

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Chapter I ➤ Introduction to National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes – its setting up, duties and responsibilities entrusted to it under the Constitution of India
- Chapter II ➤ Outline of various issues discussed in the report.
- Chapter III ➤ Various provisions of Constitution relating to safeguards for SC/ST communities; protective and anti-exploitative legislations; and other important legal provisions dealing with SC/ST matters discussed.
- Chapter IV ➤ The full impact of decentralised governance through the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution and its extension to Scheduled Areas through the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and reserved seats for SCs and STs, including women belonging to these groups, in all three tiers of the Panchayati Raj needs to be evaluated.
- Capacity building through training and orientation courses for the representatives from SC/ST communities is required.
- Conducive environment for power sharing between the traditional dominant group and SC/ST representatives needs to be ensured.
- Chapter V ➤ Minimum facilities like drinking water, education, health and sanitation, housing, roads need to be provided in SC/ST habitations.
- Public Distribution System should be strengthened to focus on nutrition in backward SC/ST concentrated area.
- Special efforts should be made to ensure availability of teachers in schools and doctors, nurses and other medical staff in Primary Health Centres and sub-centres.
- It is essential to ensure full utilisation of outlays provided for these basic minimum facilities.
- Chapter VI ➤ Nearly 50% of the total SC/ST household are estimated to be below poverty line and even among the poor section of the society, they are the poorest segments as reflected by the lower per capita expenditure of SCs and STs as compared to other sections of poor people. In rural areas, most of them are either agricultural labour or small cultivators. Efforts for providing them wage employment through various schemes have slowed down due to reduction in the amount of Central share, delay in release of instalments by Central Govt. and non-utilisation of full funds. The requisite coverage of SC/ST beneficiaries as per guidelines in these schemes is also not being adhered to. Both State Governments and Central Ministries are allocating less funds under SCP/TSP along with rampant diversions. There is a need for increasing outlays under SCP and TSP, strengthening of monitoring mechanism and full utilisation of funds allocated.
- Chapter VII ➤ The representation of SC/ST is still to reach the prescribed levels in the Central Govt. Departments and PSEs. The Department of Personnel and Training issued Office Memoranda on 31.1.97, 2.7.97, 22.7.97, 13.8.97 and 29.8.97 which had the effect of reversing the reservation policy. There is a need for an Act by the Parliament to provide reservations to the SCs/STs in educational institutions and the services.

- Associations of SCs/STs are required to be involved in the redressal of grievances of the SC/ST employees.
 - The problem of false caste certificate is a growing menace. Greater vigilance is required on the part of the authorities issuing the SC/ST certificate and the employers to check this problem.
- Chapter VIII
- Increasing awareness among SCs and STs about their rights has also led to increased violence against them. The protective measures provided through the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and setting up of Special Courts have not been able to have the desired impact. Two studies done on implementation of POA Act in UP and working of Special Courts in M.P. by the Commission substantiate this conclusion. Solution lies in creating awareness about these protective measures in the Police administration and general public and strict monitoring of punitive and protective measures as well as economic relief for the victims.
- Chapter IX
- The Tribal Sub Plan strategy and its implementation in most of the States is inadequate and notional. It is, therefore, necessary to formulate a comprehensive tribal development policy keeping in view their peculiar socio-cultural environment.
 - There is a need to evolve a separate personnel policy for the tribal areas so as to encourage posting of officers and staff, who are sincere, hardworking and sympathetic to tribal cause, through an appropriate system of incentives.
 - The personnel policy should be so devised as to ensure that the important lower level functionaries, such as teachers, para-medical staff, forest and police staff, are drawn from the local tribal communities, by relaxing the norms, if necessary.
 - Land laws should be implemented sincerely so as to protect them from alienation of lands.
 - The forest laws should be suitably amended to ensure their legitimate and traditional rights in the forests.
 - There is a need to implement the excise policy effectively and to initiate measures for weaning them away from excessive use of alcoholic beverages.
- Chapter X
- Recommendations have been made for improving the effectiveness of various programmes and the functioning of the concerned implementing agencies. It is imperative that urgent action is taken by the executive machinery for its implementation so as to realise the dream of an egalitarian society of our Constitution makers.