

Book Review

Social Inclusion Research Fund (2007); *From Exclusion to Inclusion: Socio-Political Agenda for Nepal*. Social Inclusion Research Fund, Lalitpur, Nepal, 175 pages including introduction of the contributors, Price Rs. 200.

In the modern dynamic pluralist society productive activities of the economy are oriented towards markets and higher productivity is inevitable in this direction. Economic freedom together with political freedom is considered to be complementary to each other, especially after 1990s. However, formal government regulations and norms that encourage trust, civility and reciprocity can make both markets and society healthier. Unfortunately, the Asian module of government combines a strong state with a weak democracy.

Freedom is undoubtedly a fundamental ingredient of democracy, but it does not mean a political and economic exclusion of the minority. Prof. Colin Crouch, a noted scholar, rightly observes that vanguard groups frustrated by exclusion, stroke identity politics of extreme kind, and express negative rights of citizens.

Nepalese political profile can roughly be divided into five phases: Shah Rule, Rana oligarchy Rule, again Shah Rule, Multiparty democracy, and lately the declaration of democratic republic Nepal.

The issue of inclusion is now being a strong glaring discourse for the unification and consolidation of the Nepalese society. In this connection, Social Inclusion Research Fund has compiled and published very valuable research articles in the field of social inclusion in the form of book entitled *From Exclusion to Inclusion*. This book has incorporated six research articles from eminent scholars in the field of economic development of Nepal. The book under review covers the issues of inclusion in the context of gender, caste/ethnicity, region and politics.

Dr. Harka Gurung has briefly dealt with human development, spatial disparity, state ideology of class, effect of exclusion, and towards inclusion. He has unfolded that political inequality, economic deprivation; educational inequality and low educational attainment are the effects of exclusion. He had recommended the change in constitution of Nepal 1990 to a truly democratic one with equality in all spheres of life. However, he did not define the concept of 'true democracy'. Moreover, he claims cultural dominance of a particular group should be demolished in order to establish fundamental human rights for all. He neither recognized that particular group, nor did he empirically justify its barriers to the human rights of others. It is a paradox to Nepali academia.

Professor Pushpa Shrestha has precisely identified the overall gender issues with sufficient empirical evidences. Prof Shrestha concludes female poverty a global phenomenon. She argues that females of Brahman and Chettri castes are more benefited groups than the Dalits and Janajatis. However she is silent about Newars, Thakalis and other privileged Janajatis whose HDI is significantly higher than that of Brahmins and Chettris.

Dr. Ram Prakash Yadav comes with his article "Caste/ethnic representation in government at policy level in Nepal" that has interestingly presented the highest, 30.9 percent representation of Chhetris in monarchical government; and Brahman's representation seemed to be the highest, 35.6 percent in democratic government (see p. 99, Table 2). Medhesis' participation after the restoration of multi-party democracy is noteworthy. He ironically concludes that the Medhesis are deprived of opportunities. It would be better if author had compared opportunities that madhesi people are getting with the hunger, poverty, and deprivation of mid- and far-western development regions of Nepal.

Mr. Hira Vishwakarma has raised the issue of social exclusion of *Dalit* people. He has well justified in the participation of democratic process. Although he says, democracy is the tyranny of the majority; he advocates participatory democracy for *dalits* which would be a better relief.

Professor Kristian Stokke has emphasized on democratic institutions and democratic transition in South Africa. He recommends a paradigm from elite to political forces for the institutionalization of democracy in the developing countries.

Dr. Keshab Man Shakya has concluded in his article entitled "National movement and Nepali state" that if the Nepali state is to be built as an inclusive and democratic nation, the state will have to be defined as a secular nation. That means, according to him, the issue of inclusion has already been over because Nepal is now declared a secular state.

The book has been published in the time when country is heading towards new constitution. In this context book will be highly valuable for all those who are interested in the field of social inclusion and development. However, all articles seem to be biased against Brahmin and chhetri. By and large, Brahman and Chettri biased attitudes can neither properly advocate the issue of social inclusion nor it can rise up the state's capacity. It can rather segregate or disintegrate Nepalese society; and the fact that unity is strength will vanish in air. This may create chaos and very unpleasant results in our society.

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