

Socio-Economic Development and Social Exclusion in India

A- perspective from Below

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Abstract

Since social exclusion suggests that some people or groups are "included," it is about inequality. As a result, it is also a fundamental idea that deals with the issue of social justice. The basic criteria of justice or fairness would fail if any social or economic structure created classes of people or groups that were included and excluded. However, in cases where certain persons or groups have historically been subjected to long-term exploitation or oppression, it would only be reasonable to justify progress if it exclusively benefits those who are already marginalized in society and the economy. In the face of bedizened claims of capacity building through the spread of capacity building through the spread of IT, it becomes important to invoke the idea of social capital, which besides Bourdieu, who will be analyzed subsequently, was articulated by Robert Putnam. Putnam defines societal capital as, “*features of social organisation that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating and co-ordinating actions.*” (Putnam,1993).

He outlines the constituents of social capital as being networks, in the voluntary, state and personal spheres, and the density of the networking between these spheres: individuals, sense of belongingness to the civic community (i.e. the networks referred to above), together with a sense of solidarity and equality with other community members; norms of co-operation, reciprocity and trust governing the networks; positive attitudes to institutional engagement as well as civic engagement, involving participation in sustaining and using networks. Bourdieu,

however, gives a more comprehensive definition of social capital by distinguishing between economic, cultural and social capital, thereby bringing out the inherent capitalist tendency to reduce all other forms of social practices in favour of a singularly capitalist pattern of relations, in the process discarding all alternative form of exchanges as being non-economic and therefore irrelevant. Therefore, all these practices of capitalist production led towards the exclusion of others. Bourdieu further added that cultural capital is the depository of norms, values, and practices which are held by the upper strata of the society which is superior to other cultures so it paves the way for the exclusion of others from mainstream culture.

Keywords-: *social capital, cultural capital, social exclusion. Social inclusion, jaties, social justice*

Introduction

Given the intricate structure of Indian society, which is marked by a wide range of diversity, any initiative intended to end the marginalization of underprivileged populations or move them closer to the centre must take into account the multifaceted nature of this marginalization. The goal will be to pinpoint the connection between the socio-cultural, political, and economic aspects of poverty and deprivations, as well as experiences of subjective isolation and involvement in the development process. The issue cannot be solved without examining how institutions and social structure contribute to social deprivation, vulnerability, inclusion, and exclusion in society. The Bourdieu-proposed concept of Cultural Capital takes on additional significance in this setting. It is clear from Bourdieu's concept of social differentiation that the nature of power in a democratic social system and a bureaucratic structure depends entirely on the ownership of different forms of capital, including social, cultural, and Economic capital. Better cultural capital investors may also do well while building economic capital, which in turn helps them attract more social capital or social networking. As per Bourdieu (1986), dominant groups identify cultural proximity and distance with cultural capital to both recruit and exclude new occupants of high-status positions.

According to Bachrach and Baratz (1962), the power derived from cultural capital is not the ability to influence particular decisions or determine the course of political action. Instead, it

is primarily the ability to influence other people's lives using symbolic imposition and exclusion (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

Defining social capital in the words of Bourdieu himself, *“Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintance and recognition -or in other words, to membership of a group -which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively -owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in various senses of the word (Bourdieu,1986:248-249).* Concentrating especially on the latter part of the definition which stresses providing each member of a community /group with the backing of collectively owned capital, it becomes clear that the IT, boom has failed or at least only partially succeeded in building a formidable social capital that the entire community can rely upon and calls as its own. The exclusion of the vast rural population can be explained by the inexistence of such a community-owned capital that would be salubrious to social capital enrichment and inclusive growth. Also, networks, informal and community-based as seen by Putnam and formal and institutionalized in the case of Bourdieu, have the potential to be extremely beneficial by encouraging collective production, as articulated by Putnam.

Theories of Social Exclusion

The idea of social exclusion first emerged in Europe in French social policy in the 1970s, particularly in the 1980s economic crises. The social action secretary of the French government, Rene Lenoir is credited with the coinage of this term. Discussion of social inclusion and exclusion also relates to citizenship debates; particularly in terms of a dichotomy between individualism and collectivism.

Atkinson and Divoudi,(2000) for example, refer to the differentiation between “ the European social mode, placing considerable emphasis on maintaining social solidarity and ensuring that all individuals are integrated into, and participate in a national social and moral order” and “ the concept of poverty which lies within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, where a liberal model dominates and is based on the idea that society is fragmented and composed of individuals who are in constant competition with one another” In the Indian context, as it evident, both models are relevant on account of the considerable social exclusion of the minorities as well as of the poor. In this light, this section will incorporate explanations of social exclusion by social scientists through different approaches.

Niklas Luhmann, for instance, explained exclusion by defining what would not be exclusion i.e. inclusion. According to him, *“the concept of inclusion means the encompassing of the entire population in the performances of the individual function system. On the one hand, this concerns access to these benefits and, on the other, dependence of individual modes of living on them to the extent that inclusion is achieved, groups disappear that do not or only marginally participate in social living.”* Another important conceptualization of the term social exclusion has been provided by Gerry Rodgers which includes *exclusion from goods and services, labour market exclusion, and exclusion from land and security.*

Tania Burchardt lays down five key characteristics that would imply social participation: an ability to consume those goods and services, which are considered normal for the society, an ability to own property through saving accumulation or otherwise, an ability to engage in and contribute to economic activity, an ability to improve the immediate or larger social environment by way of collective action, thereby engaging with the society politically, an ability to access an environment that allows for close interactions with friends or other form of social interactions. Reviewing it through an exclusionary lens, with these conditions serving as parameters just for the sake of theoretical convenience, the IT, booms fail to meet the great expectations bestowed upon it. While all these five conditions are fulfilled by the IT sector for a small urban elite, it seems to have failed or is severely ill-equipped to satisfy even one of the five conditions for the rural population and as long the concerns of the rural sector are addressed calling the IT boom inclusive would amount to naivety.

Further, in a country where language and linguistic groups dictate opportunities for mobility and growth, the entire IT project being articulated singularly in the English language automatically becomes an anathema to the interests of the multilingual Indian population. The introduction of multilingual versions of operating systems and other software is simply an assuagement because the entire IT discourse is rooted in the English language and simple translation is but a small step forward in what needs to be a comprehensive policy aiming at the widest possible cross-linguistic reach if the gains of the IT are to be repeated by all sections of the society.

Amartya Sen (2000) in his essay titled Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Security, describes the concept of social exclusion as being the most helpful in concerning or specializing certain relational aspects of capability deprivation. In this light, no concept of poverty can be adequate if it fails to take cognizance of the disadvantages arising from being

excluded. He places social exclusion within the broader perspective of poverty as capability deprivation and it is in this sense that his ideas become relevant in understanding the skewed growth in IT that has not engaged in sufficient capacity building, thereby excluding large sections of the society.

Caste-Based Social Exclusion

Perhaps the two most fundamental types of social exclusion are poverty and unemployment. Economists also tend to stress these factors—possibly to the point of obsession—while excluding other equally crucial categories. For instance, one may concentrate on bonded or child labour. Every category represents a final stage in the developmental process, and it is this final stage that we consider to represent an instance of exclusion. This holds true for both unemployment and poverty, but it also holds true for situations like child labour and bonded labour. Although it is unlikely that someone living in extreme poverty will escape it until something significant occurs to alter their situation, there are indeed end states that are inflexible or unchangeable. However, there is one type of exclusion that is set in stone at birth and is significant to Hindus in India: caste. Sociologists usually focus on this area of study.

Ambedkar (1992) claimed that the caste structure in the Hindu system was the primary source of societal injustice towards the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. According to his observations, castes are closed groups, and the excommunicated are forced to join a caste by their conscious plot. Because of the harsh logic of their oppressive situation, certain unhappy groups are forced to remain outside of it. As a result, groups are increasingly being transformed into castes in many ways, as if by a mechanical law. He went on to say that the caste system, which in turn had its roots in religion, was the source of untouchability. Religion, in turn, had its roots in varnashrama, which had its roots in Brahminism, which in turn had its roots in political power.

In Srinivas' (1952) classification of Hindu society, the four castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaish, and Shudras- are combined with the untouchables to form a five-fold group. Other accounts include untouchables as members of the Shudra caste. The notion that caste divides society into four or five categories is a glaring oversimplification of the truth. One of the four or five varnas is not the actual caste system unit. However, there are many jatis, or sub-castes, which are a very small indigenous community that follow a traditional vocation and enjoy some degree of cultural, ceremonial, and legal autonomy.

According to Professor Ghurye, (1969), there are 14 major languages spoken in the nation, and there are about 2000 subcastes, or jatis, in each linguistic region. Until recently, untouchable parents were prohibited from sending their children to school in rural areas. This prohibition may yet stand today as it would contaminate the children of Hindus from higher castes. In social gatherings like weddings, untouchables would usually eat at a separate table from the other upper caste groups. In the world, it is difficult to find a clearer example of social exclusion and hierarchy.

Despite being around for a short while, the idea of social exclusion has a lot of power. It is an important and broad term that may encompass, within its scope, the ideas of destitution, hunger, unemployment, and poverty. It is about everyone or any group that is denied access to the necessities of life, but it is also about those who are shut out of the political and economic decision-making process and those who are not included in the conception of social security. At a wider level, it may refer to exclusion from education, health, care and ultimately the freedom that an individual must have to organize or control her life in a given social setting.

According to James Massey, Ambedkar believed that a person had no place in a caste-based society, but in his ideal society, the individual is the ultimate goal. A person's interactions with people from different castes are predetermined within a caste system. However, Ambedkar's vision of society requires that relationships be founded on equality, liberty, and fraternity. In addition to the two fundamental tenets, Ambedkar asserts that "the norm or the criterion for judging right and wrong in the modern society is justice," making it one of the most significant elements. This concept is known as the "principle of justice." "Justice is just another name for liberty, equality, and fraternity,".

Rawls (1971) In evaluating different social situations only considers the welfare of the most disadvantaged person. Here, we are focused on the situation of everyone who is denied access to the fundamental means of subsistence, or what Rawls refers to as "primary social goods." These include "rights and liberties, opportunities and powers, incomes and wealth, and the bases of self-respect," among other "things that every rational man is presumed to want." Certain products improve people's "capabilities" and freedom to pursue their desired objectives and engage in the activities they choose.

Sen., (1983, 1990). Said that to deny someone access to these products would be to deny them vital necessities that are rightfully theirs.

State and Affirmative action

Nayak (2012) states that during that period Kaka Kalekar served as the chairman of the first commission on the backward classes, which was established in 1953. The commission was given the following mandate, among other things: (a) establish the standards to be used in determining whether any segments of the Indian population should be classified as socially and educationally backward classes; using these standards, create a list of these classes along with their approximate numbers and geographic distribution; and (b) look into the living conditions and challenges faced by all of these classes, and provide recommendations regarding actions that the union or any state should take to alleviate these challenges or improve their situation.

Nayak (2012) further shed light on that, The Commission issued a report in 1956. For the entire nation, it compiled a list of 2,399 backward castes or communities, of which 837 were deemed to be “most Backward” According to the recommendations of the Kelelkar Commission, 70% of seats in technical and professional institutions should be reserved for qualified students from backward classes. Additionally, vacancies in all government services and local bodies should be reserved for OBC, S on the following scale: class first 25%, class second 33.5%, class third and fourth 40%. Aside from this, the commission recommended positive action in a variety of areas, including public health, adult literacy, livestock development, dairy farming, land reform, reorganization of the village economy, and development of rural and cottage enterprises.

The Second Backward Committee was established on December 27, 1978, and B.P. Mandal was appointed as its chairman. The committee submitted its findings to the Indian president on December 12, 1980. The mandated tasks under the term of reference encompassed not only the establishment of criteria for classifying citizens as socially and educationally backwards but also the recommendation of actions to be taken to advance these citizens. Additionally, the feasibility of reserving appointments for members of these underrepresented classes in public services was assessed. The Mandal Commission reports were taken up by Prime Minister V.P. Singh when they were submitted to the parliament in 1982 under Prime

Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi's leadership. Interestingly, though, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's minority government, led by the Congress party, has approved the plan. Furthermore, as of right now, E.W.S. continues to get the benefits of reservations through affirmative action.

According to Beteille (1991), the system of reservations for underprivileged groups in the name of distributive justice is likely to erode institutional frameworks, which in turn will erode the framework of the state and civil society at large. However, it is undeniable that following centuries of inflexible social and economic structures, the desires of the formerly marginalized groups will inevitably lead to a new wave of social and economic policies that may not be entirely reasonable.

Shah (1991) is a little more in favour of using affirmative action to socially engineer communities. He believes that social marginalization or regression can be overcome. That being said, the procedure is not automatic. Interventions both inside and outside the political system are required to facilitate it. One such measure that could give the oppressed groups a brief reprieve is the reservation policy. He believes, nonetheless, that its ability to effect such a transformation is somewhat limited. He is concerned that the top classes of the downtrodden, who are primarily motivated by serving their political interests, will appropriate the justifiable demands of the oppressed. They see caste cohesion and feelings as a route to political power. However, Shah's overall analysis suggests that the reservation system would aid in the process of dismantling the centuries-old, inflexible hierarchies by enabling a greater number of families from various backward castes to join the middle class. A serious secularization of the middle class would result from this. The benefits of reservation should end for a family whose member works in white-collar labour.

Conclusion

The conversation that was just had places cultural capital at the centre of how social exclusion occurs in any given community. This study aims to demonstrate that, while culture can be viewed as a profitable investment, it is crucial to examine the historical and cultural factors that have contributed to the marginalization of a specific social group. The paper argues that cultural capital is crucial to the formation of social capital, which is crucial to the upkeep of a particular social structure with all of its inclusions and exclusions. Cultural

capital is reflected in internalized values, externalized practices, and institutionalized credentials. An individual with cultural capital will relate to others more readily, and according to Portes (1998), "these others, not himself, are the actual source of his or her advantage." Similar to this, equating social exclusion with cultural and social capital highlights the value of engaging in all facets of a given society as well as the roles that institutions and individuals play in promoting and limiting social and economic engagement. According to this viewpoint, the emphasis should be shifted from poverty, inequality, and unemployment to the institutions, agents, and social, cultural, and economic processes that lead to exclusion. By focusing on the process, scholars and decision-makers are better able to comprehend the origins and effects of marginalization and deprivation, which in turn creates new avenues for policy responses.

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