Socio – Economic Impact of Land Purchase Scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation of Karnataka: An Empirical Analysis

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Preamble
Dalits constitute about 25% of the population in India in the present times. They are excluded from the mainstream of development due to existing social and economic orders. They are also the most marginalized sections of society in all walks of life. There are specific constitutional norms, provisions, protective measures, reservation benefits and welfare schemes for the empowerment of Dalits. The central and state governments have constituted National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation to protect the human rights of Dalits and implement progressive welfare measures for the development of Dalits in the country. Land reforms were brought about in India to provide land to the landless tillers on humanitarian grounds. The landless Dalits are subjected to several disadvantages in India. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation is an exclusive developmental agency which has implemented land purchase scheme by providing financial assistance to the beneficiaries of Scheduled Castes. The present investigation was carried out in Karnataka state to examine the socio-economic benefits enjoyed by the beneficiary families.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation of Karnataka
The Government of India established B.R Ambedkar Development Corporation in different states in February 1975 to mobilize institutional credits for income generation programs. The Government of Karnataka had established the Karnataka Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation to implement various development schemes and bring the SCs and STs population above the poverty-line in the same year. The corporation was incorporated under the Companies Act of 1956.

It was renamed as Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation Limited in 2005. The corporation was given the task of implementing programmes for the economic development of Scheduled Castes only. The corporation acts as link among schedule cast, different programs and the financial institutions. It is engaged in identifying Scheduled Caste and identifies the beneficiaries on the basis of certain specific criteria. It provides financial assistance after assessing the needs and financial requirements of the beneficiaries. The major schemes of development of SC families include - self-employment program, direct loan scheme, micro credit scheme, land purchase scheme, Ganga Kalyana scheme, Safai Karmachari rehabilitation program and ISB scheme. The corporation has implemented land purchase scheme, self employment scheme, irrigation scheme, community irrigation scheme, credit loan scheme and other schemes.

Land Purchase Scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation
The land purchase scheme is implemented for the benefit of landless and below the poverty line Scheduled Caste population. The corporation identifies the landless families and provides loan and subsidy of 50:50 matching grant to the beneficiaries. The land will be registered in the name of wife of head of the family in order to prevent misuse of the facility. The term loan carries 6 percent interest per annum. The National SC/ST Finance Development Corporation provides the loan and Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Scheduled Caste Development Corporation provides subsidy.

The land purchase scheme is implemented on the basis of certain eligibility criteria. They include - landless agricultural SC laborers, other community land seller, land free from all disputes and land fit for cultivation. The district level committee headed by the Deputy Commissioner is the competent body to
facilitate land purchase programme in the district. District Social Welfare Officer, Principal Agricultural Officer and Assistant Commissioner of Revenue Department are the other members of the district committee. The beneficiary has to be satisfied about the fertility of the land and other factors. The land should be within a radius of 5 km from the residence of the beneficiary.

The beneficiary is required to produce certain valid documents such as application, caste certificate, landless agricultural labor certificate, photos, loan agreement and proceedings of the District Committee. The land has to be registered in the name of the housewife and mortgaged to the corporation. The District Manager of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has to personally inspect all the lands and place the details before the District Committee.

The Government of Karnataka had implemented certain initiatives in 1990s to make the Special Component Plan more meaningful and provide direct benefit to the SC/ST beneficiaries. The Finance Department had released funds as per the government order to undertake various development schemes including land purchase scheme in the state. The duties and responsibilities of the officials of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation were clearly defined in order to prevent any dereliction of duty, abuse of power and misuse of funds.

The Government of Karnataka had issued the norms and guidelines of land purchase for SC families and instructed Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation to take into account the fertility of the land, water resources and transportation facilities while purchasing the land to the beneficiaries in 2007. The beneficiaries should be rural landless laborers and no member of the family should be a land owner (Government of Karnataka, 2007:01). The land purchase programme has helped the beneficiaries to acquire assets, generate income and build capacity (Rajamma, 2008:07).

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation had laid down certain terms and conditions for land purchase to SC families in 2013. The District Manager was directed to inspect the land and report to the government regarding the suitability of the land for purchase. It had also instructed the officials concerned to prevent duplication of benefits from the corporation and abuse of power by the officials. The beneficiaries were legally prevented from sale and abuse of the land purchased by them.

The Government of Karnataka had issued clear instruction to the Executive Director of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation to seek the approval of the government in times of granting financial assistance beyond Rs.5 lakh per unit under the land purchase scheme. The government had taken adequate care to facilitate ownership of land, food security, economic benefit and social identity to the beneficiaries (Government of Karnataka, 2013:02).

The Government of Karnataka had provided specific guidelines to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation regarding the land purchase scheme. It had insisted upon submission of all relevant details and documents to the head office for obtaining official clearance. The order was issued with a view to avoid benefit of doubts and irregularities in the purchase of land for landless SC families in the state (Government of Karnataka, 2014:03).

The Government of Karnataka had insisted upon the active involvement of Taluk Executive Officer and District Manager in regard to the compliance with the government norms and submission of detailed report about land purchase scheme. It was decided to get the relevant details from the beneficiaries and clearance of land purchase by the land owners in order to avoid any discrepancy and loopholes (Government of Karnataka, 2015:04).

The Government of Karnataka had issued certain guidelines to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation regarding the fixation of land value and land agreement procedures. The government had instructed the corporation to obtain letter of undertaking and agreement from the land owner in accordance with the order. The District Committee was given the complete authority to examine the documents and decide the formalities (Government of Karnataka, 2016:05). The government had released Rs.7162.90 lakh for land purchase scheme during the 2016-17 financial year. The Government of Karnataka has increased the financial assistance from Rs.15 lakh to 20 lakh per unit of land purchase during the budget of 2018-19. The recent development has occurred because of the extensive increase of land value in Bangalore urban, Bangalore rural, Ramanagar and Chikkaballapura districts. The government has directed the Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation to comply with the order and promote the social and economic interest of the SC beneficiaries (Government of Karnataka, 2018:06). The government had released Rs.5485.47 lakh for purchase of land during the financial year 2017-18.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has implemented land purchase scheme with a view to enhance the social and economic status of Scheduled Caste families who suffer from poverty and unemployment. The land purchase scheme has been implemented during 1991-2020 to create a new class of land owners among Dalits. It is essential to enhance the scope of land purchase scheme to improve the
social and economic status of the marginalized sections of society in Karnataka state. The government has also proposed to distribute bore well and agricultural equipment to women farmers who have land under the Land Ownership Scheme implemented by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation in Karnataka state.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Thorat and Sabharwal (2014:08) have examined the need for bridging the social gap perspectives on Dalit empowerment in India. The study revealed that Dalits and Adivasis had remained backward in India in all walks of life due to lack of land, capital, entrepreneurship and other resources. The study indicated that Dalits were excluded from the mainstream of development due to poor performance in the implementation of development schemes for the benefit of these communities in the country. The scholars recommended that new educational, employment and political opportunities should be extended to the marginalized sections of society. The present investigation was carried out by the researcher on the conceptual framework offered by the scholars who have provided meaningful and constructive insights into the social and economic empowerment of Dalits in Indian context.

Research Methodology

The major objective of the present study was to examine the social and economic impact of land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation in Karnataka state. The present study was planned and conducted in three stages. In the first stage, a pilot study was conducted in order to examine the feasibility of the instruments of primary data collection. In the second stage, questionnaire was developed and perfected in order to collect authentic primary data from the stakeholders of land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation. In the third stage, appropriate scientific statistical analysis procedures were followed to ensure scientific data analysis and interpretation. Overall, the present study approached the problem through both qualitative and quantitative research methods which fit into the context of the present investigation.

Primary Data Collection

Primary data were gathered from about 382 respondents who represent policy makers (76), implementers (88), facilitators (96) and beneficiaries (122) in all the 30 districts of Karnataka state since the land purchase scheme is implemented for the benefit of Scheduled Caste families in the entire state.

Secondary Data Collection

The present study was also systematically carried out on the basis of relevant secondary data available in different forms such as gazetteers, theses, dissertations, books, professional journals, proceedings of national and inter-national seminars and conferences, media reports and other publications related to the research topic.

Statistical Analysis

The study being descriptive in nature, certain parametric statistical tests were involved to draw inferences based on the sample results. The interpretation of the chi-square and contingency table analysis justify the assumption of independence which was primarily carried out at the 0.05% level of significance. The chi-square is a statistical method assessing the goodness of fit between a set of observed values and those expected theoretically. The primary data was analyzed by using chi-square method in the present study. The hypotheses were tested by using this method.

Socio – Economic Impact of Land Purchase Scheme

- Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not brought about the social capital development of the beneficiaries in the true sense of the term (70.68%).
- Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not brought about the socialization of the beneficiaries in reality (77.49%).
- Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not brought about the social transformation of the beneficiaries (70.16%).
- Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has resulted in the protective discrimination and empowerment of the beneficiaries (77.49%).
- Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has increased the social mobilization of the beneficiaries for development (83.76%).
Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has prevented the subordination and servitude nature of the landless beneficiaries (69.11%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has prevented the resourcelessness and under-development of the beneficiaries (89.01%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not enabled the beneficiaries enhance gender justice and social justice (74.35%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not enabled the beneficiaries to achieve life sustainability, individual dignity and self respect (82.72%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not protected the human rights of the beneficiaries (67.02%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to obtain benefits from various government development programmes (73.30%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to obtain membership opportunities in self help groups, cooperative societies, cooperative banks, regional banks and nationalized banks (67.02%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to obtain health benefits like health insurance, life insurance, healthcare facilities and delivery benefits (71.20%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to fulfill their basic needs (77.49%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to overcome poverty, hunger, malnutrition and other constraints (72.25%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not enabled the beneficiaries to hold assets like vehicle, television, mobile phone, LPG stove, mixer / grinder and so on (82.72%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to increase their agricultural assets like tools of plough, bullock cart, power tiller, sprayers, harvesters, motor pump and so on (70.16%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to increase their livestock like cows, buffalo, sheep, goat, poultry and so on (76.44%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not enabled the beneficiaries to increase the irrigation and electricity facilities (71.73%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has enabled the beneficiaries to increase the watershed development activities like soil moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, dry land horticulture and so on (64.92%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not facilitated the generation of productive employment opportunities to the beneficiaries (63.87%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not enabled the beneficiaries to improve their standard of living (75.39%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not ensured access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern resources to the beneficiaries (72.77%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not strengthened the means of implementation and revitalized the partnership for development of the beneficiaries (67.54%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not facilitated sustainable consumption and production patterns of the beneficiaries (79.58%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has created new opportunities for development of the beneficiaries (73.82%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has promoted agro based activities for the benefit of beneficiaries (80.63%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has contributed for the integrated development of the beneficiaries (75.92%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has not enhanced the transformative power of the beneficiaries (69.63%).

Land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation has increased the economic security of the beneficiaries (72.77%).
Testing of Hypotheses

H1. The respondents have not gained social and economic benefits through the implementation of land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation.

The data analysis furnished in the thesis clearly emphasizes that the beneficiaries of land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation have not gained adequate social and economic benefits.

Implications of the Study

The land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation in Karnataka State has ushered in a new era of inclusive development of beneficiary families belonging to Scheduled Castes. This scheme offers multi-faceted benefits to the beneficiary families in the present times. The stakeholders of governance, development and social justice have also realized the utility of land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation in Karnataka State. The non-government organizations and progressive movements have also actively participated in the implementation of this scheme as facilitators on the basis of social commitment and responsibility. The implications of the study in specific terms are presented as follows.

- The policy of allocation and utilization of funds for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should be promptly implemented by the central and state governments.
- The objective of ensuring direct benefit for SC and ST communities should be spelt out in programme designing and planning with a clear directive in the new guidelines.
- The policy makers should launch Dalit specific developmental initiatives at the grassroots level by actively involving various stakeholders of Dalit empowerment.
- The land purchase scheme should be implemented effectively on the basis of sound legislative framework and machinery for implementation of the programme.
- Sufficient financial resources should be allocated for an efficient machinery capable of implementing the land purchase scheme in a judicious manner.
- The policy makers should adopt target group specific approaches to selection of beneficiaries and implementation of land purchase scheme through Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation.
- The policy makers should adopt Ambedkar's 'Antyodaya' (development of last man) model of development to facilitate inclusive development at the grassroots level.
- The policy makers should adopt healthy norms and guidelines for effective implementation of land purchase scheme in consultation with the beneficiaries, revenue officials and agricultural experts.
- The policy makers should realize the importance of land purchase scheme and facilitate adequate use of various media of communication for consistent campaigns and awareness building exercises.
- The stakeholders of land purchase scheme should promote development literacy and digital literacy to facilitate better utilization of land purchase scheme.
- The government organizations, non-government organizations, Panchayati Raj Institutions and progressive organizations should be actively involved in the implementation of land purchase scheme.
- The government and non-government organizations should explore new avenues and opportunities for judicious and creative use of land purchase scheme to maximize their social and economic benefits to the beneficiary families.
- The rural development and Panchayat raj institutions should harness the potentials of land purchase scheme and ensure optimum utilization of the scheme for better social transformation and economic development of the beneficiary families.
- Interactive Portals are necessary to enlist active participation of the various stakeholders including the beneficiaries to facilitate real-time data of performance and outcomes for all agencies concerned.
- There is an urgent need of an Ombudsman to monitor and evaluate the whole process of planning, financing and implementation of the land purchase scheme.
- The research and development institutions should promote adequate scientific investigations on the access, uses and impact of land purchase scheme in modern times.

Conclusion

Dalits in India constitute approximately 25% of the total population of India in the present times. They have made remarkable contributions for the development of civilization, culture, society, economy and
other sectors of national development. The Brahminical, colonial and imperialist forces have denied the fundamental rights to Dalits and isolated them from the national mainstream. Dalits suffer from multi-faceted constraints and limitations due to vertical social and economic orders in India. The empowerment of Dalits is thus a part of a continued quest for educational progress, social justice, economic equity and political empowerment. There is a need for a paradigm shift from post-facto to pro-active planning for the empowerment of Dalits in India. Ambedkar fought against the oppressive features and forces and emerged as the champion of social justice and economic equity in India. He also contributed the best constitution against failing health and other non-cooperative environment and laid a strong foundation for the welfare and progress of Indians including Dalits. The Government of India has implemented series of development programmes for the inclusive development of Dalits. The state governments have also implemented region-specific and target group specific programmes for the development of Dalits and other marginalized sections of society. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation is established across the country to facilitate the development of Scheduled Castes who are struggling for their right to emancipation and empowerment. Land purchase scheme is implemented in Karnataka state by the Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation to provide multi-faceted benefits to SC families including economic security. The corporation is well known in the state as an exclusive development support official agency. The present investigation explored the strengths and limitations of land purchase scheme in general and socio-economic impact of the scheme on the beneficiary families in particular. The study emphasizes that land purchase scheme of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Development Corporation is a constructive programme which has lifted the beneficiary families above the poverty line. The study concludes that the beneficiaries of land purchase scheme of the corporation have not gained adequate social and economic benefits. The study envisages that the corporation has to implement this programme in consultation with the experts and beneficiaries to ensure optimum utilization of the programme.

References