

**Book Review**  
**Social Inclusion and Development**

Sangeeta Shroff <sup>1</sup>

Author: Edited by Richard Pais and M.H. Makwana,

Publisher: Rawat Publications

ISBN: 978-81-316-0854-8

Year of Publications: 2018

Price: Rs 1195

Social exclusion refers to individuals or communities, normally the vulnerable section of society, who lack resources and are denied of opportunities as well as their legitimate rights. India, since independence has always followed a path of growth with social justice and social inclusion has emerged as a significant component of social, economic, political and cultural development. The book on Social Inclusion and Development is a collection of articles on several themes related to the need for social inclusion and how social exclusion leads to unequal development. The book is divided into three sections which begins with an introduction on social exclusion and inclusion and comprises of five articles. The second section which comprises of six articles highlights the need for social inclusion, by discussing case studies of weaker sections of society. Finally, through four articles, the book explains how social exclusion leads to inequality in the process of development.

In the first section of the book the concept of social exclusion is discussed which indicates that exclusion takes place because a dominant group considers itself superior to other groups which have lower social status. This exclusion is based on grounds of caste, ethnicity, sex, occupation and religion. The emergence of Dalit literature is discussed and notes that the literature signified an emergence of consciousness that dalits were denied access to education both historically and traditionally. Development and the social practices of freedom is seen as a process which removes obstacles to a person who is trying to enjoy a life of freedom according to what is valued by him. Rights, opportunities, wealth and self-respect are the “primary social goods” which will enable a person to achieve the ends of his life as they satisfy the desire of a person. The tribals constitute a community which is deprived of education and it was only in the post independence era that tribal

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor, VAMNICOM, Pune

development got prominence through constitutional provisions. Hence, the Santals of West Bengal which is taken up as a case study in this book are now able to interact with non tribals and are now living in a changed environment. However, the book notes that there should also be a curriculum for Santals which keeps them abreast of their culture which relates to their life and economic activities.

Section 2 of the book comprises of articles which pertain to social inclusion and development. The various development programmes in the form of fundamental rights, directive principles and special provisions for weaker sections are indicated and outlined. Various schemes and programmes for weaker sections since independence have played a role in social inclusion. The facts and figures of social exclusion in India reveal that child labour is still practiced, literacy rate among SCs and STs is below national average, crime among women is prevalent, rural tribal women suffer more than other underprivileged etc. In order to promote Dalits, the book locates Dalit entrepreneurship as a significant step in overcoming exclusion. Entrepreneurship is an activity which involves finance and capital and hence it is difficult for Dalits to become entrepreneurs as they lack access to capital. As a result they get entrenched into certain limited low paying economic activities which are more of a survival strategy. A welfare state providing loans to Dalits will enable them to enter into entrepreneurship and thus escape the vicious circle of poverty.

Yet another dimension of exclusion refers to children with special needs who are often deprived of education as suitable facilities are not available to them to enroll in schools. The illiteracy is high across all categories of children with special needs but even higher for children with visual, multiple and mental disabilities. This deprivation has an adverse impact on society and suitable policies are needed to ensure that they are enrolled in educational institutions. Similarly it is necessary to increase the literacy rates of Dalits and ensure that there is no discrimination against them of any sort. The picture related to Dalit women is even worse. The same is revealed through a sociological study of household footwear work by Dalit women in Agra, where leather industry occupies a prominent place. Women work due to economic necessity and get employed through contractors. They have however, never seen the factory which subcontracts the work to them and they are paid on a piece rate basis. Their home based labour has certain characteristics such as low wages, irregular work, lack of social security and unorganized work conditions.

The third section of the book deals with social exclusion which is the cause of inequality and lack of uniform development. Social exclusion denies some people the same rights and opportunities as are afforded to others in their society. Hence the productive capacity of socially excluded is accentuated and perpetuates. Social exclusion is also giving rise to rethinking the concept of development which ensures that every individual has access to primary social goods. India remains a country of stark contrasts and striking disparities and the same can be fought through education, skill development, health care, financial inclusion, and women's empowerment. The book presents a case study of the Kudubis of Karnataka, an important tribe, who are in need of social inclusion. Through a sample survey, the study revealed that the Kudubis community suffered from an adverse and imbalanced sex ratio and illiteracy is also prevalent in the community. The study concluded that it is important to recognize the Kudubi community of Karnataka as Scheduled Tribe.

The book concludes by highlighting the need for political participation of women in India which is very low in all spheres including Parliament. Women's absence from decision making has deprived the country from a necessary perspective and is necessary to achieve gender parity considering that women constitute about half the population. The main factors attributed to low representation are the socio-historic barriers and patriarchy norms. However, affirmative steps should be taken to ensure participation of women in legislature and political bodies.

While social inclusion and social exclusion are reasonably well researched, the topics still assume importance considering that the country even after crossing 75 years of independence, still finds the persistence of such social issues which ultimately lead to economic and other deprivation. The book however does note that there is progress in the direction to promote social justice through legislations, government schemes, efforts by civil society, etc. but despite these efforts, the challenges still remain. The case studies in the book are unique and clearly explain the deprivation of certain castes and classes. Overall, the book is a useful addition to the existing literature available on social exclusion and need for inclusion so that development does not create inequality but encompasses all sections of society.