹

Another recent study on distribution of Charnoi lands to scheduled castes covering eight villages in two blocks- Hatta and Shahnagar of Damoh and Panna districts respectively evaluates the amount of land distributed, and whether beneficiaries have been able to take possession of it. These blocks are situated within the 10 districts of the Bundelkhand region where Dalits constitute 25 percent of the population. The study revealed the process of land distribution to be slow though there were differences between districts. In Hatta block in Damoh district land had been distributed mainly to landless women so far, other categories, such as landless scheduled castes families, were yet to be covered. Only 44% of the respondents in the former category had received land and some had yet to gain actual possession. In Shahnagar block in Panna district on the other hand, 33 per cent of the respondent households had received land from the government. Seven percent of the respondents had bought land: 44 percent of them had bought 1 acres of land. More important, the study points out Charnoi land comprises of poor quality wasteland in the village not suitable for agriculture a fact that is well known to the government. Second, as the number of landless families is large, the process of identification of beneficiaries needs to be formalized, without which, villages are unable to understand why some landless families were given land while others were excluded, leading to conflict. Third, the plots allotted are small, in some cases economically unviable. In Shahnagar block 21 percent had received about 2 acres, 31 per cent had received up to 1.5 and 17 per cent had received up to 1 acres of land. Nor has the government helped the beneficiaries to cultivate the allotted wasteland, a task that would require considerable investment. In Hatta block,

21:- Ibid

beneficiaries complained that they have not received any assistance from the government while in the Shahnagar block about 12% in a few villages have received financial assistance from the government. Equally important, in contravention of rules, in Shahnagar block 38 percent of the respondents who have benefited from Charnoi land distribution are not landless families. The respondents already owned land, with 5 percent owning more than 3 acres of land and 3.8 percent owning 2 acres of land.

A number of problems in the implementation of the scheme have rendered it ineffective. In Hatta block, at least half of the beneficiaries to whom land has been allotted complained that the district authorities had not begun the process of measuring and allotting village land, nor have they received ownership pattas from the government. In Shahnagar the situation is better with a large number having received their ownership papers. Opposition from the upper castes leading to conflict is an important impediment. Respondents felt that government indifference was a major reason, which allowed the upper castes to prevent the scheduled castes from taking possession of land allotted to them. In Hatta block only 36 per cent of the beneficiaries are still in possession of the land allotted: 44 per cent never actually gained possession while 20 per cent have been deprived of the allotted land. In Shahnagar 20 per cent of those allotted land could not gain possession while 17 per cent are no longer in possession. The government also failed to check encroachments on the land allotted to scheduled castes. In Hatta block, 38 percent and in Shahnagar 21 percent of the respondents were allotted land already encroached upon by villagers. It was only with the help of the government machinery that a few of the beneficiaries were able to gain possession of the land allotted but none of them were able to obtain an ownership patta for the land allotted.²²

Gram Swaraj

Democracy, in form and spirit, makes a difference of fundamental nature. For Democracy, to be successful and pragmatic, peoples participation is a *sinè qua non*. Participatory democracy ensures progress and prosperity with pride and pleasure. Thus, decentralization as one of the techniques of administrative reforms for democracy and development, is on the global agenda.

Decentralization enables a better perception of the needs of local areas, makes better decision making possible, gives people a greater voice in decisions concerned with their development and welfare, ensures effective participation of the people, builds up self-reliance by mobilising resources of the community in kind or money, makes development self-sustaining and enables better exploitation of local resources and growth potentials of the local areas for improving productivity and increasing production. The development and welfare programmes concerned with the needs of the people can be integrated and coordinated in a better way through decentralized planning.²³

The chapter thus seeks to look into an attempt being made so far by the congress government under Digvijay Singh in Madhya Pradesh in transferring “ power to the people”..... a basic requirement for democratic decentralization.

Historically, the institution of Panchayat has been an integral part of rural Indian policy and society. Since ancient times, the panchayats have played a key role in organising and maintaining social order in Indian villages. These informal institutions were responsible for regulating and governing village society according to socio-political norms of the time. Indian villages, remote and disconnected from the centry of state power, primarily decided their agenda of development and management of the society and its resources through the institution of panchayats²⁴. Thus the concept of decentralized planning is not new to our nation. It has been accepted in principle since the inception of planning era and even before independence epitomized by Gandhi’s idea of Gram Swaraj. But what he meant was that the village in India should be an independent identity in

23:- Shakun Palharya (2003) ‘Decentralised Governance Hampered by Financial constraint; Economic and Political Weekly, Volume 38, Number 11, PP 1024-1028.

24:-Amitabh Behar and Yogesh Kumar (2002) ‘Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: From Panchayati Raj to Gram Swaraj (1995-2001); Working Paper 170.

economic and administrative manner. But it is a fact that since inception of the planning process, economic planning has been highly centralized and concentrated in nature. Urban local bodies like municipalities or rural institutions such as village panchayats are not only a state subject but have functioned as civic functioning agencies, not as instruments of micro-level planning and development. Thus this type of political and development system had left a vacuum as far as planning at sub-states levels was concerned. Thinking about decentralized planning was not lacking.²⁵ Village Panchayats were included under Article 40 in the ' Directive Principles of State Policy' in Part IV and an entry in the State List (Article 37) of the VII Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Article 40 states that " the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as the unit of self-government" The constitution did not provide for a separate chapter on institutional apparatus and processes for local governance unit 1993 when the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act was passed. Despite this the Panchayati Raj System came into existence during the late 1950s with the introduction of ' community development programmes' and subsequently with the appointment of Balwant Rai Mehta committee in 1952. On ' community development programmes and National Extension services' in 1957. Balwant Rai Mehta committee pattern was followed by most of the states, with some local variations. This system of participatory development created a euphoria in the rural society of the country. The decision making and planning mechanism was vested in the gram sabha. In spite of the initial success the strains were visible in the panchayati Raj System. They became financially weak and fell into the hands of elites. The politico- bureaucratic nexus created a system that isolated the common man thereby pushing the panchayats into vested hands.

The Ashok Mehta committee which was appointed in 1977 recommended the two tier system of panchayati Raj, i.e. Zila parishad and Mandal panchayat. Karnataka model was popular being based on Mandal panchayat. A review of the working of panchayats in Karnataka reveal that to a very large extent the system functioned well. But the problems continued in 1985, G.V.K. Rao committee was formed to suggest ways and

25:- Shakun Palharya (2003) 'Decentralised Governance Hampered by Financial Constraint' Economic and Political Weekly, Volume 38, Number 11, PP 1024-1028

revamping rural local government and in 1986, L.M. Singhvi committee was constituted at the instance of Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. This committee mainly resurrected the nearly forgotten gram sabha. Later on, in 1988 the Sarkaria Commission on center state relations though did not favour constitutional states to panchayati Raj institutions, but adopted uniformity in panchayats throughout the territory of India.

However, in spite of a number of committees being appointed to suggest ways and means to revitalize panchayati Raj institutions , it was observed that these institutions had not been able to acquire the status and dignity of viable and responsive people bodies due to a variety of reasons including absence of regular elections, prolonged suppression, inadequate representation of weaker sections like the scheduled castes and tribes and women, insufficient devolution of power, lack of financial resources and suspicious attitude of state governments.

The journey to find a viable system for rural governance continued, based on the realization that with the rising demand of the people due to greater awareness and spread of literacy, the government could not deliver the goods unless and until power are transferred to the people themselves. This culminated in the passage of the 73rd constitutional amendment act.²⁶

Various committees and sub-committees made several recommendations in the form of the 73rd constitutional amendment providing constitutional status to panchayati Raj institutions. The explanation for the easy passage of the 73rd amendment bill and the acceptance of radical restructuring of the state structure with far reaching political consequences which goes way beyond the committee reports and proposals.

1. Several decades of centralized planning and top-down model of development had paid dividends in terms of economic growth and industrialization. This development model was adopted with the hope that the trickle down effect will involve the poor and marginalized in the process of development. Unfortunately, this trickle down did not take place and a distorted and lopsided development process emerged, where the resources and authority

became further concentrated in few hands. The fruits of development were neither shared, nor did the poor and marginalized section, be they the poor, women or rural people, continued to be marginalized. It was clear by the 1980 that for a more egalitarian and balanced development to be achieved, a more participative democracy and decentralized bottom-up model of development was needed.

2. The collapse of Soviet Union in the late 1980s had led to a crisis and consequently various development paradigms were being discredited or put under strict scrutiny. Simultaneously in the liberal democratic countries new framework of development and governance were emerging. Many of these discourses propounded that for achieving the objectives of democratic states, the governance system needed substantial changes, making the structure more participative and decentralized.
3. During the late 1970s and 1980s all over the world and especially in India, various social movements and civil society initiatives were trying to reclaim their legitimate space from the state. These new social movements and civil society actors were spreading a democratic consciousness in the people and suggesting that a democratic development process had to be participative and bottom-up. According to them, development had to be based on local needs and priorities, and micro initiatives. Development should be flexible process emanating from the grass root level and not a blue print given from above. For these ends, the social movements and civil society actors were demanding radical changes in the government structure, to make it more participative, decentralized, democratic, accountable and transparent. The underlying theme was to replace the state centric development process with people centric development process.

In this national and international context the Indian state was under increasing pressure to radically restructure its governance system to make it more democratic and participative, and to address and needs and priorities of the marginalized sections of the society. It was genuinely felt a more grass-root approval would enhance the efficacy of the state's planning and implementation machinery, and incorporate the marginalized and underprivileged in the

mainstream of development. Thus, once brought to the forefront, the political parties understood the implications and potential of the panchayati system and a political consensus emerged.

The 73rd Amendment Bill was passed by Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with near unanimity on the 22nd and 23rd December 1992 respectively. This bill was ratified by 17 state assemblies in 1993 and came into force as Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act from the 24th April 1993. The Act provides constitutional status to the panchayats and gives it uniformly by making the three tier system a permanent feature. The key features of the Act are the following.

- Panchayats shall be constituted in every state at the village, intermediate and district level. However, the states with a population not exceeding 20 lakh have been given the option to not have any intermediate level Panchayats.
- There shall be a gram sabha in each village exercising such powers and performing such functions at the village level as the legislature of the state may provide by law.
- Members of panchayats at state levels will be elected through direct elections. The election of the chairperson at the intermediate and district level will be through indirect election and the mode of election of the chairperson of the village panchayat has been left to the respective states.
- Seats are reserved for scheduled castes and tribes at all levels according to their population at each level. Not less than one-third of seats are reserved for women and these may be allotted by rotation. The office of chairperson will also be subject to this provision.
- A uniform 5 year term has been granted to the panchayats. In case of dissolution or super-session, elections should be held within 6 months of the date of dissolution.
- State legislatures have the legislative power to confer on the panchayats such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self governance. They may be entrusted with the responsibility of (i) preparing plans for social justice and economic development; (ii) implementation of schemes for social justice and economic development; and (iii) in regard to matters listed in the 11th schedule. The list contains 29

items, such as land improvement, minor irrigation, education, fisheries, women and child development. State government has the power to authorize the panchayat to collect, and appropriate suitable local taxes. The government can make grant-in-aid to the panchayats from the consolidated fund of the concerned state.

- Review of financial position of the panchayats will be undertaken by a finance commission which shall be constituted every 5 years. It will also make recommendations on the distribution of funds between state and local bodies.
- A state election commission shall be constituted to ensure free and fair elections to the panchayats.

The 73rd amendment was entered in Part IX of the Constitution. Local government is an exclusive state subject under entry 5 of List II of the 7th schedule, therefore the Union just provides the outline of the panchayati system, which would be implemented by the State by making levels to bring them in conformity with the provisions of the 73rd Amendment. It was funding on the state that the implementing legislation should be undertaken within a year of the commencement of the 73rd Amendment Act.²⁷

Now, if we look at the effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Institutions we find that the constitutional 73rd Amendment bill has not guaranteed adequate power, authority and finance to the panchayati raj institutions to work as local self governments. At the same time there is an element of suspicion about its ability to function as an organization for the rural poor and promoting their socio-economic interests, particularly in the contexts of its leadership pattern. Elaborately, the panchayati raj institutions, as they stand, are not promoting the direct participation of the people. Instead, it enables the people to participate in the decision – making of the panchayats through their elected representatives. Here the representation of the poor to the panchayat bodies receives importance. Several recent studies of the panchayats leadership reveal that panchayats provide more opportunities to the lower castes and lower income groups to occupy leadership position as ward members, bottom of the panchayat leadership hierarchy than at the higher levels. The election of the caste people as panchayat leaders,

27:- Amitabh Behar and Yogesh Kumar (2002) 'Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: From Panchayati Raj to Gram Swaraj (1995-2001); Working Paper 170.

particularly ward members is greatly influenced by the reservation of seats for them in the panchayat election. There is also an intense competition among the economically better off sections to occupy panchayat leadership positions. The consequence is that the higher level leadership of the panchayat bodies are still dominated by economically well to do. The middle class dominated panchayat leadership cannot respond to the needs and problems of the poor, as their interests on the panchayats are not much different from the landlords and the rich who controlled them in the earlier periods. Moreover, the domination of a small upper class implies a hold not nearly over the economic resources of the community, but also over its political, cultural and social life. It has been continuously demonstrated that organizations which attempt to include rural such, elite and merchants with tenants and labourers are mostly to be captured by the farmer and be of little use to the poor group.

The Gram Sabha, which is the fourth tier of the panchayati raj institutions, is not in a position to plan programmes for the development of the village and execute them²⁸ as due to lack of leverage of local leader to initiate meaningful participation in the sabha and their inability to persuade people to support local initiatives. It has been evident that meetings called were mostly without prior and adequate notice. In most places, only a formality was observed; proxy meetings were at times convened and proceedings were written even without the knowledge of those who attended. Meetings, if arranged, either proved to be abortive or unsuccessful because of their attendance²⁹. Moreover, in gram sabha meetings, people only get opportunities to say something on the material placed before them and express their problems and views on development. There is no space for them to translate their needs and demands into a programme of action. Bottom up approach to planning is essentially to promote people's participation, meaning people deciding their own lives and development. It mobilizes people's own resources to a great extent and reduces the role of

28:-M. San Roy (2001) 'Restructuring of Panchayati Raj Institutions For People – central Planning, Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Science; Volume 6, Number 2, PP 108-124.

29:-Yatindra Singh (2003) 'Decentralised Governance in Madhya Pradesh: Experiences of the Gram Sabha in Scheduled Areas; Economic & Political Weekly, Oct.5, PP 4100-4104.

the government to supportive. However, people taking care of their development needs is not yet fully realized mainly due to the lack of political will and the vested interest of bureaucratic set-up.³⁰

Madhya Pradesh's experiments with Panchayats Raj Institutions :

The Most significant experiment in reforming governance in India from a participatory democratic decentralization point of view has been the introduction of constitutionally mandated panchayat system through the 73rd constitutional Amendment in the early 1990s. It was expected that the newly created panchayat system drawing strength from the constitutional provisions would emerge as effective tools of local self-governmece and would strongly further the primary objectives of economic growth and social justice. Unfortunately, the expectations have largely remained unfulfilled.³¹

The history of statutory village panchayats in Madhya Pradesh began with the village Panchayat Acts of 1920 in some of its constituent units and with the ordinances / Acts of 1947/1984 in other units. When the present state of Madhya Pradesh came into existence on the November 1, 1956 combining old Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, Bhopal state and Sironj subdivision from Tonk District of Rajasthan it inherited different legislation and experience of local goverance of these units. The first unified panchayat Act was enacted in the new state in 1962 followed by a more compact Act of 1981 and later a new Panchayat Act of 1990. This legislative history and its experience is reflected in the new Panchayat Act of 1993 enacted to conform to the 73rd constitutional Amendment within the one year's traditional period available from April 1993 to April 1994.³²

The exercise for a unified legislation on panchayats in new Madhya Pradesh started with a study of the whole subject by the Rural local self government committee (known at Kashi Prasad Pandey committee) set up in 1957. The act of 1962 was based on this exercise and come into effect in July 1962. In 1969 another committee chaired by. M.P. Dubey, MLA and

30:- M. San Roy (2001) 'Restructurig of Panchayati Raj Institutions For People – central Planning, Madhya pradesh Journal of Social Science; Volume 6, Number 2, PP 108-124.

31:- Amitabh Behar and Yogesh Kumar (2002) 'Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: From Panchayati Raj to Gram Swarag (1995-2001); Working Paper 170.

32:-Prof. B.K. Chandrashkar (ed) (2000) Panchayati Raj in India – State Report 1999; Task Force on Panchayati Kaj ; Rajiv Gandhi Foundation; New Delhi.

former Minister was set up to review the experiences in the state and thereafter a more simplified and shorter Act having 126 sections against 393 of the earlier act was enacted in 1981.

The 1981 act was replaced by a new Panchayati Raj Act in 1990. However, no elections were held under this act because litigation in 1991 resulted in the election being postponed at the last minute. The elections of 1965, 1970 and 1978 were held under the 1962 act which was operational upto 1981. The elections of 1983-84 which were held for all the three tier panchayats for the first time were held under the provisions of 1981 act. In 1988 the electoral process was started again after making an amendment primarily to provide for more reservations. However, due to litigation only about 30 percent of village panchayat elections could be completed. Elections for the remaining village panchayats and for the other two-tier panchayats were not pursued.

Thus, all the panchayat acts of Madhya Pradesh have had provision of three-tire panchayat structure with a gram panchayat for a village or a group of villages, a jampad panchayat at the block level and a zilla panchayat at the district level.

After the constitutional Amendment became effective in 1993, a new panchyat act, the Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Adhiniyam, 1993, was passed by the state legislative on 30 December 1993 and came into effect on 25 January 1994 replacing the earlier Panchayat Act of 1990. The new act was passed in one day and without much debate in the legislative or examination by any committee of the legislative because the government was keen to have it passed immediately. Perhaps partly as a result of this haste the new act has already been amended eight times in six years between 1994 and 1999 twice in 1994 it self and four times through ordinance. Two ordinances were issued in 1994 it self and one of these was issued when the process of the first elections was still on.

The new state act as originally enacted was substantially a reproduction of the earlier law except for the inclusion of reservations for women and OBCs, provision for gram sabhas and control of Zilla Panchayat over the District Rural Development Agency(DRDA) and of jampad panchayats over the blocks. It included provisions for cooption of members

to represent cooperatives and scheduled castes and tribes, which had to be removed by an ordinance in 1994 itself since cooption was no more permissible after the 73rd amendment.³³

Thus, the constitutional 73rd and 74th amendments also fall short of their goal of empowering the people at the grass root level as is evident from the fact that panchayats Raj institutions and Urban local bodies had been delegated powers of authorities only in the departments. They had not been vested with any power in many departments like home, or have been given cosmetic power like in forests. For example, the public works department and the water resource department have centralized control and the decisions are taken at the decisional or at state level. Even within a district there are demarcates between state functions and panchayat functions, for example, government symbols are under panchayats, whereas teacher training is a state function and hence decentralized coordination mechanism is needed at the district level. Also, the first stage of decentralisation i. e. of devolving powers and authority to local self-governance institutions was limited primarily to development and financial functions. Very few regulatory function like revenue and resource generation were given to local governance bodies. For most of the regulatory functions, the powers remained centralized and distant from the local level, vested in the state government. To fully, implement the philosophy of decentralized governance, these powers were needed locally and therefore further decentralized was essential. For example, even to rename a village, permission is needed from the state government, such and most other regulatory functions need to be immediately decentralized. Again, in India, district is the basic unit of administration and governance, and there is no coordination between the panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies within a district. District planning commission (DPC) is a constitutional body but its function is limited to co-ordination of district planning for economic development and social justice. Therefore, to make the decentralization process effective, a system is needed to co-ordinate the decentralized implementation process in a district. These limitations of the decentralization process necessitated serious conceptual analysis.³⁴

33:-Status of Panchayati Raj in the State and Union in India (2000) Institute of Social Science; Concept Publishing Company.

34:-Amitabh Behar (1999) Initiatives for Decentralization of Governance in Madhya Pradesh Economic & Political Weekly, PP 3242-3244.

Thus the significant initiative by the Madhya Pradesh government was The amendment of Panchayati Raj Adhiniyam (Act) 1993, to rename it as the Madhya Pradesh panchayati Raj (Sanshadhan) Adhiniyam, 2001. The citation of the amended act substituted the words gram swaraj in place of the words panchayati Raj the addition of the words gram swaraj in the citation of the amendment act denotes a significant paradigmatic shift in the fundamental principles of governance in Madhya Pradesh. In facts, the new system of governance 'gram swaraj' enacted by the Madhya Pradesh panchayati Raj (Sanshodhan) Adhiniyam 2001, and operationlised from January 26 is a significant experiment in the system of governance.³⁵ It has thus gone from representative democracy at the grass roots to direct democracy. "All" of the powers now exercised by elected gram panchayats would now the transferred to gram sabhas. Thus decisions on development projects will be made by the full gram sabha, and those projects will be overseen by committee of "users" of " stakeholders" who will be elected by the gram sabha from among its members. These committees will manage the funds for all government and donor funded development programmes.³⁶ Thus laying greater emphasis on gram sabhas. Gram sabha is the only constitutionally recognized institution where people participate directly – it is a reservoir of people's power. It is thereby only proper that it enjoys power and performs the functions benefiting its position as a body symbolizing people's collective wisdom and aspiration. Moreover, they form a part of those who are marginalized or are in a minority or otherwise disadvantaged. It is a part process of power sharing and building up confidence, self- esteem and security.³⁷

Some of the key features of Panchayati Raj Act in relation to Gram Sabhas were : The quorum for a Gram Sabha meeting remains one tenth, but after the Amendment of Article 6 of the Act, it is essential to have one third of the quorum as women members.

35:- Amitabh Behar (2001) 'Gram Swaraj: Experiment in Direct Democracy ; Economic & Political weekly, March 10, PP 823-826, Volume 36,Number 10.

36:- James Manor (2001) 'Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy ; Economic & Political Weekly, March 3, PP 715-716, Volume 36, Number 9.

37:-M.A. Oommen and S.V. Sharan, Baddhadeb Ghosh and R.Anandaraj Panhayati Raj Report 1995, Institute of Social Science 1996, New Delhi.

- The Gram Sabha would work as a supervisory body, and audit and regulate the functioning of gram panchayats.
- Recommendation of Gram Sabha will be binding on the Gram Panchayat.
- The Gram Sabha can approve as well as audit expenditure up to 3 lakhs.
- The Panchayat Karmi (panchayat Secretary approved by the panchayats but drawing salary from the state government) can be removed from his / her post only if the Gram Sabha approved of it.
- All the villages within a gram panchayat could have separate gram sabhas.
- The Gram Sabha shall have the right to recall the sarpanch after two and a half years of commencement of his/ her tenure.³⁸

What has therefore changed is that the gram sabha and permanent committees would soon be vested with all the powers exercised by the gram panchayat over many but not all the government development projects; select beneficiaries for many programmes, and make decisions about the location of projects funded under earmarked schemes devised at higher levels.

Again under the new system all “ user committees’ which were earlier supposed to consist of beneficiaries of various development programmes playing a role in education, watershed development, forest management etc. were being appointed from above by the bureaucrats from time ministries were now being chosen by the gram sabha, over which the panchayat chairperson or sarpanch would preside. Proportion of seats on all committees was reserved for socially exclusive groups. One third of the places would be

38:- Amitabh Behar and Yogesh Kumar (2002) ‘Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: From Panchayati Raj to Gram Swaraj (1995-2001); Working Paper 170.

occupied by women, and another one-third by people from 'deprived categories' which includes both schedule castes and tribes and other backward classes. The government hopes that most decision of members of 'user committees' would be taken unanimously in the gram sabhas. But where that is not possible, the new act requires secret ballot.³⁹

Assessment of the functioning of gram sabha reveal :

- Participation in gram sabha meetings was found to be low. Low participation was attributed to the strong caste, class, and gender divide in villages. On the basic question dealing with the awareness of villages regarding the existence, functions and rights of the gram sabha, a very high majority of people seemed completely ignorant. In all group discussions, it was found that people were unaware of the outcome of recommendation and decisions of gram sabha. For example in Krishnaganj Panchayat of Shivpuri district, the awareness level was high which could be attributed to higher level of literacy. The location of the block office in one of the wards of the Panchayats has also added to this greater awareness. Similarly Gadgaon and Patelpali panchayats of Raigarh district showed a high level of awareness amongst villagers regarding the existence of a gram sabha. In these two villages, the intervention of civil society actor (Lok Shakti) has helped in spreading awareness.

According to the panchayat secretary of Jhabua district, gram sabha generated a lot of enthusiasm during the 1995 to 1997 phase. Study conducted by Samarthan also indicate the probability of a decreasing trend in participation in gram sabha meeting. According to a survey carried out in Gwalior region by Samarthan in 1996, the average attendance at the gram sabha was a high 46 per cent among the 49 randomly selected panchayats; whereas another study conducted in 25 randomly selected panchayats in different parts of the state by Samarthan in 2000 suggests it was then only 17.5 percent.

39:- James Manor (2001) 'Madhya Pradesh Experiments with Direct Democracy ; Economic & Political Weekly, March 3, PP 715-716, Volume 36, Number 9.

With regard to decision making the study observations reveal that the sarpanch and other influential people still dominate the decision- making processes. Significantly, from in dept questioning of people who attended gram sabha meeting the fact emerged that in all the 60 panchayats, most decision- making was through consensus. None of the gram sabha had any experience of voting on any account. The group unhappy with the gram sabha also did not oppose the consensus on further probing it was discovered that villagers live in a close-knit community, which is based on interpersonal relationship. The marginalized groups are economically depended on the more powerful sections of the village community. Therefore, open confrontation is not possible. The existing social and economic disparities determine the participation and involvement of the poor, marginalized and women in gram sabha meetings.

- Pattern of leadership :-

If we look at the pattern of leadership two prominent and sharply contrasting groups emerge one, traditionally influential representatives coming from upper castes and are landowners having a high position in the socio-economic hierarchy of the village second group consists of the newly emerging leadership due to reservations for the disadvantaged castes and in many cases comprise of scheduled castes and not so economically well-off section of the rural society. Sarpanches belonging to traditionally influential groups carried out development work in areas forming their support base. On the other hand, the new sarpanches elected from non-traditional groups, faced stiff resistance to all their plans of development from traditional groups.

- Transparency and accountability in gram sabhas :

Accountability is by and large poor in the panchayat systems in all the district studies. A group of men of Sohawal Panchayat of Satna district said that the sarpanch was all powerful in all matters. Therefore, according to them, the present system is not panchayati Raj, it is actually sarpanch raj.

Again, perceptions of accountability varied from place to place. A group of Rupal Panchayat, Seoni district, felt that sarpanchpati had taken great pains to develop the area and therefore the question of corruption did not arise. Also, when an area has seen so much development activity, there is no need for accountability. A group of youth from the same village stated that development was a priority in rural areas, and since accountability was

newer there in earlier system, it was not of much importance at present as well.

Transparency in the affairs of the gram panchayat was seen to be non-existent. The gram sabha was not aware of gram panchayat functioning and there was a communication gap between the two bodies. The actual target groups of the government welfare programmes also did not have an access to information from the gram panchayat. A group of scheduled caste women from Bada Khutaja panchayat, Jhabua district stated that despite they being in the below poverty line list, no benefits had reached them, and all the benefits of welfare schemes were being shared by the sarpanchs relatives and men. However, the picture was not so dismal in all gram panchayats. In Chandanpura panchayat of Shivpuri district a youth group stated that they constantly keep themselves informed of different aspects of gram panchayat functions, even going through the records maintained by the panchayat.

The concept of participation as an important part of the process of panchayati raj is rarely seen in practice that people of influence would look at large community participation with hostility. One reason for this could be that even where the sarpanches concerned were motivated and effective, they usually do not operate totally above board. A number of additional expenses have to be taken care of or borne by them, including those for travel and food, local hospitality for visitors etc., which cannot be claimed as working expenses. There are then adjusted against other expense categories with the help of the panchayat secretary, and possibly, the connivance of some other sarpanches. In this kind of functioning, transparency certainly comes in the way of fudging expenses. Even other panchayat members, on becoming party to petty accounting jugglery, may demand their pound flesh.

However, other causes leading to corruption seem more problematic elected representatives may consider it their right to compensate for expenses incurred in contesting elections, and these may be more significant at the Janpad and Zila level.

However, gram sabhas do have the potential to carry out effectively the role and responsibilities entrusted to them with a little support and facilitation. In the Kalotra panchayat, Shivpuri district, the collector took the initiative in helping gram sabha members to articulate their demands and needs. The collector personally visited the panchayat and ensured that the right information reached the panchayat members. The voice of the villagers articulated by the gram sabha is then heard and respected by the upper tiers of panchayat and district administration.

The collector was also instrumental in making the administration assist and support the sarpanch in executing their responsibilities efficiently. Therefore due to moral and direct administrative support, gradually, over a period of time, both the sarpanch and the gram sabha showed marked improvement. With such administrative support and an enabling environment the efficiency of gram panchayats and gram sabhas are improving. Thus, the government and civil society must facilitate the process.⁴⁰

Conclusions :-

The rural sector which constitutes for three- fourths of the country's population is the mainstay of the vast majority of the people. In rural society where land is the most relevant source of living for a large sections of the people and rights in land, however small in area, confer socio-economic status and dignity, the significance of land reforms needs no emphasis.

Land reforms have been on the national agenda for rural reconstruction since Independence. The major objectives of land reforms consists of reordering agrarian relations to achieve an egalitarian social structure; elimination of exploitation in land relations; realizing the age-old goal of land to the tillers, enlarging the land- base of rural poor; increasing agricultural productivity and production; and infusing equality in local institutions. The main components of the strategy of land reform have been the abolition of intermediary tenures, tenancy reforms, ceiling on ownership of agricultural holdings, consolidation of holdings, distribution of government wastelands including Bhoodan land, modernization and updating of land records system, conferment of ownership rights on homeless persons, special measures for protection of lands of scheduled castes and tribes; improving the access of land to women and safeguarding of common property resources. While abolition of intermediary tenures and interests has been completed all over the country, the other concepts of land reform continue as unfinished tasks.⁴¹

40:- Amitabh Behar and Yogesh Kumar (2002) 'Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: From Panchayati Raj to Gram Swaraj (1995-2001); Working Paper 170.

41: S.R. Sankaran and B. M. Sinha (1992) Central- State Consultations On Land Reforms 1972-1992 ; Indian Association of Social Science Institutions Quarterly, Volume 10, Number 3, PP 184-193.

Madhya Pradesh is seen as a success story in the on going process of decentralization. Through progressive amendments to the panchayati act and supportive executive orders, the government has constantly tried to strengthen and empower the gram sabha. The gram sabha, despite its potential to strengthen governance and make it transparent, accountable, participatory and truly democratic, has remained under-utilized and dormant. Moreover, it suffers from the same limitations as the previous legislations.

Chapter 5

Conclusion :

The study analysed the Congress Model of Socio- Economic development for the weaker sections in Madhya Pradesh under Digvijay Singh. Digvijay Singh in his pronouncements claimed that his government would promote a people-centric development policy through grass roots democratization, decentralized governance and community participation.¹ This model of development was adopted when the party came to power after defeating the BJP in the 1993 assembly elections.

The government stated that there were two choice in front of the state as far as its priorities and path of development were concerned. One drew from the ongoing changes locally termed as liberalization in India and the subsequent integration of national economy into global systems. The other path was human development, or investing in the people of Madhya Pradesh. The state and its leadership chose the second path. To invest in people, to make development people centred, the statement that best describes how the state government defines its strategy to as

1:- Digvijay Singh (2001) Beginning of the Human Development Movement in India; Radical Humanist ; Volume 64, Number 11, PP 12-14

looking to “ people as the solution.” The priorities decided at that time were education for children, elimination of iodine deficiency, reduction in case fatality rate in diarrhea, increasing productivity of land and improving people’s access to weather through watershed development amongst others.²

Digvijay Singh, thus, emphasized or human development through state activism as well as multiple strategies involving voluntary associations in civil society and the market. According, the state government supported the formulation of the Bhopal Document, established a Task Force and adopted the mission approach to implement a number of programmes aimed at providing the weaker sections education, greater participation and inclusion in the decision making process in local bodies and opening up of new avenues of advancement through the principles of diversity and democratization.³

The model of governance, thus adopted by Madhya Pradesh under Digvijay Singh was different from that conceptualized by the World Bank, UNDP, international donor agencies which were rooted in economic

2:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report (2002) Human Development : The Institutional Underpinnings.

3:- Sudha Pai (2004) ‘Dalit Question and Political Response: Comparative Study of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh; Economic and Political weekly: Volume 39, Number 11, PP 1141-1150

essentialism and which ignored the fact that governance is a concept which has a significant political and context-specific context.⁴ Moreover, it has been recognized that in a country like India a retreat of the state from economic activity would adversely affect the weaker sections, thus requiring the role of the state to be conceptually repositioned stating that the state can neither be a completely minimalist role nor an entirely proactive one. It has been directed at building personal capabilities and community capacities for human development through the use of all the means at its command.⁵ Thus Madhya Pradesh experiment is one of decentralization from above, and is also a vision of the Chief Minister of the state (Digvijay Singh).⁶ The objective being the improvement of the components of human development-health, education and the like-in an equitable way in a specified period of time. And the instrument of new initiatives and ideas in the capital and implementation through the new panchayats and peoples collectives at all level.⁷

4:-Ali Kazancigil (1998) Governance and Science: Market Like Modes of Managing Society and Producing Knowledge; International Social Science Journal; Number 155, PP 77.

5:-Planning commission, government of India Report 2002

6:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report 2002; Human Development: The Institutional Underpinnings

7:- Ibid

A few of the programmes for the Weaker sections adopted by the party during its period in power are : Education guarantee Scheme, Health, Land Distribution and Gram Swaraj.

Madhya Pradesh set out addressing its agenda of political decentralization through Panchayati Raj and human development through the Rajiv Gandhi Missions in 1994. It made clear that it sees mass education as the most important objective. Education is both an end in itself to realize the full potential of a human being and has instrumental value in making political democracy full-blooded.⁸

Madhya Pradesh was among the educationally backward states in India in the middle- nineties. The government devised an Education Guarantee Scheme to provide a primary school to every community that demanded such a facility and had at least twenty five children of the schooling going age. If they did not have a school within one kilometer they would make a demand and the government guaranteed to meet the demand within 90 days. The community could also identify a local qualified resident to be the teacher. The scheme worked through a tripartite partnership between local community, local government and the state government raised the demand, identified the teacher and provided

8:-Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report 2002; Using The Power of Democracy For Development : The Madhya Pradesh effort.

the space to run the school. The local body or panchayat supervised the school. The state government supported the local community through a grant to pay the teacher and ensured all academic inputs and quality of teaching and learning. The scheme which started in 1st January 1997 was able to provide a school to every habitation in the state by August 1998, 26000 Education Guarantee Scheme Schools came up in less than 20 months and Madhya Pradesh universalized access to primary education. Over a million children were enrolled in these community schools of which nearly fifty per cent are girl children and ninety per cent belong to Scheduled Castes and tribes and other Backward Castes. The scheme went on to four other states and was adopted as a national model in 2001.

A comparison of states which were similarly placed in the beginning of the decade would serve to illustrate the effort in Madhya Pradesh and the so-called Bimaru States (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) would be a good indicator of per states. While all these states registered increase 1991 and 2001 census Madhya Pradesh today among these states has the highest literacy rate at 64.1 while Rajasthan has 61 percent, Uttar Pradesh 57.4 percent and Bihar 47.5 per cent.

Again, the increase in access to primary schooling in Madhya Pradesh leading to increase in enrolment is borne out by a comparison of the data of the Lok Sampark Abhiyan of 1996 and 2001. Lok Sampark Abhiyan or Peoples data base is an exercise carried out in Madhya Pradesh on a door-to-door basis through elected representatives in village and teachers working as a team. This leads to the creation of a village education Register that becomes the unit of planning for education for all at the village level. It is seen that between 1996 and 2001, gross enrolment ratio in the state went up from 76.5 per cent to 96.2 percent. The gross enrolment Ratio of girls has increased from 70.7 percent to in 1996 to 94.3 per cent in 2001. the gross enrolment Ratio of Scheduled Tribes has risen from 78 percent in 1996 to 91% in 2001. the percentage of out of school children reduced from 29.3 per cent in 1996 to 11.2 percent in 2001. In other words while three out of ten children did not attend primary school in 1996 now it is only one out of ten. The gap in gross enrolment Ratio to boys and girls has also narrowed from 25 per cent in 1992 to 11 per cent in 1996 to 3.6 per cent in 2001, a very positive sign⁹.

9:-Ibid

However, the guarantee is ‘incomplete’¹⁰ what is secured is the existence of an institution that opens almost every day for a small and variable number of hours with some pupils and at least one teacher who spends much time in supervising rather than teaching. The teachers can be passout from class 10 and in case of women, class 8. They qualify to be ‘teachers’ after receiving training for 30 days. The definition of attendance is rather ambiguous. A child who has attended school for one day in a year is likely to be included in the category of ‘children attending school’.

The excuse for recognizing these institutions is that they are meant for children in backward areas. This not only legitimizes low-quality education for poor children, most of whom are Dalits, Tribals and minorities. The Scheme is anti-girl too, for gender parity is merely a ratio of enrolment of girls and boys. It indicates neither participation in school nor any learning achievement. It is also unclear that whether those who are enrolment attend regularly, and whether those who do, acquire basic literacy.

10:- France Leclerq (2002) The Impact of Education Political as Report on The School System : A Held Study of Education Guarantee Scheme and Primary School as Madhya Pradesh; CHS Occasional Paper.

What is not recurred is access to schools which would impart the skills and knowledge that constitute the primary curriculum to a large majority of their pupils, who could use them outside the school system or as a crucial input into further schooling.

In the area of management of public hospitals Madhya Pradesh has gone in for Rogi Kalyam Samitis for their management. They are permitted to try a modest user for that can be retained at the hospital level to improve delivery of services. Today over 770 public hospitals are managed by such committees who have a saving of Rs. 600 million with which they are improving services. Local management and autonomy is leading to improved public services provisioning. Madhya Pradesh is currently engaged in decentralizing the management of its health system to district and local levels and implement a model of community health action. This has served components starting from basics like training two community health activities in each village as a Jan Swastya Rakshak (a barefoot doctor) and a trained traditional birth attendant to strengthening rural health care and first contact hospitals. The effort is to address the determinants of health life safe water supply, sanitation, nutrition and health education along with health action in inter-sectoral institutional - arrangements like the village Health Committees, Panchayats and

District Governments brought into existence through political decentralization.¹¹

Thus in the health area, Madhya Pradesh alone among the 'Bimaru' states has shown a declining trend in population growth, much of which can be attributed to the growth in literacy and education given the fact that health indicators per se have not improved dramatically in inter-state comparison. There is increasing cross-country evidence that political decentralization which empowers women to the public domain thereby exercising a great control on their environment can have a positive impact on population reduction.

India has not been able to fulfill its goal of "Health for All" by 2000 and its inability to execute the declaration could be traced to the factor that allocation funds the, the reach and quality of public health has been below the desired standard. Over the years the states share in the health spending has increased while the grant from center has declined drastically. Thus the state in its efforts at quickly closing the gap to keep up with national norms has resulted in the system expanding by compromising in some parts on infrastructure, staff and facilities. As per norms, the state needs

11:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report 2002; Using The Power of Democracy For Development : The Madhya Pradesh Export.

15,821 health institutions (SHC, PHC and CHC), against which 13,967 are sanctioned, leaving 1,854 more to be sanctioned.¹² there were no doctors in 375 of the 1,841 state PHC's , where as many Urban hospitals have surplus doctors. Apart from this, approximately 50 doctors were on unauthorized leave at any given time resulting in poor quality of services in the rural health institutions. Apart from this, there were complaints of health workers not staying in their headquarter. The reason for this was that many health workers faced difficulty in staying at their headquarter were women, many being unmarried and thus pending it difficult to stay under these circumstances another factors was that the system retains its curative bias which has affected efficient delivery of primary health care. Yet, another major drawback was the low population density and wide spread of villages in Madhya Pradesh where a sub-health center for 3000 population covers as much as 6 villages over an area of more than 36 squares.¹³

With regard to land distribution, the Madhya Pradesh government adopted a three- pronged strategy : distribution of land of the weaker section or help in buying land to make them independent cultivators; alternatively to move them into other

12:-Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 1995

13:- Ibid

occupations through capital formation with government distance; and third, as many of the weaker sections were small cultivators or sharecroppers, to provide addressing seed pesticides, irrigations and credit requirements on March 4,1998 the government of Madhya Pradesh issued an order to the district administration for redistribution of land gained by downsizing the area of charnoi (grazing) land from 7.5 per cent in each village to 5 per cent, which it was estimated could provide a surplus of about six lakh areas. This land was to be distributed among some four lakh scheduled castes and tribes households. During this phase 1.54 lakh acres of land in the form of 80,470 pattas was distributed to 46,088 families. Following this on September 19,2001 the state government further reduced the charnoi land from 5 per cent to 2 per cent due to this in the second phase a total of about 6 lakh acres of land was expected to be surplus of which 3.68 lakh acres it was claimed had already been identified and it was expected that another 2.5 lakh acres more would be available. In this manner the government claimed that a total of 1,04,486 acres had been distributed to 32,082 Scheduled Caste families. The Scheme was expected to benefit 4 lakh families¹⁴. Attempts were also made to

14:-The Bhopal Document (2002) : Charting New Course For Dalits in the 21st Century, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

remove encroachments on land allotted to dalits. According to the land records as of November 2001, 1,416 Scheduled Caste were found to be dispossessed of whom 528 were restored possession and another 888 cases were pending. A more recent report of the state government claimed that by July 2002, 2,48,000 hectares of land had been distributed among 3,03,000 landless individuals of whom scheduled castes constitute 1,99,178 to whom 1,60,194 hectares have been given. The process of identifying surplus land and redistributing it among the landless continued during 2003 in the state.

However, the study on governments land distribution programme in Madhya Pradesh revealed that the process of distribution in scheduled areas was slow. More important, the study pointed out Charnoi land comprising of poor quality wasteland, not suitable for agriculture and no initiative on the part of the government to help beneficiaries to cultivate wasteland as that would require considerable investment. Moreover, the plots were small, in some cases economically unviable.

Opposition from the upper castes in the village to allotment of land to the scheduled castes leading to explicit is an important impediment respondents felt that government indifference was the major reason, which allowed the upper castes to prevent the Weaker section from taking possession of land allotted to them. At

many places the government also failed to check encroachment on the land allotted to them. It was only with the help of the government machinery that a few of the beneficiaries were able to gain possession of the land allotted but none of them were able to obtain an ownership patta for the land allotted¹⁵.

The institution of Panchayati Raj was brought into modern Independent India's political set up over four decades ago. The real impetus came only after the Indian Parliament passed the famous 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendments in 1993, these amendments signaled the fulfillment of the promise made in the constituent Assembly through Article 40. these two amendments facilitated the way for creation of institutions that would strengthen the process of participative democracy and the state of Madhya Pradesh saw the amendments as an opportunity. It became the first state to legislate laws within the state to bring in the new panchayat system, it was also the first state to hold elections under the new system. The involvement of the people in their own, development, involvement of people in decision making and as participates of panchayats has in fact become a cornerstone of government policy and practice.

15:-Sudha Pai (2004) Dalit Question and Political Response: Comparative Study of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 39, Number 11, PP 1141-1150.

The existing panchayat system was constantly criticized for two major weaknesses or problems. One was the growing and almost overbearing influence of Sarpanch over the panchayat, and the second was that the Gram Sabha was not able to establish its role, character and importance and there was dwindling interest in Gram Sabhas and therefore declining attendance in its meeting. The Gram Sabha actually had considerable powers and planning, but most of this has become redundant in practice.

Recognizing both these problems, the idea of Gram Swaraj was evolved inspired by the ideas and thinking of Mahatma Gandhi. The Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj and Gram Sabha Act, 1993 has been suitably modified to incorporate the provisions of the extension Act of the 73rd Amendment Act to provide for the Panchayats in the scheduled areas. Thus, the idea was to tone down the unnecessary influence of the Sarpanch and to give a comprehensible role to Gram Sabha so that people find it worthwhile to attend the meetings and thereby participate directly in their concerns- a change towards direct democracy.¹⁶

16:- Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report 2002; Human Development: The Institutional Underpinnings.

However, after framing the new act for Gram Swaraj, the government has not adequately followed up the process by working at the nuts and bolts of the new system by devolving and decentralizing powers; the lack of financial devolution by the state government especially remains a major bottleneck. In this resource-starved scenario, the government of India programmes and schemes bringing resources to panchayats became significant. The government continues to devolve its funds to Gram panchayats, which are controlled by the Sarpanches who remain powerful despite the new role of Gram Sabhas. The government of Madhya Pradesh needs to address this issue and evolve mechanisms in consultation with the government of India to channelise funds directly to Gram 'kosh'. In spite of the initiation and philosophy of the act, the Gram Swaraj functions merely as the last bear of the government performing some developmental roles with very meager resources. It has still not been entrusted or devolved services government functions like justice or security. To energise Gram Swaraj it becomes important to assign it some governmental functions and also facilitate its role in the social sphere so that it is not merely as a government agency but as an institution of the people to discuss and deliberate on issues of consequence to the community.

Some of the factors hindering the process of institutionalization of Gram Swaraj are : First, the absence of the effective communication strategies and channels has resulted in lack of awareness about the Gram Swaraj. The government and the Civil Society have been unable to communicate the message of Gram Swaraj to the people who are being empowered by the introduction of Gram Swaraj. Also, the government machinery and the bureaucracy have failed to internalize the radical restructuring of the governance system and have not responded by making the required adjustment and changes. The conceptual shift from the representative form of local self-governance to a system of direct democracy remains largely un appreciated at the level of state, district or local bureaucracy, neither are the implications of such a drastic change understood or debated. Importantly, the bureaucracy has been strongly resistant to change even the panchayat secretary realizes that access to information gives him a privileged position and therefore he hinders the flow of information to the Gram Sabhas. The initial experience of Gram Swaraj clearly indicates that the bureaucratic, political and economic resource represented by the local bureaucracy, sarpanch and service contractors had developed a vested interest in the panchayat system and therefore they oppose any move to curtail the powers of panchayats by shifting if the power center to the Gram Sabhas.

Finally, the capacities of the Gram Sabhas in most villages are inadequate to operationalise an institution, which operates as a rational – bureaucratize structure. Most of the villages also do not have enough people who could effectively form and operationalise the committees of the Gram Swaraj. The government has taken some initiatives for training on Gram Swaraj though it has largely remained ritualistic. Some NGO group have also started working on enhancing the capacities of the Gram Sabhas and the committees of Gram Swaraj, but due to the limitations of NGOs the initiatives have remained local. Thus, this preliminary re-evaluations of the Gram Swaraj I Madhya Pradesh clearly demonstrates that the new system has to overcome various stumbling blocks before becoming an effective institution of local governance.¹⁷

However, the analysis of the four programmes for the socio-economic upliftment of the weaker sections in congress ruled government in Madhya Pradesh under Digvijay Singh show that the programmes for the weaker sections were well conceived. However, their impact due to poor implementation has been slow and halting, and in some cases ineffective.

17:- Amitabh Behar (2003) Madhya Pradesh Experiment with Direct Democracy, Economic & Political Weekly; Volume 38, Number 20, PP 1925-1927.

The programme initiated by Digvijay Singh for uplift of Weaker Sections is different from that of the World Bank as it embraces all aspects of human choices – economic, social, cultural and political and believes equality, sustainability, productivity and empowerment as essential components of human development. Within this model education is given central importance as it is the path through which the Weaker Section can come out of traditional occupations which are related to the caste hierarchy and thereby enter a new phase of life.

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