

CHAPTER II

FUNCTIONING OF THE FIELD OFFICESBACKGROUND

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has 17 field offices under its control which provide contact points with the State Governments and the field. They have been serving useful purpose and are of great assistance to the Commission in a multitude of its activities. It may be of interest to mention a brief history of the field organisation.

Set-up under the Special Officer

2.2 The Special Officer appointed under Article 338 was vested with the responsibility to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution and to submit a report to the President. The first Special Officer, designated as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, was appointed on 18-11-1950. For support at local levels, the Commissioner was provided with 17 regional offices. These field offices were headed by Assistant Commissioners for SC & ST who were redesignated as Deputy Commissioners in July 1965. These offices conducted field studies and undertook follow up action in the matter with the Governments of States/UTs under their jurisdiction.

Set-up under the Directorate General of Backward Classes Welfare

2.3 In the year 1967 a new organisation namely Directorate General of Backward Classes Welfare was set up in the then Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. The above 17 field offices of the Commissioner's office were reorganised into 5 Zonal Offices in June 1967 and placed under the control of the newly created Directorate General of Backward Classes Welfare (DGBCW). Each Zonal Office was headed by a Zonal Director, and the erstwhile Regional Deputy Commissioner for SC & ST were redesignated as Deputy Directors B.C.W. and placed under the control of the Zonal Directors posted at Chandigarh (Northern Zone), Bhopal (Central Zone), Patna (Eastern Zone), Baroda (Western Zone) and Madras (Southern Zone). The Eastern Zone office had two branches at Bhubaneswar and Shillong. Later a branch office of the Central Zone was set up at Lucknow and in 1969 and the Western Zone Office was shifted to Ahmedabad. This arrangement continued till November, 1978. During this period, these offices maintained Liaison between the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare and the State Governments and UT Administrations in the matter of SC & ST.

2.4 Government of India by resolution dated 21-7-1978 set up a Commission for SC & ST with its functions broadly corresponding with the functions entrusted to the then Special Officer. With effect from 1-12-1978 the above field offices of D.G.B.C.W. were transferred to the newly established Commission for SC & ST.

Set-up under Commission/National Commission for SC & ST

2.5 The officers of Zonal Directors B.C.W. and Deputy Directors B.C.W. under the D.G.B.C.W. were redesignated as Directors for SC and ST and Deputy Directors for SC and ST respectively. The Zonal set up was abolished by the Commission and 17 field offices having independent jurisdiction were set up. Since these field offices were also working for the then Commissioner for SC & ST, the offices of Director for SC & ST were redesignated as offices of Director for SC & ST and ex-officio Deputy Commissioner for SC & ST. To demarcate the functions of the Commission with that of the Commissioner for SC & ST, the Commission for SC & ST was renamed in September, 1987 as National Commission for SC & ST. The duties of the National Commission included research studies while functions and responsibility under Article 338 remained with the Special Officer. These 17 field offices were transferred to the National Commission so constituted alongwith liability to serve the Special Officer also with, however, priority for research studies relating to SC and ST. After the Commission became a Constitutional body the field offices came under the direct control of the Commission. However, they have continued to undertake the inspection of NGOs on behalf of the Ministry on specific request routed through the Commission's Secretariat.

Present set-up under National Commission

2.6 The location, jurisdiction and designation of the field offices of the Commission and the situation prevailing in each of them as on 31-3-94 is given below:

Table 1

Location	Designation of officer incharge as on 11-3-93	Jurisdiction	Remarks
Agartala	Dy. Director	Tripura	The post of Deputy Director was abolished on 12-3-93
Ahmedabad	Director	Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli	
Bangalore	Director	Karnataka	
Bhopal	Director	Madhya Pradesh	

Bhubaneswar	Director	Orissa	
Calcutta	Director	West Bengal, Sikkim, A&N Islands	
Chandigarh	Dy. Director	Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh	The post of Deputy Director was aboli- shed on 12-3-92
Guwahati	Dy. Director	Assam	The post of Deputy Director stands transferred to Jaipur due to aboli- tion of the post of Director at Jaipur
Hyderabad	Director	Andhra Pradesh	The post of Director was abolished on 12-3-92
Jaipur	Director	Rajasthan	-do-
Lucknow	Director	Uttar Pradesh	
Madras	Director	Tamil Nadu Pondicherry	
Patna	Director	Bihar	The post of Director was abolished on 12-3-92
Pune	Director	Maharashtra, Goa, Daman & Diu	
Shillong	Director	Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland	
Shimla	Dy. Director	Himachal Pradesh Jammu & Kashmir	The post of Deputy Director was abo- lished on 12-3-92
Thiruvananthapuram	Dy. Director	Kerala, Lakshadweep	

Work done in the field offices

2.7 In spite of the handicap of staff suffered by the field offices due to abolition of posts as mentioned elsewhere and even vacancies not being filled up, the field offices have been handling various types of work including

field enquiries in case of atrocities.

2.8 Various types of cases of complaints and representations and offences involving SC /ST. received and dealt with by the field offices during 1993-94 is given below:

Table 2

S.No.	Subject Matter	No. of complaints
1.	Service Safeguards	1776
2.	Land & Forest	251
3.	Education	101
4.	Housing	58
5.	Employment	16
6.	Economic Development Schemes	18
7.	Distributive agencies	3
8.	Atrocities and Untouchability	1309
9.	Other issues	450
Total		3982

2.9 The normal procedure adopted in dealing with these cases has been to first call for the facts from the concerned organisation or authorities. On receiving a reply if it was found that there was a violation of a safeguard or that any harassment or serious inconvenience was caused to the SC/ST the same was brought to the notice of the appropriate authorities for corrective steps.

2.10 Regarding cases of atrocity and untouchability, a number of which were reported in the press, reports were called through wireless/telegraphic communications. In serious cases of murder and rape the field offices conducted on-the-spot inquiries either at their own instance or on receiving instructions from the headquarters. During the year under report 38 such inquiries were conducted by the field offices.

Evaluation/inspection of projects run by NGOs on behalf of Ministry of Welfare

2.11 Earlier, the field offices were under the direct control of the Ministry of Social Welfare or Ministry of Home Affairs respectively as they were the administrative Ministries concerned at different times. They were required to act as representatives of the Ministry, besides being

the field representatives of the erstwhile Commissioner and later also of the Commission. Besides, other activities these field offices were conducting inspection/evaluation of ongoing welfare projects run by the NGOs with the assistance from the Government of India. They were also inspecting the NGOs who had applied for Government grants. This work imposed further pressure on already limited manpower and funds available for providing field support to this Commission and a lot of time and energy of the field offices was used up in this work. The Commission has requested the Ministry to make available adequate manpower to deal with matters relating to inspection of the NGOs.

2.12 During the year under report the evaluation/inspection of projects of NGOs conducted by field offices of the Commission is mentioned below:

Table 3

S.No.	Name of the Field Office	No. of inspections conducted during 1993-94.
1.	Dy. Director for SC & ST Agartala	-
2.	Director for SC & ST Ahmedabad	2
3.	Director for SC & ST Bangalore	9
4.	Director for SC & ST Bhopal	7
5.	Director for SC & ST Bhubaneswar	19
6.	Director for SC & ST Calcutta	30
7.	Dy. Director for SC & ST Chandigarh	2
8.	Dy. Director for SC & ST Guwahati	4
9.	Director for SC & ST Hyderabad	62
10.	Director for SC & ST Jaipur	10
11.	Director for SC & ST Lucknow	32

12.	Director for SC & ST Madras	18
13.	Director for SC & ST Patna	15
14.	Director for SC & ST Pune	2
15.	Director for SC & ST Shillong	14
16.	Dy. Director for SC & ST Shimla	1
17.	Dy. Director for SC & ST Thiruvanthapuram	2
	Total	<u>229</u>
