

Research Article

Social Exclusion: A Case Study of Bhadohi Carpet Industry

Asfiya Karimi

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002, Uttar Pradesh, India

Email id: asfiyainindia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The proposed paper examines six case studies of the Bhadohi Carpet Industry within the framework of 'social exclusion'. After defining the concept social exclusion, the researchers have emphasized its relevance on Indian society, in general, carpet industry, in particular; it has been pointed out that the process of social exclusion has started due to the introduction of new technology in the process for production of carpets in Bhadohi. If distinction is made between actors involved in traditional designing as opposed to new designing with the help of the new technology conceptualised as computer-aided design (CAD), the case studies highlight the vulnerability of the traditional designers involved with the carpet industry due to penetration of the computer-aided designing in Bhadohi. As far as dyeing is concerned, traditional manual dyeing was dominant; however, boiler dyeing is replacing the manual dyeing and this is another example of advancement in technology. Finally, at the stage of weaving, earlier manual practice was predominant but gradually tufted/hand guns are replacing the manual weaving in the process of advancement in the carpet making.

Keywords: Globalisation, Technology, Post-Industrial-Society, Social exclusion, Redundancy of Labour, Informationalism, Polarisation.

INTRODUCTION

The study the researcher is going to conduct is the study of the Carpet industry of Bhadohi within the frame work of the theories of social exclusion. What is Social exclusion, Why social exclusion and How the social exclusion? Social exclusion is a multidimensional concept and varieties of review of the literature are present within the international and national framework. The European studies have taken

so many indicators to measure the social exclusion, but when we see the concept within the Indian framework, it has limited itself in terms of only caste. The researcher wants to look into the penetration of the process of social exclusion in the Bhadohi Carpet Industry in terms of redundancy of labour due to technological-driven information society.

Objectives

Objective of this study are as follows.

- Redundancy of labour.
- Polarisation of the industry because of information communication technology (ICT).

Methodology

The study is based on the inductive logic of enquiry, an empirical data analysis through six case studies. The case study method has been used to analyse the data qualitatively. The researcher has taken the empirical data in the form of case study in the month of 1st-10th April 2013 and again in the month of 6th-21st April 2014. “The method of exploring and analysing the life of a social unit, be it a person a family, an institution or a community, is known as the case study method” (Young, 2004).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Daniel Bell contends that we are entering a new system, a post-industrial society (PIS), which is characterisation of information. He coined the term PIS in the late 1950s, he substituted the words ‘information’ and ‘knowledge’ for the prefix ‘PIS’ round about 1980. Bell was confident enough of its direction to contention, in the early 1970s, that post-industrialism will be a major feature of the 21 century....in the social structure of the United States, Japan, the Soviet and the Western Europe (Bell, 1973). Daniel Bell says PIS emerges from changes only in the social structure and it will be an ongoing process (as cited in Webster, 2006). Here, the reason why the researcher got attracted to Daniel Bell’s study was because of his vision that how the information can change the structure of the society. From his argument for the assumptions of PIS, what the researcher found interesting from the part of the study was *‘a change in the production system because of the information to produce faster and faster which leads to decline of worker’*

Castells adopts the concept ‘informational capitalism’ when describing the present epoch. Informationalism, a key term to Castells, identifies the action of knowledge upon knowledge itself as the main source of productivity (Castells, 2000a) and it heralds a ‘new economy’ as well as ‘new society’. Castells says the rise of

informationalism at the end of millennium is intertwined with rising inequality and social exclusion throughout the world by observing the characteristics of informational capitalism and the rise of inequality, social polarisation, poverty and misery in most of the world. Informationalism does create a sharp divide between valuable and non-valuable peoples and locales. Globalisation proceeds selectively, including and excluding the segments of economies and societies in and out of the networks of information, wealth and power that characterise the new dominant system. Individualisation of work leaves each worker to themselves, to bargain their fate vis-a-vis inconstantly changing market forces (Castell, 2000c).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nolan & Whelan (2010) asserts, “Social exclusion has been a term that has jumped to the forefront of the literature, since it was first used in France in the 1970s. Since then, it has been widely adopted as a topic of economic policy, both by governments and by researchers; for example, in 1997, the British government set up a social exclusion unit (SEU), and the London School of Economics set up the Research Centre for the analysis on social exclusion (CASE); in 2007, the Social inclusion unit was set up in Australia; within the European Union, the definition of social exclusion has been sharpened over time” (as cited in Parodi and Sciulli, 2012).

Chakravarty & Zoli (2009) “Social exclusion is interpreted both as a static situation of deprivation and as a process leading to it. Multidimensional poverty and social exclusion are closely related concepts, but they do not overlap. Both of these concepts refer to Sen’s intuition of capability failures, but in the multidimensional approach to poverty, failure is viewed in terms of shortfalls from a threshold for each function, and in the social exclusion approach, failure is interpreted as an inability to participate and, therefore, is identified as functioning failures. These two different approaches refer to quantitative and qualitative aspects, respectively, of social exclusion” (as cited in Parodi and Sciulli, 2012).

Amartya Sen says the idea of social exclusion has conceptual connection with poverty and deprivation. Social exclusion is constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failure. Seeing social exclusion as an approach to poverty is easy enough to establish within the general perspective of poverty as capability failure. According to Amartya Sen, constitutive relevance and instrumental importance is only one of the distinctions that can be fruitfully used to understand and analyse the nature and reach of social exclusion. Second, he differentiates between active and passive exclusion: active exclusion occurs for example when immigrants are not given full political status or citizenship, while passive exclusion exists when deprivation is caused without deliberate attempt, for example because of a sluggish economy (Sen, 2000).

Sen (2000) says “The literature of social exclusion has taken a late entry into the literature of poverty and deprivation. Indeed, its early stirrings - attributed to in the writings in the 1970s - were about 200 years after Adam Smith’s (1776) pioneering exposition of “deprivation” in the form of inability to appear in public without shame. Adam Smith was much concerned with relational deprivations that impoverished human lives in an absolute way. The idea of social exclusion fits well into this framework. Indeed, a good part of ‘The Wealth Of Nations’ is concerned with instrumental importance of exclusion and involves analysis of the effects of the particular types of exclusion”(as cited in Sen, 2000).

SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Prakash Louis (2008) “talks of social exclusion in Indian context in the following two group:

- *Social group*: Dalits/untouchables/lower castes, Tribals/Adivasis/Indigenous peoples, religious and linguistic minorities, the most backward castes and especially women and children among these social groups.
- *Sectoral groups*: Agricultural labourers, marginalised farmers, child labourers, domestic workers, informal workers/unorganised sector workers, contract workers, plantation workers, fisher communities, manual scavengers, rural and forest-based communities, vernacular speaking social groups, people with disability, etc.”

Amitabh Kundu in *Introduction: A Framework for Analyzing Exclusion and Social Backwardness, in India social development report* has said that in “India the process of social exclusion revolves around a few sections of the population, typically dalits (scheduled castes), adivasis (scheduled tribes), women and minorities fall victims to social institutions (caste, sex, ethnicity, religion, etc.) and are forced to be isolated, faced discrimination and are deprived of equal access to social and economic opportunities, which lead to inability of an individual from participating in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society” (Kundu, 2006).

Gail Omvedt (2008) in ‘the Agenda of social exclusion’ has written ‘caste is the cruellest exclusion’ and ‘caste is the form of social exclusion that is firmly entrenched because it is justified by religious scriptures’. Brahmanic theory gave religious sanction to an unequal society.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Bhadohi is a city, Lok Sabha constituency and a municipal board in Sant Ravidas Nagar district in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. It is also known as the ‘Carpet

City', as it is home to the largest hand-knotted carpet weaving industry hub in South Asia. Bhadohi is also one of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha (State Legislative Assembly) constituency as Bhadohi Lok Sabha constituency. Bhadohi is located at 25.42°N 82.57°E. It has an average elevation of 85 m (278 feet).

Case Study 1

Hafiz is a manual traditional designer, aged 50 year old and has five children; the researcher visited his house. It was two small rooms, *pucca* house. The manual traditional designer was living along with his family. He has five children, three boys and two girls. The younger boy was studying in the school. The other two male children have started working as unskilled manual labourer. The researcher asked him since how long he has been involved and the nature of work that he was doing. The respondent replied since the age 23 years he has been making the carpet designs, which is called *Naksha* and is made manually. He made *Naksha* with pencil, paint and brush. He drew flowers with the help of the manual techniques. He told that as he draw *Naksha* on one piece, it is coloured by the other. He said, 'so as many as we draw Nakshas we draw manually, as per size of the Naksha we get the wages'. But the vulnerability they suffered is that they are not in so much demand due to the innovation of computer-aided design (CAD). Now the owner of the means of production (businessmen) according to their interest does not want to take the work from a manual traditional designer. Because with the computer-aided designing they are able to produce the same *Naksha* in bulk and in large quantity within a duration of time. But the manual traditional designer lacks here in terms because to make the same *Naksha*, if needed in large quantity, the large number of people are required. Respondent said that when very typical design comes, we are asked to make the design of one piece. When the design is made, the same design is made through CAD and produced in large number due to which we are not required so much, as we were in earlier days. Then the researcher asked have you not tried to learn CAD, and then he told now the age has also gone and now we are not getting so much interest. Then, while talking he shared that there was one association started by MSME to give the training of CAD designs. But no classes were going, he said, 'when any inspection team comes then only we were called there to show ourselves to the inspection team, but we were not given proper training there'.

Case Study 2

Partha Baral is the next respondent of the researcher; he is a happy living family with two son and the wife in a well-established home. The researcher asked the respondent since how long he was involved in the work. The respondent replied that he was a migrant from Kolkatta, after completing his graduation in BVA

(Bachelor of Visual Arts) and diploma in textile designing from Government College of art and craft; he came to Bhadohi and joined a company as a designer near about 1997. When he came at that time, he was making designs with the traditional method with paint, pencil, brush, etc. It took a number of *Nakshakar*, time and labour, but later on with the introduction of CAD technology for making carpet designs the work has become easier and faster. Then, the researcher asked how do you react for the introduction of CAD. The respondent replied with the introduction of CAD technology for designing the carpet the work had become easier. The respondent replied that he is able to manage all the types of design himself now he does not require other *Nakshakar*. Now with the help of CAD, he can do lot of experiments with the colour, design, taste fashion, trend and demand of the buyer. He says in a less time with the use of CAD, he is able to satisfy more and more, in terms of design customers. CAD has made the *Nakshakari* work easier.

Case Study 3

Shyam Dhar Mishra is of 58 years of age and he had completed his graduation from Patkar Collage at Mumbai and from SASMIRA he had taken one month course of dyeing in Mumbai. At the age of 23, he started his career from woollen mill and then Nylon mill in Nagpur and from there he came to Bhadohi here under some company in which he worked as a *Rangsaaz* that is as a dyeing master and later on he opened his own by putting *Kuda* that is traditional manual dyeing pot. The researcher asked how do you do the dyeing, as shown in Figure 1. The respondent replied the work was done manually. We need number of labourers for dyeing the wool manually. The respondent told they put the wool with the help of labourers upon the *charkha* for dyeing the wool. The handle of the *charkha* was rotated by the labourers, and the dyeing master kept an eye over the coloured water. The coal was put under water by the labourers for the flame, after boiling the water, the *charkha* was rotated till the whole wool got poured into the coloured water and the colour got fix over the wool. Then, the researcher asked did you find any difficulties from the introduction of the boiler dyeing plant. Then the researcher had replied actually the wool dyed in the boiler are of uniform range; they are dried fastly through the drier. It requires less number of labourers compared to traditional manual dyeing. He said that still dyeing in *Kuda* was going on because the small sample of wool is dyed in the small *Kuda* that is traditional manual dyeing pot. But earlier, we got lot of orders for dyeing the wool, but because of the introduction of boiler dyeing plant we are not getting the large quantity of wool to dye. The researcher asked are you not going to replace your traditional dyeing plant with the boiler dyeing plant. The respondent replied that it will take lots of money that much amount we cannot afford.



Figure 1: Manual dyeing process in traditional kuda

Case Study 4

The new mode for dyeing the wool is the introduction of boiler dyeing plant as shown in Figure 1. The researcher visited a company where the boiler dyeing plant was setup and observed the condition and the way of dyeing the wool which was very different from the dyeing in *Kuda* that is traditional manual dyeing pot. The researcher observed that the *Rangsaaz* prepare first the sample colour in the lab. The colour is added to the water supply to the tank of boiler machine connected at the back when the machine switched on. The steam of coloured water colours the wool as shown in Figure 2, 4 and 5. The whole process is mechanised; it does not require more labourers as compared to traditional manual dyeing. After the observation, researcher interacted with the owner of the dyeing plant and asked since how long you are involved in the work. The respondent replied that we are engaged in the work since 1991; we are the migrant of Bihar and here we had setup *Kuda* that is the traditional manual dyeing pot, and hired the *Rangsaaz* that is dyers and started taking work from them on daily wages. Later on, due to the tough competition of the global market, the respondent replaced the *Kuda* that is traditional manual dyeing pot with the boiler dyeing plant. The researcher asked the respondent what changes do you find between the earlier mode of dyeing and the present mode of dyeing, that is dyeing in *Kuda* and dyeing in the boiler. He said that in earlier mode of dyeing that is dyeing in *Kuda* required a lot of labourers, whereas the number of labourers has decreased in the mode of dyeing the wool in the boiler plant. With the help of boiler dyeing plant, the delivery of the orders is made in time. During rainy season, now we do not have to worry for drying of the

wool, we have the drier machines as shown in figure 3, to dry the wools. In boiler, we do not require more than four or five labourers, but when the earlier method of dyeing the wool was there that is dyeing in the *Kuda* we required 20-30 labourers sometimes more. It depended upon the quantity of the orders.



Figure 2: Dyeing plant



Figure 3: Drier machine



Figure 4: Coloured water refiner



Figure 5: Steam provider

Case Study 5

The researcher approached hand-knotted weaver, who is a man of near about 65 years of age; the man has wrinkles around his eyes and was sitting over the hand-knotted loom, the wool yarn, that is *kati*. With the *kati* he was preparing tie the

knot over the cotton yarn, that is *tana bana*, which he had prepared upon the *Kath* that is the frame of making hand-made carpets. The researcher asked, ‘since how long you have been involved in the work of artisan’. He replied ‘*Aap logan ke waqt me jaise copy kitab padhai hai. Hum logan ke waqt me yahi kam hum logon ki asli padhai hoti thi*’.

It was his family business and they were involved in the job of making carpet at 18 years of age. They were having *Kath* loom at their houses, where they used to work. Bringing the order from the exporters, they use to weave the carpets. In which not only the whole member of the family were involved, but other relatives of the family were also involved. He said, ‘at that time we were having four *Kath* of 6.8,9.12,8.9 size. It was our source of livelihood. But with the passage of time things had changed. Slowly, the demand for such carpets has declined due to the high cost of production. The tough competition has occurred due to the machine made carpets of other countries and its low cost of the production of carpets. The exporters here faced tough competition and they had introduced new technology for the production of carpets fast, which has declined the cost of production. Due to which we were not having orders for weaving the carpet’. Then, the researcher asked them what have you done then, the respondent replied that we had sold our *Kath*. Our children have engaged themselves in other kinds of work, some migrated from the place to find job, another found job in Dhabha and started selling juice. Some got themselves involved into the labour employment programme of MGNREGA. The respondent replied that now he was only the member of the family who is involved in such kind of work. He says now he was only working on this small loom as shown in Figure 6, making the pieces of *Pusti* that is small



Figure 6: Artisan weaving the carpet over Kath

carpets and selling it into the companies. Then, the researcher said, 'why don't you try to weave the carpets with technology like the Tufted machine'. He replied, 'we will have to learn it. When we were working on *Kath*, it was our homely work, but now we have to go into the *karkhana* to work there due to which my children decided to leave this job and got involved into other works, and also learning a new way of weaving the carpets we feel is not suitable for us'. Then, while talking at the end he told that a new situation had occurred that '*Mahajan log kehte hai ki hand knotted ka order hain kam karoge mui manga dam denge. Ab hum log kehte hain Sahab ab waisa galicha binne ke liye logan hi nahi to ka karengae aisanva kam lekar*'.

Case Study 6

My respondent is the contractor for preparing the *Galicha*. The researcher had visited to his *karkhana* there in the *karkhana* the researcher watched what type of work was going on. Then the researcher asked the respondent that what type of work you are doing. The respondent replied that here we are manufacturing the *Galicha* that is the carpet of Tufted quality with the new technology of tufted/hand machines to weave the carpet. Then, the researcher asked the respondent when does such *Galicha* you have started to manufacture. The respondent replied that there is so much competition that we are getting the cost of production from other country's machine made products. There carpets are machine made due to which they are cheap in cost than ours hand-knotted carpets due to which the demand for the hand-knotted carpets had declined. Then, the owners of the means of production (exporters) have introduced the new technology for the production of carpets; they have introduced the tufted/hand guns to weave the carpets. With the help of these tufted guns the cost of the production of carpets had declined and the production of the carpets has become fast. Then, the researcher asked the respondent with the introduction of the tufted/hand guns the number of artisans required have decreased or increased? The respondent replied with the use of the tufted/hand guns the number of artisans required for the production of the carpets had declined. Earlier when the *karkhana* had hand-knotted carpets to weave, the large numbers of artisans were required and the *karkhanas* were having 60-70 number of artisans working, but now the same *karkhana* is able to produce the same quantity of the carpets with ten or sixteen artisans. Good thing is that the cost of the production of carpets had decreased and the time for the production of carpets has also decreased.

Then, the researcher had approached one of the artisans weaving the *Galicha* with the tufted guns as shown in Figure 7, the tufted quality of *Galicha*. The researcher observed a large size of *Galicha* near about 8.12,6.9 piece 12 feet in length and 8 feet in width. According to the observation of the researcher earlier



Figure 7: Artisan weaving the carpet with tufted guns

mode of manufacturing *Galicha* had employment for many artisans but with the new mode of production of *Galicha* the number of requirement of artisans had decreased. The researcher tried to enquire about the artisans from what places they have come here, the respondent replied that we came here from the parts of Jharkhand, Gorakhpur, Buxar, Bihar, etc, on the basis of daily wages as per the demand of the time.

DISCUSSION

To understand the whole process of penetration of exclusion in the Bhadohi carpet industry, the researcher took the definition of walker and walker that is Walker & Walker says ‘the dynamic process of being shutout from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society’ (as cited in Taket *et al.*, 2009). The dynamic process of being shut out in the sense that the traditional manual designers that is *nakshakar* are gradually replaced by computer-aided designers due to which the traditional *nakshakar* are becoming the victims of the process of being shut out from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society. The same condition of the exclusion we can see in terms of the traditional manual dyeing and also in manual mode of weaving by the use of tufted/hand guns. As Prof. Matin has emphasised that Castellan notion of ‘social exclusion’ like many other concepts is neither rhetoric nor semantic. It must be looked upon as a major contribution for enhancing our understanding for contemporary PIS with specific reference to issues like social exclusion. Manuel Castell has defined ‘social exclusion’ 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. Social exclusion has the consequences for inequality, polarisation, poverty and misery as inequality. Polarisation, poverty and misery are a social dynamic of the distribution and consumption of production. Social exclusion is in fact the process that disfranchises a person as labour in the context of capitalism. Social exclusion is a process not a condition thus its boundaries shift and who is excluded and included may vary over time depending on education, demographic characteristic, social prejudices, business practices and public policies.

CONCLUSION

What the researcher has analysed through the six case studies and enlightenment of the above discussions that in the new mode of development the main source of productivity is no longer the sources of energy but the 'action of knowledge upon knowledge' itself which has accepted the social exclusion in terms of the redundancy of labour. Not only The work has polarised for those who are having the knowledge and information but also in the PIS, there is the redundancy of labour which results into social exclusion; it is evident that social exclusion is the outcome of the informationalism.

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