

Research Article

Relevance of Social Exclusion in Castellan Theory of Informationalism for South Asia

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ABSTRACT

'Social exclusion' has become a buzzword in an era of 'globalisation'. Many social scientists have made an attempt in defining, conceptualising, contextualising and theorising social exclusion. There is an attempt in this paper in examining social exclusion from Manuel Castells' perspective in South Asian context. Information plays crucial role in informationalism especially due to ICT (information and communication technology). However, it has resulted into a new form of social problem, what he calls 'redundancy of labour' as opposed to 'appropriation of surplus labour' based on the notion of exploitative relations of production. Social exclusion must be looked upon not only in terms of non-access to resources but also in terms of 'redundancy of labour' in an era of globalisation process, intensified with ICT resulting into 'network production' to cope with the crisis of capitalism. It has been argued that Castellan notion of social exclusion must be understood from the perspective of technology driven information society characterised by: (a) redundancy of labour and (b) notion of network. To him, information society differs from industrial society which is characterised by: (i) appropriation of surplus labour and (ii) maximisation of profit. Redundancy of labour results into social exclusion in knowledge-based information society.

Key words: Castellan Theory, Labour, Profit, Globalization, Scientist

INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion as a concept discussed by Manuel Castells may be examined within the theoretical framework of 'Informationalism' even in the South Asian context. His *magnum opus* 'Information Society' which is equated with Marx's *Das Capital* and Weber's *Economy and Society* is the major source for examining social exclusion in an era of informationalism. It may not be out of context to

point out that Castells's writings reflect Marxism: both as an academician as well as an activist. Therefore it was natural for him to explain many changes in the Post-Industrial Societies within the framework of 'Mode of Production'. However acceleration of the globalisation process especially due to ICT has brought many changes. These changes cannot be explained from old concepts and theoretical frameworks. Therefore, he introduced 'Mode of Development', subsequently crystallised as 'Informationalism'. I must emphasise here that Castellian notion of 'Social exclusion' like many other concepts are neither rhetoric nor semantic. It must be looked upon as a major contribution for enhancing our understanding for contemporary Post-Industrial Societies with specific reference to issues like social exclusion in South Asia. It may be pointed out here that the Castells theory is disposable and it must be thrown into the dustbin, if it is unable to explain the social reality. Manuel Castells's epistemological assumption lies in 'grounded theory' of Glaser and Strauss. Therefore, he does not try to mechanically fit empirical data into existing theory if new empirical reality cannot explain the existing concepts and theories than it must be replaced. His epistemological position took him to shape his ideas. Grounded theory as a methodology is a collaborative contribution of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. The former was inspired by Paul Lazarsfeld who has been associated with logic of positivistic tradition. The later was influenced by the interactionist tradition of Robert E. Park, W. I. Thomas, John Dewey, G. H Mead, Everret Hughes and Herbert Blumer. The proponent of the grounded theory are of the view that it is an alternative approach to any kind of research that produced finding not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. The finding in qualitative research of grounded theory are derived from data gathered by a variety of means including observation interview, documents, video tapes an even data that have been quantify for other purpose such as census data (Matin, 2004).

Social Exclusion in Indian Sub-Continent

In Indian sub-continent, exclusion revolves around the societal interrelations and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate, and deprive some groups on the basis of group's identities like caste and ethnicity. The nature of exclusion revolving around the caste system particularly needs to be understood and conceptualised. It is the caste-based exclusion, which has formed the basis for various anti-discriminatory policies in India. Historically, the caste system has regulated the social and economic life of the people in India (Thorat, 2005).

Amartya Sen draws in thought with respect to distinctive implications and measurements of the thought of social avoidance. Refinement is drawn between the condition where a couple of people are being kept out (or at scarcest overlooked), and where a couple of people are being fused (may even be

influentially included) at amazingly unfavourable terms, and depicted these two circumstances as 'unfavourable rejection' and 'unfavourable consideration'. Unfavourable incorporation, with unequal treatment may pass on the same unfriendly effects as 'unfavourable avoidance'. Sen, likewise separated between 'active and passive exclusion'. He defined 'active exclusion' as the deliberate exclusion of individuals from opportunity through government strategy or other means. 'Passive exclusion', as characterised by Sen, lives up to expectations through the social procedure in which there are no deliberate attempts to exclude, yet in any case, may bring about rejection from an arrangement of circumstances. Sen, further perceives the 'constitutive pertinence' of rejection from that of 'instrumental significance'. In the previous, exclusion and deprivation have inherent significance they could call their own. For example, not having the ability to relate to others and to join in the group's life can direct destroy a man's life, despite the further hardship it may produce. This is not exactly the same as social exclusion of 'instrumental significance', in which the dismissal in itself is not demolishing, but instead can provoke impoverishment of human life (Sen, 2000).

In India, prohibition rotates around the societal interrelations and organisations that exclude, discriminate, disconnect and deprive a few groups on the premise of their identity like caste and ethnicity (Thorat and Louis, 2003). Generally, the caste system has regulated the social and economic life of the individuals in India (Thorat, 2003). The nature of exclusion rotating around the caste framework especially should be comprehended and conceptualised. It is this caste-based exclusion that has formed the premise for different anti-discriminatory policies in India (Thorat, 2004).

Castes at the highest order of the social order appreciate more rights to the expense of those situated at the base. In this way the untouchables, situated at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, have far less economic and social rights (Thorat, 2002; Thorat and Deshpande, 1999).

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional procedure. It includes the need or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to take an interest in the ordinary relationship and activities, available to larger part of individuals in the public arena, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and union of society as a whole (Levitas *et al.*, 2007).

LOCATION OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE THEORY OF 'INFORMATIONALISM'

Castells is struck by the fact that while the industrial society was characterised by fordism (assembly line production), the post-industrial society (informationalism)

is characterised by information. As far as the concept 'information' is concerned, it needs elaboration. In order to understand information, it may be a good idea to comprehend data, information, knowledge and wisdom and its contexts. Data means information lacking structure (viz. an alphabet). It may be an outcome of research, creation, gathering or discovery. Information refers to data with structure (viz. a word, a sentence, etc.). Information is primarily organisation or presentation knowledge is what a knower knows. It refers to an integration of data and information in a context. Thus information is data given context, and endowed with meaning and significance. Knowledge is information that is transformed through reasoning and reflection into beliefs, concepts and mental modes. Wisdom is contemplation, evaluation, interpretation and/or retrospection of knowledge. Further data and information are stimulus and may be global. Whereas, knowledge is based on experience and it is local in nature. Wisdom is understanding and personal.

His three pillars of industrial society revolve round production, power, and experience. These three pillars echo Althusser's three levels, namely, economy, state and ideology: each developing with 'relative autonomy'. It may be noted here that Castells abandoned structural Marxism and appreciated role of technology in the society, which is very unusual intellectual trajectory. However, the formulism of Althusser may have also been conducive in shifting the perspective from transformative conflict to the transformation of forms. This might have been conducive for his new attempts in generating the notion of 'Networks' advocated by physicists and complexity theorists. Compared with industrial technology, new technology tends to be more open, amenable to being configured and transformed. They also penetrate more deeply into the users' experience. Technology is becoming personal and intimate. There is a distinction between how we use a plain and how we use a personal computer or a mobile phone. Gradually, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish clearly the boundaries between the social and the technical.

Rejecting the mode of production and advocating the mode of development. He finds that in the capitalist mode of production overriding principle is the accumulation of profit by the ownership of property, market, principles and competition between participants. This goal defines how the social relationship between capital and labour is organised. What kind of economic investments are under taken. Expectation of profit is the key determinant for where investment takes place and the realisation of profit determines what remains available in a capitalist economy. On the contrary, the 'informationalism' (mode of development) is characterised by the technological arrangements through which labour upon matter to generate the product ultimately determining the levels of surplus. For

the sake of oversimplification in agrarian mode of development, characteristic of pre-industrial society increased linearly with the increase of labour input. In the industrial mode of development the output is increased by the new source of energy (steam engine, nuclear power plant) and finding qualitatively new ways (factory, mass production, fordism) of using the energy to transform raw material into products. In the new mode of development (information mode of development), the main source of productivity is no longer the sources of energy but the action of knowledge upon knowledge itself.

Three following crucial questions may be posed in the background of the above discussions:

First what is social exclusion, second how social exclusion operates in any society and last why social exclusion¹? Before addressing these three sets of questions, one may examine its origin too. No doubt, social scientists look upon social exclusion as a by-product of globalisation in an era of informationalism, especially since the last two decades; its origin may be traced since the fracture of solidarity in the French society due to the emergence of the third estate and its conflicting interests with the first and the second estates in the traditional French Order.

Bourdieu (1986) has pointed out that share of valued resources like money, property, education, health and power may be categorised into three domains which are economic capital, cultural capital (education) and social capital (networks of contacts and social associations). Social scientists have pointed out that social exclusion is the combined outcome of deprivation and discrimination, which prevent individuals or groups from participating fully in the economic, social and political life of the society in which they live². Social exclusion is structural, i.e. the result of social processes and institutions rather than individual action. Social inequality and social exclusion are social because they are not about individuals but about groups. Social exclusion/social inequality is not economic, although there is usually a strong link between social and economic inequality. They are systematic and structured. There is a definite pattern to social inequalities.

‘Social Exclusion as a process by which a person/group/community is denied access to resources that is economic, political, social, cultural, educational, health so on and so forth’ (Matin, 2013). On the issue of how does social exclusion

¹Asfiya Karimi (2015) in her Ph.D. thesis ‘Bhadohi Carpet Industry: Dynamics of Social exclusion’ is examining social exclusion due to technological change from Manuel Castells perspective.

²René Lenoir, writing about a quarter of a century ago, is given credit of authorship of the expression. As Secrétaire d’Etat à l’Action Sociale of the French Government, René Lenoir, talked about the accompanying as constituting the ‘excluded – a tenth – of the French population: ‘mentally and physically handicapped, self-destructive individuals, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single folks, multi-issue family units, minor, a social persons, and other social misfits (Rawal, 2008).

operates? I consider caste as an institution (including among Muslims) in the Indian society that prevents in accessing resources. Stereotype perception, discriminatory attitude and similar issues perpetuate social exclusion. As a multidimensional and dynamic process, social exclusion refers to the social relations and organisational barriers that block the attainment of livelihoods, human development and equal citizenship. It can create or sustain poverty and inequality, and can restrict social participation. As a dynamic process, social exclusion is governed by social and political relations, and as well as access to organisations and institutional sites of power. Sources of social exclusion may be kinship, race, caste, class, gender, etc. Reasons for social exclusion may be faith or religion, language, ethnicity, natural disasters, famines, droughts, floods, tsunamis, etc., increased vulnerability due to globalisation, exploitative relations of production due to variety of reasons, etc. Social exclusion may be examined in India covering many dimensions in the areas of: (a) resources (both, material and non-material), (b) participation and (c) quality of life as a complex and multidimensional concept.

The study 'In Pursuit of Alternative Livelihood: Redundancy of Labour in Aligarh Lock Industry' has pointed out the procedure of lock workers skill, de-skill and re-skill because of upgradation of technology in the industry. It has additionally called attention to the procedure of redundancy of labour and resultant exclusion because of new technology got the lock industry keeping in mind to cope with national and international competition in the market. More or less, there is an endeavour in the study in looking at the persuasion of skill of workers as skill of labourers as thesis, deskilling of lock industry workers as anti-thesis and re-skill of workers in the lock industry as synthesis due to upgradation of technology in the Aligarh Lock Industry within Castellan framework. The new types of sufferings because of the economic restructuring with the logic of tough competition and upgradation of technologies have been analysed in the study. The case studies are divided into the three categories. In the first classification, respondents were taken from the entrepreneur. In the second classification, case study was taken from the social activist. In the last and the third classification, respondents were taken from the labourers who were excluded from the lock business in view of the upgradation in the technology and were compelled to search for alternative livelihood. In this manner the study has pointed out the procedure of lock specialists expertise, deskilling and re-ability because of upgradation of innovation in the business. It has additionally called attention to the procedure of excess of work and resultant rejection because of new innovation got the lock business keeping in mind the end goal to adapt to the national and worldwide rivalry in the business. In a nutshell, there is an attempt in the study in examining the dialectics of skill of labourers as thesis, deskilling of lock industry workers as anti-thesis and re-skill of workers in the lock industry as synthesis due to up-gradation of technology in the Aligarh Lock Industry within Castellan framework (Matin and Karimi, 2015).

From the above examination, scientist has investigated that the technological changes has driven towards excess of work. Castells endeavours in a method of improvement and informationalism seen as far as 'Information haves' and 'Information have not's' (Matin and Karimi, 2015).

However, unlike my understanding at the local level, Manuel Castells has defined 'Social exclusion' at the global level as the process by which certain individuals and groups are systematically excluded or systematically barred from access to positions, that which would enable them to an autonomous livelihood with the social standards framed by institutions and values in a given context. According to Castells, this process is taking place worldwide: diverse categories of people, in many different countries, are being excluded and pushed to the side. What is new and different about this is the fact that this type of social exclusion is the diversity of its victims. It is this diversity and global reach that he captures under the label the 'Fourth World'. In his *magnum opus* entitled *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Vol. III), first published by Blackwell in the year 1988 and reprinted three times the same year and revised and updated in 1999, one full chapter revolves round 'The Rise of the Fourth World: Informational Capitalism, Poverty, and Social Exclusion'. He has observed that 'a new world; the Fourth World has emerged, made up of the multiple black holes of social exclusion throughout the planet. The Fourth World comprises large areas of the globe, such as much of Sub-Saharan Africa, and impoverished rural areas of Latin America and Asia. But it is also present in literally every country, and every city, in this new geography of social exclusion. It is formed of American inner-city ghettos, Spanish enclaves of mass youth unemployment, French Banlieues warehousing North Africans, Japanese Yoseba quarters, and Asian mega-cities' shanty towns. And it is populated by millions of homeless, incarcerated, prostituted, criminalised, brutalised, stigmatised, sick and illiterate persons. They are the majority in some areas, the minority in others, and a tiny minority in a few privileged contexts. But, everywhere, they are growing in number, and increasing in visibility, as the selective triage of informational capitalism, and the political breakdown of the welfare state³, intensify social exclusion. In the current historical context, the rise of the 'Fourth World' is inseparable from the rise of 'informational global capitalism'.

³'Social exclusion' – what do these two words mean? Why have they got to be prevalent in approach talk in parts of the English-speaking world? How and in what ways would they say they are a contested concept? Arguably, they imply another idea by one means or another identified with thoughts of neediness, hardship, hardship and minimisation, yet the settings in which the idea shows up are frequently questionable and opposing. In spite of more than 20 year of utilisation in the European Union (particularly France), United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, there is level headed discussion about what the idea connotes and how it is best utilised as a part of expository and strategy settings. Notwithstanding the level of debate, the idea is broadly utilised and is by all accounts significantly procedures to the makers of social policy discourse (Peace, 2001).

In the new, informational mode of development the wellspring of profitability lies in the technology of knowledge generation, information processing, and symbol correspondence. Certainly, learning and data are discriminating components in all modes of development, since the process of production is constantly taking into account some level of information and in the preparing of data. Be that as it may, what is particular to the educational method of advancement is the activity of information upon learning itself as the primary wellspring of efficiency. Information processing is focused on improving the technology of information processing as a source of productivity, in a virtuous circle of interaction between the knowledge sources of technology and the application of technology to improve knowledge generation and information processing; this is the reason, rejoining mainstream design, Castells calls this new mode of development informational, constituted by the emergence of a new technological paradigm based on information technology (Castells, 2000a).

Each mode of development has also a structurally determined performance principle around which technological processes are organised: industrialism is oriented towards economic growth that is towards maximising output; informationalism is oriented towards technological development that is towards the accumulation of knowledge and towards higher levels of complexity in information processing. While higher levels of knowledge may normally result in higher levels of output per unit of input, it is the pursuit of knowledge and information that characterises the technological production function under informationalism. Thus, informationalism is linked to the expansion and rejuvenation of capitalism, as industrialism was linked to its constitution as a mode of production (Castells, 2000a).

Castells ought to draw a logical qualification between the ideas of ‘information society’ and ‘informational society’, with similar implications for informational economy. The term ‘information society’ underlines the part of data in the society. Yet, Castells has drawn consideration towards information, in its broadest sense, e.g. as correspondence of information, has been basic in all social orders, including medieval Europe which was socially organised, and to some extent brought together, around scholasticism, that is, all things considered a intellectual framework (Southern, 1995).

In contrast, the term ‘informational’ indicates the attribute of a specific form of social organisation in which information generation, processing, and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power because of new technological conditions emerging in this historical period. Castells phrasing tries to build up a parallel with, the distinction between industry and industrial. A industrial society (a typical idea in the sociological convention) is not just a society

where there is industry, as well as a general public where the social and technological types of industrial organisation pervade all circles of movement, beginning with the overwhelming exercises, situated in the monetary framework and in military technology, and reaching the objects and habits of everyday life. Castells utilisation of the terms ‘informational society’ and ‘informational economy’ endeavours a more exact characterisation of current changes beyond the common sense perception that information and knowledge are important to our societies. Then again, the actual substance of ‘informational society’ must be determined by perception and analysis. For example, one of the key components of informational society is the networking rationale of its essential structure, which clarifies the idea’s utilisation of ‘network society’. Castells utilisation of the terms ‘informational society’ and ‘informational economy’ endeavours a more exact portrayal of current transformation past the judgment skills perception that information and knowledge are important to our social orders. Then again, the real substance of ‘informational society’ must be controlled by observation and analysis. For example, one of the key components of informational society is the networking rationale of its essential structure, which clarifies the idea’s utilisation of ‘network society’. (Castells, 2000a).

Castells defines ‘social exclusion as the process by which certain individuals and groups are systemically barred from access to positions that would enable them to an autonomous livelihood within the social standards framed by institutions and values in a given context. Under normal circumstances, in informational capitalism, such a position is usually associated with the possibility of access to relatively regular, paid labour, for at least one member of a stable household. Social exclusion is, in fact, the process that disfranchises a person as labour in the context of capitalism’ (Castells, 2000b).

For the sake of oversimplification, Castells’ social exclusion refers to the inability in accessing resources due to technological upgradation and change.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is evident from the above discussion that Manuel Castells’ understanding of social exclusion revolves around his notion of ‘informationalism’. It is characterised by technological change in an unprecedented manner. This is also related with his concept of ‘network society’. Social exclusion has been understood in South Asia in general and Indian sub-continent in particular from Castellan framework. He argues that the informational society is knowledge-based society. It is the society in which knowledge is the source of employment. It is the knowledge driven society. The source of employment is the knowledge according to the technological changes going in the society leads towards the redundancy of

labour. Redundancy of labour is because of the Lean production. The concept of social exclusion here revolves round the unemployment because of the intention of lean production there is the change in the technology. Here those included who have the knowledge and those who do not have the knowledge they are excluded. It is a new kind of suffering going in the society. This is not by everyone. It has polarised the society, in the sense that it has polarised into the two, that is information haves and information have not.

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