# Dialectics of 'Inclusion and Exclusion' in Nepal: A Review

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## Abstract

Nepal's post 1990s political discourse has witnessed many issues and the most important ones, among them, are also related to inclusion and exclusion. Both of them have taken the centre stage for their own reasons. Yet, the debate itself is not going toward the right direction and there is more than one reason for that. A closer look of the discourse on the subject indicates that it certainly has not been much helpful to address problems coming out of it. In contrast, it has not only weakened the social fabric of society but also preparing grounds for the latent conflicts as well. If Nepal's problems of inclusion and exclusion are to be resolved, there certainly is a need to revisit the debate itself. There are certainly problems in Nepali society as they are in others societies as well. Having said this, however, the crux of the matter is that the narrative that has been established in society over the years and their role in guiding the process is not free problem. Among many other factors, they do not necessarily take from societal realities and its foundations into consideration.

*Keywords***:** Ethnicity, Hinduism, identity, inclusion, social science

## Introduction

To begin with, the debate on inclusion/exclusion has taken centre stage in Nepali politics in recent time. Yet, debates themselves were exclusive and divided along sub-national identities. Such debates concluded that not all groups/regions/sexes are adequately represented in the institutional life of the state. Likewise, they were also of the view that cultural identities of many smaller groups, too, were subsumed by majoritarians. These groups raised issues of inclusion in various layers of the state and society[1]. The debate does not simply end here; it has, indeed, transcended national boundaries. One cannot deny the

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[1]This narrative has been well-established in Nepal but state itself has never ever came up with policies of systematic marginalisation of one community at the cost of other.

fact that Nepal may not have par excellence inclusive polices but the efforts it has undertaken should be recognised. Similarly, no wrong is there to raise issues from the part of those who have been excluded in more than one way. Also, the state that adopts exclusionary policies will fail and falter. Keeping these factors in mind, in recent years, the entire discourse on development and democratisation process has changed. Not only the state, but also the external agencies, has been assisting to have inclusive state. This certainly is a commendable step to have a better society.

Having said that, the problem, however, began when there is mismatch between issues, methods, and actors. Perhaps, agencies became more vocal and active in setting agendas and developing framework for inclusion/exclusion only for short-term benefits. The intellectual inputs they have received, in this regard, is somehow problematic. Their exclusive dependence on history written primarily by the colonial scholars and rehashed report produced by sundry organisations and parachute academicians have not been helpful. Both take certain historical incidents and cultural backgrounds in consideration. For many of them, exclusion started, right from the time of unification by Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769. But Shah's actions were the product and necessity of history. One cannot and should not make judgement just on the basis of those steps. His project of making Nepal – *Asali Hindustan* (pure Hindu State) was to protect his own nation. The other Hindustan – India – which Shah was referring, then, was under British rule. Before that, India was ruled by many outside rulers who have imposed their own values systems. Prithvi Narayan Shah knowing the intent of those foreign rulers was, therefore, prepared to defend Nepal unlike Jayaprakash Malla, who was covertly working with outsiders. That said, Prithvi Narayan Shah's such efforts were portrayed differently by the colonial historians and their Nepali conduits. Many explain Prithvi Narayan's effort as an attempt to *sanskritise* (without even knowing its meaning) people from other groups. Yet, fact remains that Prithvi Narayan Shah did not even bring his own deity to his new-found Kingdom – the *Kasthamandap*. In contrast, he adopted the local cultural traits.

Moreover, marginalisation of certain groups, what they called indigenous people (Mamdani, 2020) and other communities, who do not fall under the *Khas-Aryan* category (imaginary and misnomer concept)has also developed their own ecosystem that only benefits them not others. For them, this also came as a part of unification project. This set of groups claim to have been experiencing exclusion right from the state formation. Yet, there are others who argue that no such official documents/policies can be found that sanctions exclusion in society. Other sets of people blame *Hindu Dharma (Dharma is not necessarily a religion as we often translate in English)* and its paraphernalia as part of the problem when it comes to the point of exclusion. Yet, proponents of *Hinduism* claim that it is the most pluralistic in nature and people have choices to be believer, non-believer (*Charwak's* principle) or have a choice to select their own God. Perhaps, it is the only religion where one can find God in feminine form as well. Yet, it has its own social order which perhaps is seen as problematic. Still, one may not find scope for exclusion whatsoever. Similarly, there are those who argue that efforts are underway to represent those who are less represented in the institutional life of the state and society. Paradoxical as it may be, then the question arises what made some groups feel excluded? This certainly must be answered and there cannot be going back in this regard. What certainly true, though, is that successive Nepali rulers/governments, for one reason or other, have not been able to give due attention to the genuine grievances of these groups. In contrary, they have promised too much for the political gains, but delivery was too little. Likewise, polices that Nepal has developed over the years somehow could not generate sufficient economic opportunities which certainly would have given some relief to

those who were excluded otherwise. Yet, all these have created vacuum and provided enough room for agencies/actors to intervene in the internal affairs of the state. It is these agencies, who now claim to be their saviour and taking the discourse towards wrong direction.[2] These agencies often advise that inclusion can only happen when one group wins over the other – not necessarily empowering those communities/groups that are fallen or left behind – at par with others.

As mentioned earlier, part of the problem in this regard, comes from the way narratives are established. Truth be told that most of the studies carried right from 1799[3] till today have explained Nepali society negatively which has only created deep and widespread confusion about history, culture, tradition, identity, and nationhood. Such studies put emphasis on ethnicity (in the case of *janajati* groups) and race (in the case of *Madhesi* groups – who are now classified as *Madhesi Aryans* as opposed to *Khasa-Aryanas* of *Pahad*). The western anthropologists and their studies of human being only reduces whole *(the Brahma)* into parts and divides society, as they did elsewhere, horizontally and vertically (Ferguson, 2012, Small, 2020). There are scholars who argue their divide and rule approach has been replaced by define and rule (Mamdani, 2012). It only promotes what the scholars call 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer & Schiller, 2003). Such academic surgery, by and large, has only helped mobilise significantly to militate one societal group, one community, one region, and one sex against the corresponding group, community, religion, and the sex. There is a potential that application of such policies without considering social structure would only jeopardise social cohesion and social fabric of the state. The ethnocentric interpretation of the nation brings the permanent state of war (Habermas, 115). Three types of exclusions are normally explained which are: spatial, social, and political (Gurung, 2006). The political order that came into being after 1990s, and political agendas that were floated after the political change of 2006 have, indeed, brought enormous challenges as well as opportunities. Both of them have brought and reinforced liberal political set-up. Liberal politics, however, also requires liberal economy and society – both were somehow not at par here. What certainly happened, then, was that during these multiple transitions', problems outpaced the efforts.

**Objectives and methodology**

As explained above, this paper reflects on the various dimensions of inclusion and exclusion in Nepal. It argues that rather than promoting more inclusive society, extant discourse, by contrast, has become more contested and dialectic in nature. Part of the problem, in this regard, comes from the nature of discourse itself, which is influenced and operating in the binary mode of majority and minority and part from its modus operandi. The paper is qualitative and largely built on the secondary information and adopts *poorva pakshya* – a logical approach (to explaian things being, and ideas) that is being used by the indic scholar(s) to systematically look into the issues. This approach, at the outset, tries to look

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[2] Two factors: religion and language are important for any state argues Samuel P Huntington in his seminal work Clash of Civilization. But in the context of Nepal both the factors are brought into controversy by the scholars.

[3] Father Giuseppe published an Account of the Kingdom of Nepal in 1799 which is the first literature ever written by any Westerners about Nepal. This was recycled by other British officials and scholars. Since then, majority of the writings on Nepal by the foreign scholars and their Nepalis cohorts have been publishing in the same line.

inside, rather than looking outside based on certain theoretical backgrounds which only sees other part of the problem.

## Inclusion and Identity: The Deadly Combination

After the fall of Berlin Wall, and end of the Cold War, many thought ideological conflict would come to an end and liberal democracy, market economy, and human rights would become norms of the new world order (Fukuyama, 1992). The liberal democracy, indeed, made its inroads to many countries. It, however, did not necessarily provide political stability and peace there (Chua, 2004). Many of them have become flash points of intra-state conflicts. The focus on rights of various sorts – individual and group – has increased social awareness – but these newly democratised state were not sufficiently equipped to fulfill those increased demands of rights. This has only led what Mishra (2017) calls war of all against all.

In addition to this, liberal democracy brought many such packages and programmes in new democracies. Rather than becoming boon, in many places they became bane and played a catalytic role either in unearthing or generating issues for the latent conflicts. Paradoxically, many of these countries could not deal with the situation as they were not really prepared – both socially and economically, as mentioned earlier. In contrary, they certainly came shockingly to them.  For all these reasons, there is growing dissatisfaction towards the Western model of liberal democracy from the non-Western world (Youngs, 2015). Some scholars argue that, in the process, they became victim of the Fourth World Geopolitics, where state began to teeter out of control, when nations actively opposed the state policies (Ryser 2012, p. 32). The conflict widened to such an extent that on many cases, nations started disowning the states. Some even entered or re-entered into the era of identity-based conflicts. In this regard, one may witness continuous attack on the historical past of the state, which, yet again, gave new urgency to an old question: what is it that holds a nation together? Nationalism – the most powerful political emotions among all – too, is losing its legitimacy for the reason that many question very unification process of Nepali state and nationalism it espouses. However, political parties who either were facing existential problems or looking for new issues in 1990s, found their fortune on identity. They saw identity related issues more beneficial from political vantage point. This state of affairs, has also been captured by the non-state-organisations (NSOs) who were of the view that its their responsibility to provide identity to those whose identity, they claimed, has been hijacked in one way or the other. Invariably, such a state of affairs, have brought both inclusion and identity together to do the old politics. The new social movement (s)[4] (Dahal, 2004), which erupted during 1990s further cemented 'identity politics' where ethnicity and regionalism becomes the basis of operation.

One of the major demands of the identity politics, among others, has been to redefine nationalism, revisit history to summersault historical injustices, which undermined others history. In the process, certain cultural and societal groups will have to be downsized, then

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[4]Scholars argue that these movements are significantly different from previous social movements of the industrial economy. The primary difference is in their goals, as the new movements focus not on issues of materialistic qualities such as economic wellbeing, but on issues related to human rights and alike.

only, would Nepal become an inclusive state. Interestingly, the current constitution does not ameliorate such undercurrents escalated by the identity politics. Conversely, it goes a step further, reinforces primordial identities as opposed to civic citizenship, and divides people along various lines. The constitution's mere focus on 'group rights' (ethnic and regional) does provide sufficient conditions for the future lines of conflict. The issue of inclusion becomes major cause of disagreement where identity politics will dictate as how the issues of inclusion are to be resolved. The most likelihood scenario in such cases, would be that only those groups can be included who are well organised and hillbillies, as usual, will be left behind. Moreover, while, on the one hand, it does not take the issue of 'merit' and 'need' into consideration, its direct consequences, thus, would fall on those hillbillies who really needed benefits of inclusion. Likewise, too much of focus on identity-based rights would play ethnos against demos and real issues of inclusion/exclusion can become more complicated. In fact, inclusion/exclusion debate has been raised in such a way that if ethnicity is one side of the coin, inclusion is the other. Under these circumstances, chances are such that it shall promote the notion of 'othering' in society, which, in turn, would create conditions to 'prosper' the right-wing politics – on either side.

## Dissecting the society

The issue at stake here is how identity politics have captured the whole discourse on inclusion/exclusion. Based-on earlier studies, identity took further impetus after 2000, when series of seminars/workshops/conferences and publications were brought out which only explored fault lines of Nepal's body politic based on 'people and the region'[5]. The ground, in fact, was building-up right from 1950s onwards, when anthropologists tried to explain Nepali society from their own perception and imagination. The momentum spiked during the Cold War era (Price, 2016). The anthropological and sociological studies of Nepali society by using alien social science methods have created more problems than the solutions. The artificial invention of the problems by using certain methodological approaches, without doing much of *Purvapakshaya* on culture, religion, tradition, and structure of society did not go well. Neither deductive nor the inductive methods can truly understand the society as diverse as Nepal. In contrast, such methodologies only project diversity as part of the problem. Many of those scholars who are using such methodologie have no clue what does this society stands for. Yet, they are successful to radicalise the society by using the past with the present or vice versa. If the period starting from 1950 till 1990s was focused on studying Nepali society, the one starting from 1990 onwards took activism as main strategy based on the studies carried out earlier.

Introduction of 'identity-friendly-investment'[6] is the outcome drawn from those seminars/conferences[7]. The reductionist approach adopted in the course of such studies have approved that 'identity and inclusion' could well be used interchangeably for the same purpose. This deadly blending of both has led to the disintegration of society into many parts. This has dissected society and led to the emergence of politics between nation and the

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[5]Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) established by the donors in 2007 has contributed immensely to this end.

[6] See at http://www.ekantipur.com/np/2071/2/24full-story/390425-html (accessed on 4th March, 2017).

[7]The major funding criteria of SIRF was based on identity and subnational issues.

state (Ryser, 2012). Two factors have led to the growth of such politics in Nepal: first, most of the scholarshipson Nepal have concluded that majorities have exploited minorities. This has now has been well documented and will have multiple and far-reaching impacts. However, political parties working along artificially manufactured identities based-on race theories were rejected by the people[8]. In contrast, unlike some academicians, majority of Nepalis are convinced that such identities are mere social creation of new political ideals and run opposition to the very idea of democracy. Yet, for some, identities still remains most potent political tool to incite ethnic politics and promote empirical identities. Whatever the case might be, recently emerged idea of a nation (ethnicities) and the region appears to have weakened the concept of the state and created deep confusion in understanding the entire process of social inclusion. Those who have realised that they have been living under discrimination decided to revolt against the state. Of course, one cannot deny such discrimination, but the way societies were measured was not justifiable primarily because such measurement were brought without looking into local contexts and realities. In contrast, such measurement came up with forgone conclusion to take revenge against the society itself rather than changing it for the better.

## Past weighs on the present

It is important to reflect as to what extent past hangs on the present. This is important for the reason that past is increasingly becoming present in many ways. There are certain people who think that past was great for them. Yet, others are of the view that past has brought problems in the present. Yet, the study of history, for the obvious reason, is certainly important as it may construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct narratives and inform people who they are (Mamdani, 2020). Keeping these facts and fictions in mind, what might become important, though, is how past is narrated. There are scholars who have problematised and politicised the past for political, social, and cultural gains and is anchored in more than one way. The rise of political conservatism including identity politics and politics of nationalism are certainly part and parcel of this approach. What has happened, in the course of time, is the effective dissection of societal fabric along identity based-on ethnicity, language, and regionalism.

With regard to the identity politics in relation to inclusion, it would be worthwhile to underline the fact that in the past, diversity in Nepali society used to be expressed through celebrated differences and was not necessarily exclusive (as has been said). The celebration of diversity comes from the teachings of Hinduism/Buddhism. That said, situation, however, changed in recent years and diversity has been projected through manifested differences. Today, efforts are underway to disassociate people from such celebration. Yet, many saw diversities as part of problem to achieve equality. Nepal in fact has been living with diversity and has survived with it till today. The new social movements (Dahal, 2004) have played great role in mobilising people and increasing differences which, they call, misrecognition of certain groups/communities/region through forced assimilation. Such a state of affairs has led some communities/groups/caste to be stigmatised, while others are demanding for honour. In the long-run, identity politics if played around these lines would only harden the differences and risk freezing historically acquired humanistic identity (Parekh 2008, p. 36). Such politicisation of differences will not necessarily lead to national

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[8]The result of the Second CA election is a case in point.

cohesion as it has potential to be exclusive as well as to reify that which collective actors want to change (Bernstein 2005, Fraser 2000, & Parekh 2008). Yet, nobody really knows how to solve thorny questions of many historical, cultural, and traditions inherited from the past, at a time, when past is compared with the present. Whatever path we take, the first step is to acknowledge complexity of this dilemma and accept that simplistically describing past into good and bad leads nowhere.

## Manufacturing debate through words

Last half-a-century has witnessed arrival of new terminologies, like minority, majority, indigenous groups, ethnic community, *dalits, khasa, arya, pahadi, madheshi*, marginalised groups, old Nepal, new Nepal, human rights, empowerment, development, under development, women, men, third gender, LGBT, multiculturalism, multinational state, social security, social justice in the political and developmental discourse. Most of them were rarely heard before. They have become more pronounced after 1990, when Nepal witnessed multiple transitions. The political change of 1990s, like elsewhere, envisaged political equality at the top, but no true endeavours were undertaken to have equality at the grass-roots level. In contrast, society was divided along vertical and horizontal lines as indicated earlier. This has exposed more problems than expected, when constitution itself promises to have an egalitarian society. However, explaining society from those terminologies do not necessarily go well. These words, indeed, were used to show some societies/culture/groups/regionon the higher end, others on the lower ebb. They also indicate that nothing good has ever existed and civilizing, and developmental project should take place in line with the advises they offer. Majority of these words were coined either by academics or development workers to explain society of, what they normally call, the Third World. There certainly are problems and they exist everywhere. Yet, majority of them, in the context of Nepal, are results of explaining society from the prism of certain words. This perhaps might be the part of what scholars call diplomacy by words (Mirdal, 1970).

## Rise of intellectual Fakirs and making of Kurushetra

Nepal's extant problem of inclusion/exclusion have various explanations and dimensions such as spatial, social, and political as mentioned earlier (Gurung, ibid). The country has undertaken steps to address problems related to inclusion/exclusion. And of all, the Constitution of Nepal 2015 entails major provisions to address challenges brought about by the exclusion *per se* elements. Yet, there are groups/communities/regions, who viewed that present constitution is not inclusive. The crux of the problem is that while one group sees positively, the other corresponding groups see it negatively. Circumstances, as they exist, are such that Nepal has reached to such conditions, if the state fulfills demands of one group; others will go by the snowball effect and seek for the same. We can already observe such cases taking place in society on various issues. For example, there are groups/regions who think that federalism will ultimately disintegrate Nepali state. Yet, for others, federalism would only contribute towards inclusive society by giving due recognition to the identity of people and shall resolve spatial problems. Likewise, there are a sizeable number of people who still think that republicanism and secularism are bad for Nepali society. Yet, others think in a different way.

The proportional electoral provisions introduced had objective to bring those into politics who otherwise, could not have made it. However, it has been misused and interpreted to the extent that influential political leaders brought their own people (mostly relatives) into politics. With regard to the affirmative action, it has certainly widened representation of various groups. Yet, not all is well with this. It puts all in one basket irrespective of their merit and need. In contrast, in the course of their implementation, elites hijacked all the benefits, and poor and powerless were left behind, as usual[9]. Who should be held responsible for this state of affairs? Perhaps, non-other than the identity factor which has become a major criterion for it. Yet, only those can express their identities who are aware of it. Moreover, identity politics has also created a lobby system by putting certain groups in one 'cluster'. Given this scenario, one can certainly argue that inclusion done on the basis of caste, creed, religion, ethnicity, and region can only consolidate primordial identities[10].It may sound farfetched, but such identities shall be used to wage what some scholar call hybrid war in society. The entire discourse needs to be changed from multiple sides. Major responsibility, in this regard, would certainly fall on intellectuals/academicians. Yet, only intellectual *Chhetris* not the intellectual *fakirs* can fight in this *Kurushetrha* of academic warfare of generates narratives not for the wisdom but to acquire certain interest. The rise of broiler intellectuals - who cannot stand on their own feet –are more problematic than the political leaders. They would do anything for their own personal benefits.

## Theoretical Brahmins and empirical Shudras

The very idea of theoretical Brahmins and empirical Shudras has been floated by the Indian sociologists Gopal Guru (2002) wherein he points out that Indian scholarship is deominated by the upper caste people and he calls them theoretical Brahmins and others are empirical Shudras. But here I paraphrase his argument and puts it in a different perspectives. In the study of society, people have always been outsiders who provide the framework. In the course of such study those who give such framework are theoretical Brahmins and natives – who are going to be studied becomes mere data and can be termed as empirical Shudras. This process of explaining the society undermines the fundamental features and of that society. In fact every society is unique on its own way. There are no such templates, which necessarily can be replicated in other societies. Yet, understanding societies as diverse as Nepal is not easier. Any attempt to emulate theoretical models without understanding complexities would turn us into data and will not necessarily provide right answer and would always put that society into conflict with each other. Many academicians, including donors, have their own imagination and perception of Nepali society. They prefer to develop their own mechanism of inclusions. Their prescriptions, they think, is pure, authentic and

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[9]Dalits, backward communities from the Madhes, rural women, among others, were left behind. Who had access in the process or benefits, yet again, is that Dalits who have been in power, backward communities who were in power, urban educated women. The do not want to bring about change in the society, in contrast, they are more interested in developing projects of the odyssey of these groups. If the real changes take place, they will lose the space. This is what many donors have also been doing for the years. This has to be change for the good.

[10] The identity of 'dalit' has been so strongly inserted in the constitution that no future generation will appreciate the past. Don't know how long will they be known as dalit – this is the *Yakshaya Prashna.*

guarantees inclusiveness which were also endorsed by their *swadeshiblind pujaris*. Scholars call such feelings, at best naïve; at worst, they serve as disingenuous windows dressing for crude nationalism and bigotry (Harari, 2011, p. 228). Their attention is more on promoting sub-national identities and pushing for 'transformation' through social engineering. The social transformation methods ultimately destroy the idea of self. Likewise, some want to rewrite the history because existing history disparages certain groups, and their identities have to be supplanted by the fresh one. The frequent evocation of the words like 'new Nepal', among others, is the outcome of this thinking. Instruction provided, thus, for building Nepal – politically, economically, socially, and culturally by aliens have only polarised society and divided the whole into parts. Such a state of affairs has left harmonious society concept far behind. The lesson one may draw, thus, is that there is an urgent need to reflect internally. Too much of relying on external initiatives for rebuilding inclusive Nepal may not be endurable. By contrast, the process of inclusion must be contextualised locally to create ambience for worthwhile debate. Also, 'we like what we have' feeling is sweeping across various societies in the world, including here, is dangerous for having an inclusive society. Nepal is rich socio-culturally yet, appreciating differences requires deeper knowledge of its national identity in the era of hyper-globalisations. Artificially constructed narrative denies everything for which this civilisation stands for and what makes us what we are. The need, thus, is to have organic knowledge that embraces pluralism of all sorts. In this regard, pulling the weeds out and planting the flowers to keep the garden afresh should go hand in hand. This can only happen when we deconstruct some of the knowledge which is provided by the Western supply chains and their retailers.

## Inclusion in the making

The issue of social inclusion/exclusion has gotten considerable currency everywhere and Nepal could not remain exception from it. To respond them, Government of Nepal has come up with various schemes[11]. While it has adopted poverty reduction strategy, right from the Tenth Five Year Plan, along-with other initiatives, to reduce economic inequality, for the political part, it has introduced inclusion as an important component for the representation of various groups/regions. Nepal may not have used the word 'inclusion' or its Nepali equivalent '*samabesi*' in the past, but it certainly has been taking progressive steps, in more than one area. Yet, what is true is that Nepal certainly has fallen behind to catch-up with other countries of the world in economic development and scientific invention. There are more than one reasons (both internal and external) to this end.

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[11].Sixth plan (1980-85): Incorporation of women's development 2. July 1994: UML govt. identification of 16 deprived groups 3. July 1995: Congress govt. identification of 12 deprived groups 4. Ninth Plan (1997-2002): Sections on Indigenous Groups and Downtrodden Community without identification 5. 1997: National Committee for Development of Nationalities (NCDN) 6. 1997: Committee for Upliftment of Downtrodden, Oppressed and Dalit Classes (CUDODC) 7. 2002: Upgrading of NCDN to National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) 8. 2002: National Women Commission (NWC) 9. 2002: National Dalit Commission (NDC) 10. August 2003: Road map policies on economic and social transformation 11. January 2004: Committee on Reservation Recommendation. 12. October 2004: Policy announcement on job reservation (see at www. http://www.socialinclusion.org.np/new/files/ Social% 20Inclusion% 20and%20Nation%20Building%20in%20Nepal%20-%20Dr%20Hakra%20Gurung_ 1336541331 c25e.pdf).

**Dialectics of 'Inclusion and Exclusion' in Nepal**

Despite many flaws, the extant constitution has come up a step forward, and in principle, it promises to abolish discrimination and exclusionary policies and practices of various nature. Two important initiatives were undertaken in this regard (1) administrative and political restructuring of the state (2) and social restructuring of the society. For the first, devolution of political and economic power is important. Federalism in this regard can make important contribution and minimise spatial disparity. Similarly, reformed electoral provisions with proportional electoral system along with fixed quota can widen political representation. Introduction of special provisions to increase representation of dalits, women, indigenous groups, madhesis, among others, in polity, is part of this reformed electoral mechanism.

With regard to the social restructuring, government has abolished many discriminatory laws and by-laws including untouchability. Women are given parental property rights and many more. Special provisions have been made for women to have access to the property (parental) rights. Women's are tax exempted while purchasing the land. More laws are made favouring women's wellbeing. Today 35.64 percent women are in the civil service and that number has also increased for other groups as well. Nepal's bureaucracy, politics, and society is rapidly becoming more diverse than before. There are special rights for the third gender (transgender). Perhaps Nepal adopts more judicial policies towards them who even can claim citizenship in the name of third gender. In fact, when it comes to the point of gender equality, Nepal certainly is in the forefront in Asia. Yet, there are problems in realising the fruits of equality despite equity being in place. Part of such problem emanate from the lack of economic opportunities, which certainly cannot translate them into action.

The Government of Nepal, as part of its commitment, has also introduced social security scheme for all. To that end, provisions for old age persons as well as pension for widows are just two examples. Nepal has become a secular state and people are encouraged to perform their religious rituals as per their *dhamra*. The government has duly recognised all religions, cultures, and festivals of those groups who have been classified as marginaslied and minorities. Likewise, government provides holidays for their festivals. Not necessarily tolerance, which in fact is not the right word to explain the religiosity of *Sanathan dharma*, more appropriate word, would, then, be accommodation and mutual respect for all. Nepal is the seat of *Sanatana Dharma* (which many of us call *Hindu Dharma* today – which is its rooted identity, that is, from where it has come from) as Vatican for the Christians and Mecca for the Muslims. This happens because the very plurality of the God unlike in the Hebrite Civilisation – where God is *Nirakar* but not necessarily *Saguna*. In *Sanatan dharma* 'God' is *Nirakara* and *Sakar* but also *Saguna*.

Many cite *Manu Smiriti* and the caste system as a source of exclusion. It is, however, a mere half-truth. First, *Manu Smiriti* was misinterpreted by the Western scholars of the *Sanskrit* what they did with caste system as well. With invasion from the Western powers and the Muslims, the whole social structure was dismantled, which V S Naipaul calls the wounded civilisation. When British came to South Asia, rather than abolishing the caste system, they reinforced it to control the society. The downward spiraling of society began when Lord Risely, took the census in India in 1865, 1872, and 1881 – which divided society along identities. Since then, identities were super imposed in the minds of people. Forceful treatment of the problem would only come into retaliation. That said we certainly will have to reflect on history, which can help to us to understand the situation more accurately. The way things are moving, one certainly can argue that we are reinforcing discrimination more strongly than was it some 30 years ago.

## Conclusion

The popular inclusiveness theories and mechanism floated by local and foreign experts needs broader social approval before putting them into action. Similarly, any endeavour that is being introduced, for the purpose of political and social correctness may look good to others but will not resolve our problems. This is so because political correctness is externally imposed whereas being inclusiveness is internally driven and is based-on local values and realities. Many such ideas floated in the past became not only infective but also counterproductive. When society is identified from outside – as who they are and how should they behave – this is where the problem begins. In the context of Nepal, *samata, prem, apanatwa, bhaichara* (equanimity, love, togetherness and brother and sisterhood) are deeply rooted in the local values. The identification of people around ethnic, religious, caste, creed, sexual orientation, and regional basis would only promote political and social tribalism. Yet, surprisingly, all these appeals to the donor, development practitioner, and some fly by night expert academicians. To conclude, the existing mechanisms tacitly use minorities against the majorities and separates parts from the whole rather than embracing parts into it – which is inclusive. A society, which has stayed together without any major qualms, is on the verge of being pulverised. There are two problems: real and imaginary. Of the two, the imaginary are the most real. Their solution comes from the broader understanding of deep-rooted societal values and positivist approach (continuous education) and acceptance of others (whether are they in majority or minority). The negative rationalisation of everything and blaming some 'culture' for bringing chaos and poverty or under development for that matter is the product of this second feeling.

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