

Research Article

Social and Economic Exclusion among Social Groups in India

Digvijay Kumar

Research Scholar, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai 400088, Maharashtra, India
E-mail id: digvijayk04@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Social and economic exclusion is a dynamic and multi dimensional processes, driven by unequal power relationship in the society. It hinders to achieve equity and justice. India is the country known for its diversity and complexity known in its socio-economic and cultural policy. Poverty and unemployment are the major constraints in the path of development. Informalisation of work further deteriorates the working condition of Schedule caste, schedule tribe and minority. The root of such causes lies in its social structure. The unique social system known as caste is an important feature of this country. This system is still critical and complex in the study of social sciences. The adverse effects of the caste system is prevalent in today's society especially in rural areas, continue to be widespread and impoverish a certain part of society. The caste system brings the division of labor based on caste, which is inherited from birth. This system is subject to the notion of purity and pollution. Agricultural labour and casual labour in rural and urban areas respectively are largely contributed by the people from schedule caste and schedule tribe, who are left with meagre wage, uncertain works and without social security. Development induced displacement and land acquisition have left them with depeasantization and casual works. Social exclusion forms are divided into several groups that have been perpetuated since ancient times and have taken a new shape under the market economy and globalisation, citing as invisible forms or new discrimination. The relative socio-economic disadvantages among Muslim prove their exclusion from the majority-infested Hindu in general and the upper caste in particular.

Keywords: Caste, Discrimination, Development, Displacement, Exclusion, Globalisation, Tribe.

INTRODUCTION

Caste has for long been a subject of inquiry with sociologists and social anthropologists. Caste system is an Indian origin. It distinguishes Indian society from the western society. It is a system of social relation. Caste system is both an institution as well as an ideology. Institutionally, 'caste' provided a framework for arranging and organising social groups in terms of their statuses and positions in the social and economic system. As an ideology, caste was a system of values and ideas that legitimised and reinforced the existing structures of social inequality (Jodhka, 2010). Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST), which constitute about a quarter of the population, have a disproportionate rate of the poverty level. This is a historical phenomenon, emerge since the inception of the Hindu caste system. Although the magnitude of deprivation and marginalisation are diminishing among them but with the slower and unequal rate. Scheduled castes are a constitutionally declared collection of castes, which has suffered from the practice of untouchability. Schedule tribes are identified on the basis of certain criteria such as primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation and general backwardness. However, the terms 'scheduled caste' and 'scheduled tribe' are nowhere defined in the constitution of India. They include more than four hundred castes and tribes respectively, with a great cultural heterogeneity (Singh, 1993). The former "untouchables" were considered to be at the bottom of the Hindu social hierarchy and were not part of the "Varna system" quadruple with Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The tribal people known as "Adivasis" meaning people of the earth are not social in the context of the Hindu hierarchy. Schedule caste historically suffered from social stigma due to untouchability and was therefore excluded from society, although physically, they have always been a part of society. Tribes on the other side were physically or geographically excluded, but not against any social stigma and are not socially excluded. This historically developed different form of exclusion has very important implications for the present nature and causes of poverty in these groups (Mutatkar, 2005 : 3).

Caste is a peculiarly Hindu practice and states that the Hindu mind was concerned with maintaining social difference and inequalities. The caste reflects a fundamental social principal and hierarchy. System of hierarchy is governed by the concept of purity and impurity. Pure was understandably superior to impure (Dumont, 1980: 43). Indian caste system is a 'status groups', which were present in all societies where market or capitalist relation had not yet evolved. Status groups were like ethnic communities, completely closed to outsiders and sharing some form of 'social estimation of honour'. Birth within the group, like an ethnic group, determined the membership of a caste group (Hutton, 1946). According to Ambedkar (1936), caste is not just a division of labour, it is a division of labourers.

Division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour, it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other. In no other country is the division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers. The division of labour brought about by the caste system is not a division based on choice. Individual sentiment, individual preference, has no place in it (Ambedkar, 1936). Untouchability is unique in caste system. Practice of untouchability divides touchable and untouchable caste. The notion of untouchability is based on superiority and inferiority. There are three schools of thought of the origin of untouchability. It is racial, religious and social. According to racial theory, touchable (caste Hindu) and untouchable (Ati-sudras) belong to two different races, differentiated by colour (Shah, 2002: 19).

The main objective of the development plan was economic growth with equity and justice since after independence. The government has been trying to provide entitlements and productive endowments among the poor, in general, and among the socially marginalised and economically disadvantaged sections of the society (SCs/STs) in particular through an integrated approach. The thrust of rural development programmes was to make a direct attack on poverty by implementing wage employment and self-employment programmes and providing education, health care services, rural housing, drinking water, sanitation, etc., so that these groups come out from the vicious cycle of poverty. The available information and data show that the recent economic growth has not been trickled down properly which has resulted in mass poverty, low income, and deprivation (Biradar, 2012: 1).

CASTE AND TRIBE IN INDIA

The caste is the dynamic appearance. Caste is a system of social stratification, which lies at the very root of social structure of most social groups in India. No sociologist had ever been precisely defined it. Ghanshyam Shah cited Hutton and Ghurye (1961) in, 'caste and democratic politics in India'. 'The truth is that while caste is a social unit in a quasi-organic system of society throughout India, is consistent enough to be immediately identifiable, the nature of the unit is variable enough to make a concise definition difficult' (Shah *et al.*, 2006). It is about 100 years before Ambedkar mentioned in his Ethnological thesis, castes in India: Their mechanism, genesis and development cited the definition of Dr. Ketkar who has brought a critical insight and an open mind to bear on his study of caste. He has defined caste in its relation to the system of castes and has concentrated attention only on characteristics which are absolutely necessary for the existence of caste within a system. These characteristics are prohibition of intermarriage, and membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born. Ambedkar further argues that these two characteristics are one and the

same; if you restricted intermarriages, you limited the membership to those who born within a closed group. He defines the superposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste. 'Caste in India means an artificial chopping-off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy. Thus the conclusion is inevitably that, endogamy is the only characteristic that is peculiar to the caste. If one will success in showing how the endogamy is maintained, he shall practically have proved the genesis and also the mechanism of caste' (Ambedkar, 1936).

The tribal population in India, though a numerically small minority, represents an enormous diversity of groups. They vary among themselves in respect of language and linguistic traits, ecological settings in which they live, physical features, size of the population, the extent of acculturation, dominant modes of making a livelihood, level of development and social stratification. They are present in almost each and every part of the country. The tribal population of the country, as per the 2011 census, constitute 8.6 per cent of the total. A majority of tribal groups work in the primary sector and are heavily dependent on agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. At the same time, a number of scheduled tribes no longer follow their traditional occupations and work as labourers on plantations or in mines and factories. Displacement and enforced migration have also led to an increasing number of scheduled tribes working as contract labourers in the construction industry and as domestic workers in major cities (Ministry of Tribal Affairs report, 2014: 36).

CASTE IN HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

Despite difficulties in defining the caste and how it came to be, scholars came at the consensus about the philosophical central idea which constitutes the caste structured society. They absolutely found that 'homo hierarchicus' is the central and substantial element of the caste system which is different from other social systems of the west. The one can simply say that 'homo hierarchicus' means the established hierarchy among the different homogeneous social groups which constitute the system of castes. This system is governed by the concept of purity and pollution. 'Purity and pollution, by interpersonal relationship among individuals being, dictated in terms of blood, food and occupation and by rituals related to them being divided into pure and impure. It is obligatory to each Hindu to confine her/his relationship and interaction within the restricted circle called "jati" so as to maintain purity in marriage, relationship, exchange of food and in the pursuit of occupation' (Shah, 2002: 7). This is the main philosophical concept which provided the founding base to the most exploitative system, so-called the caste system. 'The concept of purity and impurity in hierarchical system implicate to the principle of the antipathy between pure and impure. Where pure is superior

to the impure, underlies the separation which is must to keep them separate, which also underlies the division of labour because the pure and impure occupation must be kept separate. The whole system is hierarchical coexistence of opposites' (Dumont, 1980: 43).

In some more specific ways, some theory reflects that the caste system is interlinked with the 'Varna' model which divides the Hindu society is divided into four orders, like Brahmana (priest), Kshatriya (ruler and soldier), Vaishya (traders) and Shudra (labourer and servant). The first three castes are 'twice-born' or 'dvija' as the men from these castes are entitled to done the sacred thread at the Vedic rite of upanayana, which the Shudras were not allowed to perform. The untouchable castes are outside the varna scheme. The philosophy of caste manages to sustain it throughout time immemorial only because of its religious sanction (Pritchett, 1979). Dumont explores the relationship between power and hierarchy in the varna system to specify the relationship between varna and caste. He says the hierarchy in the caste is not the same as in the class, social stratification of western countries nor it is mandatory graduated authority of power. In caste, hierarchy is the systemic phenomenon which established the ranked relation of the elements of system to the whole system. He argues that it is not a linear order but a series of successive dichotomies or inclusive positions. 'The set of the four varnas divided into two categories, the last category that of the Shudras is in antipathy to the block of the three, whose members are "twice born" in the sense that they have a sanction to participate in initiation, second birth and in religious life in general. The twice born then divided in two: the Vaishyas are opposed to the block formed by Kshatriyas and Brahmans, which in turn divides into two. But the fifth category, the untouchables are outside the varnas just as the shudras were outside the twice-born' (Dumont, 1980).

Dr. Ambedkar argues that the caste system has religious legitimacy and sanction; hence, he rejected Hinduism. Further, he argues that the caste system is anti-development which perpetuates the Brahmin and upper caste hegemony, and is so politically not acceptable. He was the first to argue that untouchability is a part of the caste system, and caste system is the consolidated infrastructure for Hindu religion to stand. If you destroy the caste system, the whole structure of Hinduism will collapse, because Hinduism is nothing but caste-based structure. Further, he made the distinction between family reform and social reform in Hindu society and argued for the imperative need of reorganisation and reconstruction of the Hindu society. He proposed that the social and religious change is required first to have a political change. 'I have taken in support of the proposition that social and religious problems have a bearing on political constitutions seem to be too particular. Perhaps they are. But it should not be supposed that the bearing of the

one on the other is limited. On the other hand, one can say that generally speaking history bears out the proposition that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolution, the emancipation of the mind and the soul is a necessary preliminary for the political expansion of the people' (Ambedkar, 1936).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATIONS OF MINORITY IN INDIA

A minority at the present historical juncture is the first and foremost section of the society which has a poor access to power and suffers from a democratic and developmental deficit. A minority is a state of marginalisation. There is a need for minority rights in the form of opportunities and resources which are important for the realisation of any minority's creative potential. The minority with special focus on Muslim are suffering from many exclusions. Their woeful conditions are summarised in the extensive report of the Sachar committee. This shows the poor and backward educational, economic and women condition of the Muslim. The Rangnath Mishra committee report shows the same and recommend for the affirmative action by the state for their improvement. The atrocity against them is also rising in the forms of illegal detention under TADA (Terrorist And Disruptive Activities) and other laws which are completely a human right violation. There are basically three important dimensions of the social exclusion of the Muslims – backwardness, marginalisation and discrimination. The educational status and literacy is very low among them. They are lagging behind with a literacy rate of only 67.6 per cent as against the national rate of 74 per cent. In higher education, the difference between Muslim and others stand out even more sharply. Their marginalisation can be easily seen with the evidences on high-rate poverty and low-income level. The exclusionary and prejudice behaviour towards the Muslims have resulted into the economic and labour market discrimination which has its effect on high incidence of poverty. The low participation in salaried jobs, higher dependency on low-income self-employment, low worker participation and massive unemployment among them compel them to remain poor and to stand at the bottom. There is a high share of Muslim workers in self-employment activities, particularly in urban areas. This concentration in self-employment like street vending, small trades and enterprises ensures that the community is far more exposed to the disruption and damages caused by urban conflict and violence. The fragility of Muslim participation in the economy and the low level of assets accumulation in general further intensify their vulnerability to the displacements, physical and economic, caused by situations of continual communal strife. The less focus by the government for their upliftment particularly after the new economic policy forced them for casualisation of work and ghettoisation in urban areas. The lack of access to credit urges to look for Islamic banking system for

financial inclusion among the Muslim. The financial exclusion is concluded in the form of lower share in credit from specialised institution and lack of banking facilities in the Muslim-concentrated areas. The average size of the credit is meagre and low as compared with other socio-religious groups. Their participation is relatively lower in managerial, technical and professional work in urban areas, and they tend to be more insecure and vulnerable in terms of conditions of work. They are poorly represented in defence and security-related activities as well. They are discriminated on the basis of the public service provisioning including low educational, medical and banking facilities in their areas (Robinson, 2008).

Although there are some constitutional provisions under Articles 29 and 30 which provide them cultural and religious rights besides some other policies, these are either not being implemented or insufficient to handle the deprivation faced by a large section of the Muslim in the country. Any fundamental rights of equality and equal opportunity have not been updated in the context of the Muslim minority in India, where a variety of exclusionary activities deeply rooted in systems and mechanisms that have kept Muslims out of the process of development and democratic fabric of this country. The government has not actually been able to protect this minority, which can be observed from the growing gap in development indicators.

MARGINALISATION OF SOCIAL GROUPS IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

The poor economic condition of socially marginalised groups namely SC and ST has its historical root in the social exclusion where SC was excluded and discriminated from the caste system while ST was physically excluded. Land acquisition and displacement have been proved to be a major cause of poverty among the tribal in the country. The indigenous people have a special relationship with the land and for them; it is not only a means of production but also a symbolic and emotional meaning as the repository for ancestral remains, clan origin sites and other sacred features important to their religious system. Land acquisition for the purpose of starting a commercial project in tribal areas has been a difficult nut to crack right from the very beginning (Hauser, 2005). Displacement of these indigenous groups has been taking place in the form of the mining industry and urbanisation. A large area of agricultural land belonging to indigenous people is being laid waste because of haphazard mining. After the land acquisition and displacement, compensation and rehabilitation policy adopted by the government are unjust and inequitable. Such model of development is that the local communities became passive beneficiaries of the state's development policy instead of being active partners. There is no perception of improvement on the part of the local communities (Prakash, 2010).

Social, political and cultural dispossessions have compelled them to remain vulnerable. Owing to new forces in terms of unjust industrial policies and dominance of ruling class, after economic disruption, the social condition of the indigenous societies is also breaking down. They are losing their traditional social controls and social tension is increasing among them. They are feeling the deprivation of their sense of personal worth and a devaluation of their social identity. In the political sphere, their traditional political institutions are destroyed. They are incorporated into the state and they have to conform to and become integrated with the political institution of the dominant society. The process of disintegration of their traditional cultures is further accelerated by deliberate programmes of integration and assimilation followed by the state to bring the indigenous people to the so called national mainstream. There is a non declared polity to suppress the language of the indigenous people and to impose on them the dominant language of the area. Proletarianisation of indigenous people are taking place through the process of disassociation of the indigenous people from their subsistent and self sufficient economy which have destroyed and turned them into free workers, independent from and deprived of the material means of their own reproduction. The conversion of self sufficient farmers into cheap wage labourers resulted in the spread of capitalist relations of production (Areeparampil, 2010: 161-166).

The forms of caste-based discrimination are changing in the present scenario. New forms of discrimination are being practised unlike earlier untouchability. Owing to the implementation of laws to protect these communities, invisible forms of discrimination are taking place. After the Dalit panthers movement in the early 1970s and more specifically after the emergence of the Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) under the leadership of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati, some positive changes have started to come in the forms of mobilisation and polarisation of backward people, coalition politics, social and political assertion and symbolically assertion. The formation of Dalit identity aims at uniting them as the oppressed at one level, cutting across religious and linguistic boundaries. It is secular in nature and not confining to any caste or religious community (Shah, 2002).

The new forms of caste discrimination are taking place from the market-based activities also besides some earlier practice of caste discrimination or atrocity. The growth of labour productivity in the unorganised sector including most of the agriculture comes from lengthening the hours of work, due to having lack of labour laws and social security to protect workers. The surplus labour value of the workers, who are mainly from the lower caste, are used for profit making by the owners which widens the gap between the rich and the poor and spells out the negative idea of justice in the society. Instead of protecting the interest of the

people from the adverse impact of the market, government is forcibly snatching the natural resources land, water, sea shores and forests and are handing over to the private investors/corporations for mining and industrialisation in the name of the formation of SEZs (special economic zones). So, instead of creating employment, SEZs are destroying livelihoods of marginalised people. Owing to the impact of globalisation, the stringent market disciplines are imposed by the financial markets and the Bretton Wood Institutions, inequality and distress increase due to the states roll back and privatisation of expenditure in area of social services like basic health, education and public distribution of foods. As the economy becomes market oriented, this caste is turning into class in some aspects, and the proletarianisation (process of downward social mobility of upper class) and embourgeoisement (upward social mobility of lower class) are being observed particularly in urban areas as well. According to the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) survey 2014, 30 per cent of rural and 20 per cent of urban households said they practised untouchability. Although the inter caste marriage is just over 5 per cent in India Muslims are not very different from such discrimination, and their present economic and political conditions are also on the same line. As regards Muslims, some of the report shows improvement on a few indicators, the increase has been marginal and rate of growth is still much lower than for schedule castes/schedule tribes (SC/STs). The situation is more or less the same as that articulated by the Sachar Committee report (Robinson, 2008). There is a high concentration of Muslims in urban areas, making the incidence of poverty more visible there. A report by the Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission, which came out in 2007, further emphasised the deplorable condition of Muslims on socio-economic indicators and strengthened the findings, arguments and recommendations of the Sachar Committee report. To uplift the condition of socially excluded group, the government has adopted the protective and promotive measures.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The concept of economic and social exclusion was encouraged by debates in Europe on new forms of poverty in the wake of the crisis of the welfare state, more specifically, consequent upon World Summit for Social Development and endeavoured to explore the notion of social exclusion (Thorat and Sabharwal, 2010). Social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education and training opportunities, as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless

and are unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives. The idea of social exclusion was conceived in Western Europe to capture different forms of disadvantages that had resulted from economic restructuring in the 1970s. It was, however, first popularised by Rene Lenoir in France. Social exclusion means persistence of complex and multi disadvantages. In the process of its evolution, social exclusion has been conceptualised as both process and outcome. As a process, social exclusion examines the way individuals or groups get excluded in the society in which they live. As a state or condition or an outcome, it identifies the most disadvantaged people or social groups who could be labelled as and excluded from larger social system and relationship (Alam, 2013: 16).

Beall (2002) has identified three approaches to social exclusion. The neo-liberal approach views social exclusion as ‘an unfortunate but inevitable side effect of global economic realignment’. As a consequence of the emergence of free trade and a single global market, workers are now excluded from the benefits of trade barriers and social and employment protection. A second approach argues that ‘social exclusion represents little more than an unhelpful relabelling of poverty or acts to distract attention from inequality generated by the workings of the economic system’. The third, transformationalist, approach focuses attention on social relations embedded in formal and informal institutions, and ‘signals the use of the social exclusion framework to analyse international processes and institutional relationships associated with rapid social and economic global change and local impacts and responses’ (Beall, 2002: 43–44). Of these three approaches, the neo-liberal and relabelling of poverty approaches conceptualise social exclusion as a ‘state’, whereas the transformational approach focuses attention on exclusionary processes. This latter approach is concerned with social interactions and power relationships at different levels – from global to local – and recognises the social, political and cultural, as well as the economic, dimensions of power. Origin of the term ‘exclusion’, nevertheless, is traced to Weber who identified exclusion as one form of social closure that is an intended attempt of one group to secure privileged position at the expense of other groups through process of subordination (Hills, 2002). Such weberian framework of exclusion is visible in Indian context where certain groups especially upper caste in dominant religious communities have developed social closure and have systematically excluded vast majority of masses from accessing goods and services. The idea of social exclusion is considered a necessary and inherent characteristic of unequal post-industrial capitalism founded around a flexible labour market (Byrne, 1999: 128).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION IN INDIA

Social exclusion is defined as social process which involves denial of fair and equal opportunities to certain social groups in multiple spheres in society, resulting

in the inability of individuals from excluded groups to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society. Social exclusion denies the equal opportunities in multiple spheres from political to economic field which lead to lack of freedom and human poverty (Thorat and Sabharwal, 2010). According to Sen (2000), the dimension of social exclusion can be described in unfavourable inclusion (inclusion with unequal treatment) and unfavourable exclusion (complete denial to include). He differentiates between active and passive exclusion. Active exclusion is the deliberate exclusion of people from opportunities through government policies or other means. This can be seen in the context of the land acquisition policy of the government in the tribal regions where their land are forcefully taken by the government in the name of eminent domain. The displacement of millions of poor people is mainly from SC and ST through the establishment of large dam and other government infrastructure projects also refer to the instances of the active exclusion. Passive exclusion refers to the social process in which there are no deliberate attempts to exclude, but nevertheless, may result in exclusion of people from a set of circumstances. Sen further distinguishes 'constitutive relevance of exclusion' from that of 'instrumental importance'. In the former, exclusion and deprivation have an intrinsic importance of their own. For instance, being unable to relate to others and to take part in community life can directly impoverish an individual, in addition to further deprivation that it may generate. This is different from social exclusion of 'instrumental importance', in which the exclusion in itself is not impoverishing but can lead to impoverishment of human lives (Thorat, 2010: 4). Such types of exclusion are being experienced by SC, ST and Muslim as well in various forms. The prejudice behaviour has been pushing them into impoverishment and perpetual deprivation. In the civil, cultural and religious spheres, the 'untouchables' may face discrimination and exclusion in the use of public services like roads, water bodies, temples and institutions delivering educational and health services. Due to the physical (or residential) segregation and social exclusion on account of untouchability, they can suffer from a general societal exclusion.

As there is a societal mechanism to regulate and enforce the customary norms and rules of the caste system, the 'untouchables' usually face opposition in the form of social and economic boycott and violence, which acts as a deterrent to their right to development. In the political sphere, the 'untouchables' can face discrimination in limited or no access to political rights, and participation in the institutions of governance and the decision-making process. In the Indian context poverty is largely a social question arises from caste conflict and further caused by politics played by certain interest groups. To hold power, assets and resources, some upper section of society influences the government policies and programmes in such a way which keep the people of lower caste vulnerable. The social groups

(SCs and STs) and Muslim suffer from unfair exclusion and unfair inclusion with discriminated access to rights and entitlements, which resulted in the denial of equal rights and opportunities and induce more poverty among them. Unfair exclusion means complete denial of certain groups from the access to their rights and entitlements, whereas unfair inclusion means to involve them to provide access to rights and entitlements but with unequal terms and condition or different treatment. Such discriminations take place due to two factors: market institution and non-market institution. Market institution discriminates these groups in various ways, namely, first, landlessness or marginal landholder; second, lack of access to credit due to having absence of mortgage as they are landless and its considered as collateral mortgage, so the market does not provide them credit; third factor is the input markets including material and services inputs and higher prices paid to fertilisers, irrigation and others; fourth, non-farm business and markets like denial of licence, electricity, water and others; fifth, the labour market discrimination which includes complete denial of certain social groups to hire them as they are untouchables, low wages paid, denial of jobs or employment in certain categories as they are involved in unclean or polluting occupations. In the context of non-market institutions, discrimination takes place in access to education, public- and private-health services, access to CPRs (common property resources in the village), access to basic amenities and access to participation in the village panchayat (Thorat, 2008).

IMPACT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Affirmative action has promoted socially marginalised groups to get government jobs but in an unfair way, means, they mostly work in lower grade, unlike upper caste who are involved in executive, managerial and top decision making level. These groups are deprived of basic facilities like access to safe drinking water, electricity, housing and other housing amenities. Most of the people from SC groups are either landless or hold marginal and small land in rural areas which is not enough to survive with minimum standard level. Such deprivations force them to remain multi dimensionally poor. Most of the output of the recent economic growth have been utilised by the upper section of the society, mainly consist of forward caste.

The denial and exclusion in employment and in certain categories of works results in higher unemployment and under-employment among the discriminated groups. Lower wages reduce income and compulsory involvement in works due to traditional caste obligations which make them vulnerable to exploitation and often lead to unpaid labour. The most adversely affected businesses owned by discriminated groups are likely to be ones dealing in consumer goods, in which the restrictions on purchases by higher castes from the low castes may be more

pronounced and persuasive due to the notions of purity and pollution. As a corollary, few persons from discriminated groups are likely to engage in businesses dealing with the sale of consumable items. This may particularly be the case in the village setting and close localities in urban area where the caste identity of seller is known. In effect, such restrictions will affect the magnitude of sale of consumer goods and incomes of businesses owned by the untouchables. Social or any kind of exclusion of these groups namely SC/ST and Muslim can reflect the high incidence of poverty among them. According to Panagariya and More (2013), the poverty rate among the SC and ST was 29.4 and 43 per cent compared with 22 per cent among all groups in the year 2011–2012. The poverty rate among the Muslim was 25.4 per cent compared with 21.9 per cent among the Hindu. Uttarakhand which has a large area of mountains and hill is also not different from the presence of caste, tribe and religion-based discrimination. Poverty rate among the SC and ST was 14.9 per cent and 13.5 per cent, respectively, compared with 11.4 per cent for all groups (Panagariya and More 2013: 24). According to 61st round of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation), 75 per cent, 52.5 per cent and 46.4 per cent rural households are either landless or having less than 1 ac of land among SCs, STs and others, respectively. Only 4.7 per cent SCs households hold more than 5 ac of land. There are also some cases of caste-based discrimination in the state (Thorat, 2010). The condition of tribal is pathetic because of multidimensional exclusion in the form of geographical, social, political and economic exclusion. The condition of Muslim is deplorable with high incidences of poverty rate at 19 per cent compared with 10 per cent among the Hindu. Besides the high incidences of poverty, these communities particularly tribals have been excluded for the very long time. Such exclusionary policy led to the commencement of the chipko movement. The caste system also constraints the economic growth and development which reduces the mobility of labours as well as capital. It assumes that poverty is a complex and cumulative consequence of power relations over a period of time between groups within a region and between regions in the modern world system.

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