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**“On Inclusiveness –
Challenges of Inclusive Society, Economy and
Polity in India”**

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Professor Ashis Nandy, Chairman; B.D.Sharma, President, N.D.Pancholi, Secretary and friends

I feel honored to have been invited to deliver the 2012 ,M.N. Roy Memorial lecture by the Indian Renaissance Institute and Indian Radical Humanist Association. M.N Roy was great visionary, thinker and a visionary with a particular vision for India. Every body knows about his contribution and vision.

I wish to use this occasion to reflect on the a vision of “Inclusive India”,- our efforts to develop a more inclusive society, which ensures equal and due share and participation to all sections and groups, in the governance of our economy and polity and in the fruits of social and economic development in the country .

I wish to address this issue in the contemporary context. I shall discuss the meaning of social exclusion, the consequences of social exclusion and as to why we should be concerned about social exclusion, the insights from theoretical literature for remedies against discrimination and for inclusive society, and application of these insights to the Indian situation.

Social Exclusion and Need for Inclusiveness :

Before we discuss the issue related to exclusion in Indian society it is useful to get insights on the concept of social exclusion in its general term. In social sciences literature there is general agreement on the core features of social exclusion, its principle indicators, and the way it relates to poverty and inequality. (Mayara Buvinic 2005). Buvinic summarizes the meaning of social exclusion as “ the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society, and goes on to add that social exclusion is “ the denial of equal access to opportunities imposed by certain groups of society up on others”. (Mayara Buvinic 2005). The definition captures the three most distinguished features of social exclusion namely, that it affects culturally defined “groups”, that it is embedded in social interrelation ,(the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live), and that its outcome is the deprivation, low income

and high degree of poverty of the excluded groups .(Arjan Hann 1997, Sen, Amartya 2000).

Consequences of exclusion thus depend crucially on the functioning of social institutions through network of social relations, and the degree to which they are exclusionary and discriminatory in their outcome. Social exclusion has sizeable impact on an individual's access to equal opportunity if social interactions occur between groups in power/subordinate relationship .The groups focus recognizes that people are excluded because of ascribed rather than achieved features, beyond individual agency or responsibility . (Mayara Buvinic 2005 , Amartya Sen) draw attention to various meanings and dimensions of the concept of social exclusion (Sen 2000). Distinction is drawn between the situation where some people are being kept out (at least left out), and where some people are being included (may even be forced to be included)- in deeply unfavorable terms, and described the two situations as “unfavorable exclusion” and “unfavorable inclusion.” The “unfavorable inclusion”, with unequal treatment may carry the same adverse effects as “unfavorable exclusion”.

Sen also differentiated between “active and passive exclusion”. For the casual analysis, and policy response, Sen argued “it is important to distinguish between “active exclusion”-fostering of exclusion through the deliberate policy interventions by the government, or by any other willful agents (to exclude some people from some opportunity), and “passive exclusion”, which works through the social process in which there are no deliberate attempts to exclude, but nevertheless, may result in exclusion from a set of circumstances.

Sen further distinguishes the “constitutive relevance” of exclusion, from that of “instrumental importance”. In the former, exclusion or deprivation have an intrinsic importance of their own. For instance, not being able to relate to others and to take part in the life of the community can directly impoverish a person's life, in addition to the further deprivation 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 life.

Within the social science literature more precise elaboration of the concept of discrimination has come from the economics in the context of race and gender (Darity 1995). The mainstream economic literature throws more light on discrimination that works through markets, and non market transactions and

develops the concept of market discrimination with some analytical clarity. In the market discrimination framework, discrimination of a group, may operate through restrictions on the entry in market, and/or through “selective inclusion”, with an unequal treatment in market and non-market transactions, which is similar to Sen’s concept of unfavorable inclusion.

The labour market discrimination can occur in hiring when two persons with the same employment experience, education and training but differing in some non-economic characteristic face denial in hiring. The differences are generally correlated with certain non-economic (racial, ethnic or religious) characteristics of individual. The occupational discrimination occurs when business persons from a group are faced with quantitative restrictions to enter into the occupation of majority group, or face differential treatment in acquiring access to factors and services necessary for production and business activity.

To summarize the development in social science literature, the concept of social exclusion thus, essentially refers to the processes through which groups are wholly, or partially, excluded on the basis of group identity from full participation in economy and society in which they live. It involves two crucial dimensions namely the “societal interrelations” (causing exclusion), and their “outcome” (causing deprivation). For understanding the nature of exclusion, therefore the insight into the societal interrelations and institutions of exclusions is as important as the outcome in terms of deprivation for excluded groups. It is also necessary to recognize that in “Group Exclusion”, people are excluded because of their group identity and not because of individual attributes. Therefore, we need to recognize distinction between exclusion of an individual and exclusion of a group. Exclusion of an “Individual” is different from “Exclusion of a Group”. Individuals often get excluded from access to economic and social opportunities for various reasons specific to them. An individual often gets excluded from employment due to lack of required education and skills. An individual also gets excluded from having access to higher education due to lack of minimum merit. Similarly people get excluded from access to input and consumer markets due to lack of purchasing power. The exclusion of an individual has no connection with his or her social and cultural identity. In case of exclusion of group, however individuals with certain social and cultural identity such as social origin like caste, ethnicity, religion, gender or colour are excluded from having access to sources of income, employment, education civil rights and other social needs. Thus Group exclusion

is based on social and cultural identity of persons ,irrespective of the attribute of individuals with in the social /cultural group .

This has important policy implications .While in case of “individual exclusion” the pro-poor policy will have to be focussed on the individual capabilities ,in case of “Group Exclusion” the focus of the policy will be targeted on the group as a whole covering all individual in the social /cultural group.

Caste, ethnicity, religion and Social Exclusion:

This theoretical literature and the insights from it is quite relevant in understanding the exclusion in the Indian situation .In India, exclusion revolves around the societal institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate, and deprive some groups on the basis of group’s identities like caste, ethnicity, religion, gender and others.

The nature of exclusion associated with institutions of the caste system particularly needs to be understood and conceptualized as it has been the basis of reservation policy for scheduled caste and tribe and for other backward caste and there is growing demand to extend it to similar groups like religious minority such as Muslim and low caste converted to Islam and Christianity .

Theoretical attempts in social and economic interpretation of caste system recognized that caste as a system of social and economic governance is determined by certain customary rules and norms, which are unique and distinct. (Akerlof 1976, Scoville 1991, Lal 1988, Ambedkar 1936 and 1987).The economic organization of caste system is based on the division of people in social groups (or castes) in which the economic rights of each individual caste are pre-determined or ascribed by birth and made hereditary. Entitlement of economic rights is however , unequal and hierarchal. The economic rights are unequally assigned and therefore entitlement of rights get narrower and narrower as one moves down in caste hierarchy from high to low caste. The system also provides for a community based regulatory mechanism to enforce the system through the instruments of social ostracism (or social and economic penalties), and reinforces it further with the justification from some philosophical elements in Hindu religion such as theory of Karma and rebirth based on the notion of eternity of soul . (Lal 1988, Ambedkar 1936 and 1987).

The caste system's fundamental characteristics of fixed social and economic rights for each caste, with restrictions for change implies "forced exclusion" of one caste from the civil, economic and educational rights of other caste. Exclusion in civil and economic spheres thus is internal to the system, and a necessary outcome of its governing principles. In the market economy framework, the occupational immobility would operate through restrictions in various markets such as land, labour, capital, credit, other inputs, and services necessary for any business and education.

This interpretation of caste system implies that in its original form, unlike many other human societies, the caste system does not recognize the individual and his/her distinctiveness as the center of the social purpose. In fact, for the purpose of rights and duties, the unit of the Hindu society is not an individual (even the family is not regarded as a unit in the Hindu society, except for the purposes of marriages and inheritance). The primary unit in the Hindu society is caste, and hence, the rights and privileges (or the lack of them) of an individual are on account of him/her being a member of a particular caste (Ambedkar first published in 1987). Also, due to the hierarchical or graded nature of the caste system, the entitlements to civil, economic and educational rights by different castes become narrower and narrower as one goes down in hierarchical ladder in the caste system. Various castes in their rights and duties get artfully interlinked and coupled with each other, in a manner such that the rights and privileges of the higher castes become the causative reasons for the disadvantage and disability of the lower castes, particularly the untouchables and other backward caste located at the bottom of caste hierarchy. In this sense, a caste does not exist in a single number, but only in plural (Ambedkar 1987 first time). Castes exist as a system of endogenous groups, which are interlinked with each other in unequal measure of rights and relations in all walks of life. Castes at the top of the order enjoy more rights, at the expense of those located at the bottom. Therefore, the lower castes, such as former untouchable and other backward castes located at the bottom of the caste hierarchy has much less economic, educational and social rights.

The caste /untouchability and ethnicity based exclusion thus reflect in inability of individuals and groups like former untouchables and other backward caste and other similar groups to interact freely and productively with others and to take part in the full economic, social, and political life of a community (Bhalla and Lapeyere 1997). Incomplete citizenship or denial of civil rights (freedom of expression, rule of law, right to justice), political rights (right and means to participate in the exercise

of political power),and socio-economic rights(right to property, employment and education) are key dimensions of impoverished live .

Consequences of social exclusion and discrimination:

The concern about discrimination is precisely because of its linkages with underdevelopment, inequality, poverty and the potential inter-group conflict that it can lead to between the dominant and discriminated subordinated groups.

On Economic Development :

The standard economic theory of discrimination indicates that economic discrimination generally generates consequences which adversely affect overall economic efficiency and thereby economic growth. The market discrimination leads to failure of market mechanism, which in turn induces inefficiency due to misallocation of labour and other factors among firms and economy.

Factor immobility also brings segmentation of the markets. In case of caste system for instance, fixed occupations by not permitting mobility of human labor, land, capital and entrepreneurship across caste, the system creates segmented markets and brings imperfections in each of these markets. Thus far from promoting competitive market situations, it creates segmented and monopolistic markets. Labour and capital fails to shift from one occupation to another even if the wage rate and rate of return (on investment) are higher in the alternative occupations. Factor immobility brings gross inefficiency in resource allocation and in economic outcome . (Ambedkar 1936 and 1987).

Economic efficiency is also affected by reducing job commitment and efforts of workers who perceive themselves to be victims of discrimination and by reducing the magnitude of investment in human capital by discriminated groups. In caste based segmented markets, the economic efficiency is thus lower than in the model of perfectly competitive market economy. (Birdstall and Sabot 1991)

Factors immobility also leads to unemployment which is typically associated with the customary rules governing employment in various occupations. (Ambedkar 1936 and 1987). By not permitting the movement of labour between occupations, caste becomes a direct cause of much of voluntary unemployment for higher caste and involuntary unemployment for low caste persons. The higher caste Hindu would generally prefer to be voluntarily unemployed for some time than to take up an occupation which is considered to be polluting. For the lower caste on the other hand the restriction to take other caste occupation will compel them to remain

involuntarily unemployed. Thus involuntary unemployment in the case of lower caste and voluntary unemployment in the case of higher caste is one of the negative outcomes of the caste system.

The economic efficiency of labour suffers severely in another manner also. In so far as the division of occupations is not based on individual choice, the individual sentiment, preference and the natural aptitudes has no place in it. The social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and make once own career. The principle of individual choice is violated in the caste system in so far as it involves an attempt to appoint a task to an individual in advance, selected not on the basis of training or capacities but on caste status of parents.

Further some of the occupations are considered socially degrading which reduce the social status of persons engaged in them. Forced into these occupations on account of their caste origin, people do not derive job satisfaction. In fact such occupations constantly provoke them to aversion, ill will and desire to evade. (Ambedkar 1936) The caste system also disassociates intelligence from work and creates contempt for physical labour. The dignity of physical labour is nearly absent in the work ethics of caste system .The lack of dignity of labour thus affects the incentive to work adversely. This implies that the caste system (as an economic organisation) lacks several elements, which are required to satisfy the conditions for optimum use of resources and optimum economic outcome .

On inequality, poverty and inter group conflict:

This brings us to the consequence of discrimination and exclusion on income distribution and poverty. The consequences of the caste system in terms of equity and poverty are more serious than that for economic growth. Since the access to source of income and economic reward under the caste system are determined by unequal job assignment of rights , the result is an income distribution generally skewed along caste line. Lal writes, “Much of modern abhorrence of the caste system is due to the legitimate dislike in my view of the system of economic inequality it perpetuates.”(Lal 1989) Ambedkar argued that whatever may have been the original purpose behind the origin of the caste system but later as it evolved in its classical form it certainly involved an economic motive, the purpose of which is income maximization through coercion rather than economic efficiency of any

sort. (Ambedker 1936 and 1987). The manner in which the customary rules and norms regarding right to property, occupation, employment, wages, education, social status occupation, dignity of labour, are framed and defined they involve denial of educational , social and economic rights , and resultant deprivation and the poverty of the lower castes. Economic and educational disparities in general and poverty of lower caste like former untouchables and other backward caste in particular is a direct outcome of the unequal assignment rights under the caste system.

There is an additional social and political cost of caste based social exclusion. By exacerbating current inequality between groups, and by contributing to its perpetuation from one generation to the next, it also fosters inter-group conflict (Birdsall and Sabot 1991). Caste based discrimination in access to sources of income and human development of subordinate groups thus has potential for inducing inter-group conflict.

Continuity and Change -Dynamics of Exclusion:

The caste system as an institution has also undergone a significant change from its original form, which have been discussed in the preceding section. Only a few have ventured to explain the dynamics of the caste system. Akerlof's economic model of the caste system emphasized that the provision of social ostracism (with social and economic penalties involving social and economic boycott and isolation) against the violation of customary rules of caste system act as main deterrent for any change. The fear of being socially and economically boycotted and isolated, act as an imminent force for the survival of the system. This implied that there are social costs associated with change, which discourage the caste system from being dynamic in nature. (Akerlof 1976). Scoville, emphasized the role of the economic cost involved in the enforcement of the caste system. Enforcement of the system involves economic cost,-transaction and enforcement - and these costs are too high for the individual members to break the rules of the system. (Scoville, 1991). Scoville thus locate the reasons for rigidity of caste system into enormous economic costs, which inhibit the change in the customary rules governing caste system . This implies that in situation of low economic costs the inefficient rules governing the caste system would change and make the system dynamic.

The “cost and efficiency” explanation however remained silent about the other motive behind the discrimination. Marxist and Ambedkar explanations go beyond the “costs and efficiency “and emphasized the role of social, educational and economic gains of monopolization accruing to the higher castes persons as reason

for continuation of the caste system. The higher caste will continue to support the caste system as long as it brings gains in social, economic and educational spheres. The customary rules governing the social and economic relations and those relating to education under the caste system would change, if the alternative (or new) rules yield higher economic and social gains to the higher caste. Conversely, traditional rules would continue if the alternative rules (or new rules) yield lesser gains to the higher caste persons. Ambedkar further added that the change in the ideas about human rights and equality also induces the change in the social relations, in so far as the concept of human rights and justice involved under caste system is contrary to the modern tenets of human rights and justice.

Thus the prevailing theoretical literature indicates that the changes in caste system will depend on the relative magnitude of social costs (in terms of social isolation/standing), economic costs (that is, transaction and enforcement costs), and the social and economic gains associated with change. It will also depend on the extent of acceptability of the modern ideas about human rights, justice and equality. The lesser gains to the higher caste in the existing system (compared with gains in system governed by new rules) and the low social and economic costs of such change will induce change in the traditional social and economic relations of the caste system. Similarly the recognition and pursuit of human rights and justice will also induce the change in the system. Conversely if the gains to higher caste in social, education and economic spheres in the traditional system are higher and the cost of change is high and also the notion of human right and justice as prevalent among the masses is against the progressive norms of human rights, there will be less incentive for higher caste to go for change.

Remedies Against social exclusion –Free market versus Interventionists Policy:

Given the adverse consequences of economic and social discrimination, reducing discrimination is thus a worthwhile strategy because it is likely to increase economic efficiency and growth, and reduce poverty and inequality and also minimize the potential for conflict between the groups. How to overcome the discrimination has been the subject of central concern of social and economic theories. Two alternative solutions have emerged in the economic literature. One theoretical stand predicts that, in highly competitive markets, discrimination will prove to be a transitory phenomenon as there are costs associated with discrimination to the firm/employer, which result in lowering the profits. Firms /employers who indulge in discrimination, face the ultimate sanction imposed by the markets. The theory sees the resulting erosion of profits as a self-correcting solution to eliminate discrimination. Thus this

view would suggest promotion of competitive markets to reduce economic and social discrimination.

However others argued for different policy to overcome economic and social discrimination. This view argued that there are several reasons why economic discrimination might persist over long periods. Firstly, even if the markets are sufficiently competitive the exclusion and discrimination will still persist, if all firms practice discrimination, the possibility of which is high. The persistence over decades of labour market discrimination in high-income countries attests to that. Secondly, in reality not all markets are competitive. Indeed in most of the economies the market are highly imperfect and are government by oligopoly and monopolistic market situation, which give power to the firms to discriminate at will.

The limitation of the competitive market as a solution is summarized by Shulmen and Darity, :

“The analytical stance of the main stream neo-classical economists is characterized as methodological individualism and it presumes that economic institutions are structured such that society-wide outcomes result from an aggregation of individual behaviours. It presumed that if individuals act on the basis of pecuniary self-interest then market dynamics dictate equal treatment for equal individuals regardless of inscriptive characteristics such as race. Consequently, observed group inequality is attributed to familial, educational, or other background differences among individuals who are unevenly distributed between social groups. The causes of a dissimilar distribution of individuals between social groups may be genetic, cultural, historical, or some combination thereof. The differences in cultural attributes include the value families and neighbourhoods place on education, attitudes, and work habits. The historical refers primarily to the impact of past discrimination on current inequality. In contrast, economists who may be classified as methodological structuralism do not accept this interpretation. Structuralism as an analytical method holds that aggregate outcomes are not the result of a simple summation of individual behaviours, but rather arise from the constraints and incentives imposed by organizational and social hierarchies. In this view, individual behaviour achieves its importance within the context of group formation, cooperation, and conflict. Economic and political outcomes are thus a function of the hegemony exercised by dominant groups, the resistance offered by subordinate groups, and the institutions that mediate their relationship. Discrimination, in this view, is an inherent feature of economic system. Competition is either not powerful enough to offset the group dynamics of identity and interest, or it actually operates so as to sustain discriminatory behaviours. --- Discrimination is due to the dynamics of group identification, competition, and conflict rather than irrational, individual attitudes. Market mechanisms, far from being relied upon to eliminate discrimination of their own accord, must be scrutinized and pressured to further the goal of equality of opportunity”. (Shulmen and Darity-----).

These two views have different policy implications to overcome discrimination. A view which predicts discrimination to be self correcting argues for strengthening competitive market mechanism. The alternative view asserts that market discrimination will persist, despite the presence of competitive market

forces or for other reasons; therefore the interventionist policies will be necessary. In their view correcting discrimination would require legal safeguards against discrimination and policies for equal share in various spheres. It calls for state interventions not only in land, labor, and capital market but also in product and consumer market and social needs such as education, housing and health, as the discriminated groups face discrimination in multiple spheres in transactions canalized through market and non market channels.

Empowerment versus Equal opportunity policy :

We are caught in discussion over developing reservation policies for groups and communities suffering from social, educational and economic exclusion associated with caste, ethnicity, gender and religious identity. Experience of half century of economic development has brought to surface the exclusionary character of Indian society and its consequences for excluded groups. The alternative ways of overcoming the deprivation are suggested by the social scientists engaged in the discussion, particularly in the context of issue of reservation in private sector and extension of reservation for OBC in educational institutions and similar demand by lower caste converted to Islam and Christianity and certain religious minority group like Muslim. Two alternative set of remedies which can be grouped into strategy of “Social and Economic Empowerment” and of “Equal Opportunity” emerged from the discussion.

The policy of social and economic empowerment is essentially directed towards improving the ownership of capital assets like agricultural land, capital for business, entrepreneurial skills, and education level and skills of discriminated groups. These measures are supposed to enhance the capacity of discriminated groups to undertake business and to enhance their employability through education and skill development to seek good quality employment. It appears that there is also a general recognition of need to empower the discriminated groups such as lower caste, particularly the former untouchable, other backward caste, women and some religious minority groups, for denial of equal economic rights to them in the past. However when it comes to giving equal opportunity through instruments of reservation and similar methods, it does not find similar favour. It is argued that the labour and other markets and educational institutions generally work in neutral manner and access to markets are therefore determined by merit and efficiency alone. As such there is no need of safeguards against possible market and non market discrimination. Thus while the policies for general social, educational and

economic empowerment of discriminated groups are favored, those ensuring equal share and participation in terms of reservation are marked with differences.

What are the insights from the theoretical and empirical literature on this policy issue. It is necessary to recognize that the problem of discriminated groups like scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, women, religious minority is dual in nature. First is the lack of access to income earning capital assets like agricultural land and capital for business, quality employment and education and skills due to denial of the same in the past for long periods of time, the consequences of which are visible today in the form of inter-group inequality in several indicators of human development. Second is the continuation of the discrimination in the various markets and non market transactions in the present, in some forms, if not its in full original forms. This is particularly the case of lower castes in Hindu society. Therefore, the discriminated groups require dual solution –a set of remedies for improving the ownership of land and capital assets, quality employment and education as compensation for that denial in the past, and another set of remedy to provide safeguard against discrimination in the present. While the first remedy is based on the justification of the principle of compensation for denial of rights in the past(the consequences of which are visible in the present) , the second remedy of equal opportunity is based on the assumption of providing safeguards against the discrimination in the present, in various market and non market transactions and ensuring the due share and participation in employment, education, business ,legislature and other supportive services.

It is expected that policy of social, educational and economic empowerment will help to enhance the capacity of discriminated groups to take advantage of on going social and economic progress. Improved access to income earning assets will improve the capacity and enable to undertake business activity. Education and skill development is expected to increase employability and help them to get jobs in private sectors and public sector.

However it necessary to recognise that economic and educational empowerment alone will not suffice ,it will only empower the discriminated groups to enable them to make use of the on going economic and social progress ,but will not ensure the ultimate use due to continuing discrimination in market and non market transactions including the supply of social needs such as education and health.In the absence of equal opportunity policy in the form of reservation ,the discriminated groups may continue to face discrimination in the form of denial to

access in private employment, education, business and civil amenities ,like housing and water and other spheres .It is precisely for this reason the complementary equal opportunity policy , (complementary to the policy of general economic empowerment) is developed, in the form of reservation to ensure them the due share in employment, education, selectively in capital for business and, housing and water and other amenities ,in addition to the policy of social and economic empowerment . The complementary nature of these two policies will ultimately help the historically discriminated groups to receive due share in economic and social progress.

Multiple Group Exclusion and nature of inclusive policy:

The development of “Inclusive Policy” thus requires use of both policies, namely policy of social and economic empowerment and policy of Equal Opportunity (in the form of Reservation policy)

Caste and Graded Inequalities:

. However formulating the reservation policy for the various caste groups of Hindu society and other religion needs to take into account feature of caste system in terms of its exclusionary character with wider social and economic consequences on different caste with in the Hindu fold .

Let us first discuss the feature of caste system in the context of inclusive policy . The core governing principle of caste system is not the inequality alone but the “graded inequality”, which implied hierarchical unequal entitlement of rights to various caste . Entitlement of rights being hierarchically unequal, , every caste (except for the highest caste group) suffered from a degree of denial and exclusion. No rights could be universal. However, in the given framework of social relations, the loss of rights was not uniform across caste groups. As one moved down in the caste hierarchy, the rights and privileges also got reduced. By implication the caste located at the bottom of caste hierarchy suffered the most. The hierarchical structure determined privileges and obligations of different caste groups in a given network of social relations. Disadvantage of lower caste become advantage for higher castes.

The system of graded entitlement to rights results in disparities in social, economic and education condition of different caste groups. The lesson we ought to learn from this is that given the differential impact on each caste , the policy against discrimination and deprivation needs to be caste specific and governed by specific social, economic and education condition of each

caste . Thus while the general exclusionary character of Hindu society, in which every caste suffers (except the highest) from denial of rights in differentiated manner, will require a common policy of social inclusion, to ensure equal participation for all castes in various spheres of society, however, additionally it will also have to be combined with group specific policies of inclusiveness. By implication equal opportunity policy will necessarily be different for different caste groups depending on the nature of discrimination faced by them and their social ,economic and educational situation .

Ethnic, Religious Group and Women:

It has to be recognized that Indian society is characterized by exclusion not associated with group identity like caste alone but also with , ethnicity, gender, religion and other in various spheres of our society, polity and economy. Therefore, beside caste it requires an inclusive policy to overcome deprivation associated with , ethnicity, gender, religion and other forms of exclusions. It appears that the development experience of last fifty years or so indicate that social and economic development has benefited the various groups in differentiated manner and therefore those who experienced exclusion or derived limited benefits from social and economic development are now seeking solution to their group specific problem.

How to develop inclusive policy for different groups suffering from exclusion associated with ethnicity, religion and gender is an issue which is being currently discussed by the policy makers in India. The lesson from the literature is that the nature of inclusive policies for India will have to be necessarily guided by nature of an exclusionary character of Hindu and non-Hindu communities of the Indian society. The policy framework will have to be governed by the forms and spheres of discrimination and their consequences on the discriminated groups

As regards the Hindu society, as mentioned above the principle of “graded inequality” implies that not all castes suffer equally from hierarchical entitlement of rights. While the caste located at the bottom of caste hierarchy, namely the former untouchables suffer the most, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) follow closely. The OBCs probably did not suffer from untouchability and residential and social isolation as much as the former untouchable did, but historically they too faced exclusion in

education, employment, and certain other spheres. In case of non-Hindu communities the some elements of Hindu caste system seems to have been carry forward and spillover in to the converted religions , and therefore the lower castes converted to Christianity and Islam (like the lower caste converted to Buddhism and Sikhism) also faced discrimination, although not in a similar fashion as the Hindu low caste did.

Certain religious minorities, particularly the Muslims, also probably face discrimination as a religious group in a number of spheres ,as reflected in their lower performance with respect to relevant human development indicators . Similarly the women face exclusion as a category of population but it varies depending on their caste, class and religious background. Some groups such as tribal and semi-nomadic and de-notified tribal communities suffer from isolation and exclusion due their ethnic background and stigma of criminality.

Due to variations in the forms and spheres of discrimination, the consequences on the deprivation and poverty across various discriminated groups also vary. Although unlike scheduled caste and scheduled tribe , there are limited studies on discrimination of other discriminated groups ,however the visible presence of inter-group inequalities in various indicators of human development points towards the consequences of historical discrimination -reflected in differential access to income earning assets , property, business, employment, education, civil rights in varying degree to various castes. Therefore although all of them require measures to compensate for denial of equal right in the past and also necessary safeguards against discrimination, (in some forms if not in all of its original forms) in the present, however, the equal opportunity policy in the form of “Reservation”, in its essential elements may vary depending on nature of discrimination faced by each of these excluded groups and their present social educational, economic and political standing.

The “Inclusive Policy” for the discriminated groups essentially will have two aspects. First in so far as the bulk of discriminated persons also happens to be the poorer, it will require pro-poor policies of general nature. Among the general policies, the special programs to improve the skill and education level to enhance the employability of these section is most important .Since these section particularly SC,ST OBC ,Women were denied rights to

education in the past ,it is necessary to use measures to compensate for past denial .The other group like religious minority like muslim ,dalit christen and backward caste muslim also sufferers from lower education level ,hence similar measures are necessary for them as well. Beside education general policy will also require measures to improve the ownership of income earning assets like agriculture land and non land capital assets as some group as whole or some sections with in the groups lack access to income earning capital assets ,again due denial of ownership of such assets . Also it will require measures to provide social needs like housing and other.

Secondly in addition to the general pro-poor policy, it will have to be supplemented by “Equal Opportunity Policy” .The general policy will be necessary to compensate the discriminated groups for denial of equal rights which every body enjoy in the past .However given the fact they continued to suffers form exclusion and discrimination in society ,polity and economy in some form ,if not in their original traditional form ,it is necessary to provide legal safeguards against discrimination as well as pro-active measures to give them the fair share in various spheres of society ,polity and economy. The Equal Opportunity policy will have to necessarily in the form of reservation to ensure fair access to employment, capital assets, and social needs like education and housing ,civil and cultural rights and other spheres .

The experiences of various countries and our own indicate that government have used few measures separately or in combination as part of equal opportunity policy .It generally constitute few components. (a) Legal safeguards against discrimination in multiple spheres of society, polity and economy is the first necessary steps .This generally takes the form of Law against discrimination such as Civil Rights Act in USA or Civil Rights Act in India (formerly known as Anti- Untouchability Act,1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act ,1989) .This act are necessary to provide legal safeguards so that in event of discrimination individual could take recourse to these legal provision. (b) However it has also been recognized that although the legal provision are pre-necessary pre-condition to overcome the discrimination, legal safeguards are not enough .It is recognized that laws can not overcome the consequences of historical exclusion in the past , in terms of denial of basic rights in education, in access to income earning assets ,employment ,civil right and other spheres .The law also have their

limitation in overcoming the consequences of exclusion and discrimination suffered by the discriminated groups in the past and also consequences of discrimination which continue in the present . In fact consequences of discrimination in the past and present are reflected in poor performance of the discriminated groups with respect to necessary indicators of human development such as educational level, ownership of income earning assets ,employment both in private sector and public sector ,as well their participation in executive ,governance and legislature in the centre and the State.

There fore the equal opportunity policy will require specific policy measures to ensure equal share and participation of discriminated group in various sphere of society ,polity and economy such as legislature, executive, employment in private and public , education and other public spheres for discriminated groups in the form of reservation policy. The Reservation policy will ensure their due share in income earning assets , employment in private and public sectors , education, civil amenities like housing and other services and also executive (including decision making and monitoring). This compensatory policy is necessary to break the intergenerational cumulative transmission of disadvantage.

Beside the policy of equal access in employment, education and legislature, equally important is their participation in executive, administrative in decision making and monitoring The representation of discrimination groups become meaningful through their own representation and participation in administration and decision-making process at all levels as it brings their experiences as well sensitivity in the whole process. Therefore participation of the discriminated groups in the governance at all levels, from legislature to making of policies, execution and monitoring is necessary. Representation and participation in governance of discriminated groups is central to inclusive policy and inclusive society. In this context the views of Ambedkar are particularly important. Ambedkar observed

“ It is not enough to be electors only. It is necessary to be law-makers; otherwise who can be law-makers will be masters of those who can only be electors.... One crux of popular Government is the representation of interests and opinions. The other crux is personal representation.”

(BAWS 1979 Vol. 1:251-52).

And observed that-

“Just as it is necessary that the Depressed Classes should have the power to influence government action by seats in the Legislature so also it is desirable that the Depressed Classes should have the opportunity to frame the general policy of the Government. This they can do only if they can find a seat in the Cabinet. The Depressed Classes therefore claim that in common with other minorities, their moral rights to be represented in the Cabinet should be recognized” (BAWS 1982 Vol. 2:554).

Thus, he emphasizes both on due share on the representation and participation of depressed classes and minorities in the legislatures but also in the formulation and implementation of policies for them.

There are legal and other mechanism which have been used internationally and nationally to operationalized the two dimension of equal opportunity policy ,namely reservation in employment, education ,legislature ,public housing and other spheres and equal share and space in executive, administration for decision making and monitoring .It is imperative that the provisions with respect to equal rights and protection against violation of rights needed to be embodied in the Constitution. If a society practices discrimination then the impetus for change should come from both from the State and from civil society. The private initiative by civil society in the form of reforms of society and other initiative by private sector for equal human rights are necessary. However State has responsibility and therefore it is obligatory on the state make legal and other steps in the form of provisions in the Constitution and in the law , with clear statement of responsibility on the State to develop policies against exclusion and discrimination and undertake measures to compensate the discriminated groups for denial of equal rights and to over come consequences of discrimination.

To put in brief the “Socially Inclusive Policy”, will involve three necessary components. Firstly, it should include general pro-poor policy for the generality of poor as whole including the discriminated groups , Secondly the equal opportunity policy for discriminated groups with two measures

namely law against discrimination and pro-active measures in the form of reservation to give equal share in income earning capital assets ,employment both public and private sector ,social needs like education and housing ,and participation in governance through fair share in legislature, executive and administration with necessary provision in constitution and the laws . It necessary to recognized that while there will be some common features of inclusive policy cutting across all discriminated groups ,the equal opportunity policy will have be of different nature for different discriminated groups such as scheduled caste, other backward caste, scheduled tribe ,semi-nomadic and de-notified tribe, a specific discriminated religious minorities , social groups (low caste person) within some religions such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism ,Sikhism ; women, physically challenged and other categories depending on the form and nature of discrimination suffered by each one of them and their social ,education and economic situations . Since our society, economy and polity is characterized by exclusions and isolation of various types and magnitude it is imperative that a comprehensive inclusive policy to ensure the representation and participation of hitherto excluded section to receive the gains of social and economic development is necessary . The polity society and economy will have to be more inclusive and participatory, and only then can democracy as means of governance become a meaningful for all.

Making the Invisible Visible through data and Research:

Improving the ability to gather data disaggregated by caste, gender, ethnic background, religion, disability and other feature associated with exclusion is basic step for governments in promoting inclusion .Such information is necessary for better program design and for more effective targeting and program evaluation ((Mayara Buvinic 2005).Several countries in Latin America and else where include questions on the ethnicity and race in population censuses. In addition specialized household surveys are conducted which include question about the changing situation of excluded groups. In India , it is necessary that National Statistical data system which includes population census and specialized household surveys such as National Sample Survey, National Family Planning and Health Survey and others should include specific questions related to excluded groups covering their situation and also the nature and forms of discrimination in multiple spheres .

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