

## **Discourse on Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Nepal: A Review**

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### **Abstract**

The discourse of social exclusion and inclusion is debatable issue in contemporary Nepali society. The issue of social exclusion should be addressed by adopting the process of social inclusion in several sectors of Nepali society which helps to establish society with equality. The article Social Exclusion and Inclusion tries to address the issue raised in the discourse of social inclusion. Similarly, it tries to explore the issue of social exclusion and inclusion from new line. Article is based on the review of the several articles published addressing the issue of social exclusion and inclusion. In introduction, I have mentioned the context and origin of social exclusion and inclusion debate. Different views of various renowned scholars on Social Exclusion and Inclusion have been mentioned. In Nepalese context, political movement and academic effort of social exclusion and inclusion have been discussed. The achievement that excluded group got in the Constitution and other Acts from the political and other inclusion movement have been disclosed here. In Nepal, there are three types of notions/domains: Inclusive based on Caste Ethnicity, Economy Prosperity and Meritocracy. I critically support the Inclusive based on Caste Ethnicity Movement.

*Keywords:* social inclusion, social exclusion, meritocracy, caste, ethnicity

### **Introduction**

Societies of the world are not only homogenous. Heterogeneity is the primary feature of the society. It, in society, is found in terms of different bases such as biological, social and cultural etc. It is social in its characteristics. In heterogeneous society, dominant class or group always exercise power; and consume the available resources as per their will. Similarly, sometime any group or individual may deprive from the resources accidently (Drucza, 2016). As a result, the process of social exclusion begins in society. Because of such exclusion, social conflict may arise gradually in society. Behind such conflicting phenomena there are different social, economic and political factors which are responsible to such phenomenon. So, social context plays an important supportive role to start the debate of social exclusion and inclusion.

The concept of social exclusion and inclusion has become the burning issue of debate in the political discourse in society.

Any particular individual or group who are expelled or not admitted for full participation in any activities of the society is regarded as exclusion. In other word, exclusion is the process individual or community who remain outside from the mainstream. Full participation can be defined as the basic requirement for a person to lead a respectful, dutiful and happy life like interpersonal relationship (relation between person to person, person to institutions, person to structure). Exclusion is of multi dimensional in its nature. Any individual or group can be excluded at once from more than one dimension. It is necessary to see through context specific about the much or less important dimension among multi dimensions. If we have to view any level of relations, there is not only one group. If there would be only one group then there would not be debate on exclusion. Exclusion is caused due to the ups and down, inequality and differences in relation of an individual with another individual, family, institution, state, market etc. Because of all these, we have to see the nature of relation which causes exclusion.

### **Research Problem**

The issue of social inclusion and exclusion has become a hotly debated topic in contemporary Nepalese society. This issue is attracting the attention of from common people to social activists and politicians as well. It has also been the subject of much debate in the academic field. Many articles have been published in this regard. There has been a lot of debate and discussion. But it is important to be very clear about this. There is still a lack of common concepts regarding social inclusion and exclusion. There are many problems in understanding about it. This article seeks to clarify the meaning of social inclusion and exclusion.

### **Research Objectives**

General objective of this article is to discuss on status of social exclusion and inclusion in Nepali society. The specific objectives of the article are as follows:

- To discuss on theoretical aspects of social exclusion and inclusion.
- To analyze the position of social exclusion and inclusion in references of Nepali society.

### **Literature Review**

Social exclusion and inclusion are context- dependent concepts in at least three senses. First, the ideal of an inclusive society varies by country and by region. Second, different places have different history, cultures, institutions and social structures. These influence the economic, social and political dimension of social exclusion and the interplay among them. Third, content-

where one lives-shapes create access to resources and opportunities. Social inclusion is thus spatially uneven (Silver, 2015).

The concept of social exclusion argues that it has relevance for richer as well as poorer countries. The concept does not describe a new reality; neither is it the only appropriate or even a radically innovation concept of describe deprivation: deprivation is a multi- dimensional phenomenon, and deprivation is part and parcel of social relations. The concept of social exclusion can help to ground the understanding of deprivation firmly in tradition of social science analyses. The concept has rapidly entered debates on deprivation and policies that combat deprivation (De Haan, 2000).

The term exclusion was referred to –

- Problematic groups (e.g., beggars, rural landless or asset-poor, the long –term, unemployed, retrenched women, workers, ethnic minorities)
- Problematic conditions (poverty, unemployment, ghettoisation, family breakdown, isolation)
- Problematic processes (political, social, economic) (Kabeer, 2000, p. 83).

It is useful to investigate the literature on “social exclusion” using this broadly Aristotelian approach. The connections are immediate. First, we have good reason to value not being excluded from social relations, and in this sense, social exclusion may be directly a part of capability poverty. Second, being excluded from social relation can lead to other deprivation as well, thereby further limiting our living opportunities. These connections are important to seize, especially since the idea of social exclusion has had, as we mentioned earlier, a relatively late entry into the literature of poverty and deprivation (Sen, 2000).

Social exclusion is embedded in different discourses which manifest these problems to varying extent. Three discourses are: a redistribution discourse (RED) developed in British critical social policy, whose prime concern is with poverty; a moral underclass discourse (MUD) which centers on the moral and behavioral delinquency of the excluded themselves; and a social integrationist discourse (SID) whose central focus is on paid work (Levitas, 2005).

Social exclusion in academic and political in Nepal, Bhattachan (2009), referring Ghale D. Rawal (2008) claim that, the Current discourse on social exclusion and in inclusion in the international aid agencies working in Nepal Development Form (NDF) meeting held in London in the United Kingdom in 2001 and later injected in the plans, policies and programs of Nepal Government by the department for International Development (DFID) and World Bank in 2002. Nepal Development Form (NDF) had discussed on social exclusion and inclusion and that the Tenth plan or Poverty Reduction strategy paper (PRSP) of Nepal Government incorporated targeted programs; dubbed as social inclusion as one of its four pillars (Bhattachan, 2009).

Social exclusion and inclusion originated and continued for centuries in Nepal. In Nepal, there are mainly two paradigms of exclusion and inclusion (Bhattachan, 2009).

1. Social exclusion and inclusion among indigenous people. All indigenous people use the concept of 'us'/ we feeling and for others 'them'.
2. Social exclusion and inclusion among the caste Hindu which is based on Hindu religion, society and culture.

### **Research Methods and Materials**

Any piece of writing is based on the certain method. This is based on the interpretive philosophy of writing. In course of preparing this piece of work I have used so many databases to acquire the research articles and research navigators to collect materials. Mainly I have collected the article related to the issue of social exclusion and inclusion. I used the database and research navigator such as jstor, Google scholar, research gate, etc and printed version of articles. I entered the term social inclusion and exclusion in Nepal into search engine to find the research articles. I found many articles but I selected few and use only some relevant articles to prepare this work. Then I read all the materials and review and finally I have written this article. Similarly I have used some other printed version of research books. Most of the articles out of selected were about the discourse on the issue of social inclusion and exclusion. This work is based on the content analysis of the related research articles.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Social inclusion**

Social inclusion is the process of mainstreaming who are excluded in the society. It should explain in relation to the process of social exclusion. The process of social inclusion cannot be separated from the process of social exclusion (Rawal, 2008). There are several bases to address the issue of social exclusion in society.

#### **Exclusion is a process**

Individual or groups who have been excluded today through different processes and mechanisms can in included in future and vice-versa. So, in this case it is necessary to identify and analyze the process behind such exclusion (De Haan , 2000). From the above discussion which De Haan has mentioned in his article, it can be concluded that exclusion is a multi dimensional nature, relational, process wise and context specific. It is not incidence of overnight in society. It may be developed as a process in society. It is found in society in different forms. Unequal power sharing, unequal distribution of power, and other sociocultural inequalities are creating the social exclusion in society.

### **Historical Overview on Social Exclusion and Inclusion**

In 1970s, the debate of social exclusion originated especially in France and then gradually spread to Europe (Rawal, 2008). At that time market was not being properly working and social security too could not incorporate numerous sections like disabled, single mother, suicidal, poor, handicapped, abused children etc. in the mainstream society (Sen, 2000, Pp.1). So, the debate of this exclusion was originally based on the context of how to integrate them, how to maintain solidarity and how to bring those excluded one into mainstream. Another reason behind the debate of exclusion is poverty paradigm or poverty perspective. At that situation in one hand, rate of unemployment was increasing and on the other hand, various sections of society were detached from the mainstream which caused deprivation. Likewise, perspective of poverty had failed to address the issues and problems of deprived people. And then there has been realization of the necessity of debate on poverty. In 1974, the term “Exclusion” was introduced for the first time in France (Silver, 2015). Similarly, the term exclusion was widespread from Europe to America and this debate was adopted by multi-national company. The organizations like DFID, UNDP etc instituted it worldwide.

### **Existing Debate of Social Exclusion in Nepal**

In present context, there are three types of Notion/Domains existing on Exclusion debate which are as follows:

#### ***Inclusive Based on Caste Ethnicity***

Since the beginning of the debate based on exclusion, the voice was raised on behalf of excluded Dalit, Adibashi/Janajati, marginalized, women etc to bring them in inclusion process. The supporters for this notion defend that these people are excluded because of religious, socio-cultural or political circumstances but not by themselves. To bring Dalit, Adibashi/Janajati, marginalized and women in mainstream of state, involve them in respectful participation and to uplift them, reservation quota should be assured because they cannot compete with the so-called upper caste people. Due to the extensive thought raising from such excluded people and assuring their reservation quota by different political movement in Nepal’s Constitution 2015, reservation quota was included as inclusive policy to Dalit, Adibashi/Janajati, marginalized, madhesi, muslims, women etc. The supporters argue that inclusive process should be widely and effectively implemented, so that, excluded group will be benefitted or include in different sectors.

**Economy Prosperity.** Reservation quota addressed by the Nepal’s Constitution of 2015 cannot only bring the Dalit, Adibashi/Janajati, marginalized, women in inclusive. If these people who are economically deprived, then they should be uplifted economically. So, reservation quota should not be based on such marginalized, Dalit, etc. group rather it should be given by uplifting lower class which is possible only through poverty alleviation is the main

concept of this notion criticized by some critics. And regarding economic prosperity, such domains have been raised. All Dalit, marginalized, women etc. are not backward and out of mainstream and all the upper-class people are not getting opportunities and are forward. So, by observing the economic condition of such group, inclusion process should be adopted is the main notion of supporters.

**Meritocracy.** All the citizens are treated equally in democracy by giving them equal rights by the constitution. So, on the basis of class and group, reservation quota should not be ensure. Because of this, capable competent candidate cannot get opportunities and be backward. So, based on competence and merit basis, every individual should fight for their rights in every sector which is its domain.

Among the three domains mentioned above, I opine inclusive based on caste and ethnic group. Nepalese social structure is stuck with the Hindu religion from the historical period in which different caste, Adibashi/Janajati, women and indigenous groups are excluded. To bring them in mainstream of the state, make them capable to participate in different sectors, reservation quota should be ensuring in exclusive policy. This reservation quota should be given for certain period but not forever, until they are capable to compete with other superior group. It is important to systematize exclusion process by which capable individual or group can be inclusive nor like recent example of Deuba and Chaudhary. In recent election of Nepali Congress, Arzoo Deuba, wife of prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected from women quota and in the same way Binod Chaudhary was elected from madhesi quota as a central member who according to my opinion is not fair and I opine to be involve those in quota who are actually excluded.

### ***Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Politics***

The people's movement of 1990 regained democracy with constitutional monarchy and opened up public discourses on all issues of public concern. During the making of the constitution of 1990, public discourse was on securing rights of women, Dalit, indigenous people, mother tongue speaker and religious minorities. The public debate was more concentrated on participation and representation of these excluded groups mainly through reservation of seats or affirmative action mainly in civil service, political appointments, police, army and employment. The promulgated constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, did not address such demands though some of these demands were dumped in the safe policy and directives with no legally binding obligation. The main political parties including the Nepali Congress and The Nepali Communist party (UML) completely ignored representation of different caste/ethnic and sex groups and they fail to give any space for public discourse on social exclusion and inclusion within their respective political parties. Discussion on inclusion began with the initiation of people's war by the Nepal Communist Party Maoist in 1996. King

Gyanendra took executive power in his hand by dissolving the parliament on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. It resulted in the people's movement of 2006 followed by the Madhesi Movement, the main political parties, planners, policy makers, the general public and internal add agency, have solely focused on agenda of social inclusion. Indigenous people's movement has solely focused on securing ethnic autonomy with right to self determination in Federal Democratic Republic through the constituent assembly (Bhattachan, 2009).

Constitution of Nepal (2015) mention in "Preamble"- Embracing multi caste, multi lingual, multi-cultural and diverse geographical specificities by ending discrimination relation to class, caste, region, language, religion and gender discrimination including all forms of racial untouchability, in order to protect and promote unity in diversity, social and cultural solidarity, tolerance and harmonious attitudes, we also express our determination to create and egalitarian society on the basis of the principles of proportional inclusion and participation to ensure, equitable economy, prosperity and social justice (GoN, 2015).

Fundamental rights, Part 3 mention certain rights to different groups like Right of Women, Children, Dalit, Senior citizens and Right to social justice and social security. In Part 4, Section 51 in "State Policies" from serial no. 1 to 14 mentions about policies of social inclusion. In Part 27, in "Other Commission" mention different commissions like women, Dalit, Adhibashi/Janajati, Madhesi, Tharu, Muslim and National Inclusion Commission (GoN, 2015).

In Nepal, this is the first constitution in which preamble also mention about inclusion and also give rights to different groups, social justice and formed different commissions which is related with inclusion. This constitution is the result of political pressure and political movement, long struggle of Dalit and marginalized group regarding exclusion and inclusion. The Government of Nepal introduced a reservation policy in 2007 by amending 1993 Civil Service Act. The Act has located 45% of the total seats to be filled through open competition for eligible candidates from disadvantage group. Of the total reserved seats, 33% are allocated for women, 27% for Adibashi/Janajati, 22% for Madhesi, 9% for Dalit, 5% for people with disabilities and 4% for backward region. GoN (2007). So, we can say this is the process in which excluded people are included in initiation of different political activities.

### **Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Academics**

In my opinion, the process of teaching and learning, research, publishing articles and books is the academic which enhance the academic knowledge. With the help of the academician's activities, the researcher's as well as the readers' knowledge will be promoted. Bhattachan (2009) has mentioned in detail about social exclusion and inclusion academic. Some of the major points are as below:

- Krishna B. Bhattachan has been raising the issues of exclusion indigenous people, women, Dalit, madhesi and linguistic and religious minorities since early nineties.
- The most cited work on Nepal's ethnic issues is a book "Nepal ko Jatiya Prashna" written by Govinda Neupane.
- Neelam Shekhar Adhikari had documented in his book, "Nepal ma Jatiya Andolan" that the indigenous people of Nepal have been struggling against social exclusion by moving from reservation to self – rule or autonomy to the federal state.
- In the book "Unequal citizen. Gender caste and Ethnic exclusion in Nepal" prepared and published by the World Bank and DFID identified some dimension of exclusion in Nepal.
- Dr. Harka Gurung had identified problem of exclusion of Dalit, indigenous people and madhesi.
- One of the recent publications with exclusive focus on inclusion is a book, "The Inclusive State. Reflections on Reinventing Nepal" edited by Ananda Aditya. It contains 53 articles.

Gurung & Pradhan states that in Nepal many groups are in the vulnerable conditions and they are suffering from the risk factors. Particularly Madhesi, Women, Muslim minorities, Hill and Tarai Dalits and ethnic groups of both Tarai and Hilly region are excluded from the main stream of the country and are in the vulnerable condition. They are taken as the disadvantage group in Nepali society. The country has adopted the policy of inclusion to those groups in education, politics, civil service sectors etc. However, there are number of barriers such as regional barriers, caste based barriers to the inclusion of Dalit, language based barriers to non Nepali speakers, religion based barriers the individuals of Muslim community and gender based obstacle to the mainstreaming of the women in contemporary Nepali society (2020).

However, it is also debatable issue in discourse of social inclusion in Nepali society. Some social thinkers, political leaders, and activist are of view that the bases of social inclusion should be changed in the context of Nepal. They opine that present bases of social inclusion are providing the benefits to the individuals who have power in respective groups. They argues that the bases of social inclusion should be the intersectionality and class based social inclusion is preferable to address the issue of social exclusion in Nepal.

### **Conclusion**

In this article of Social Exclusion and Inclusion, I tried to refer in which context the exclusion was originated in France and how it extended to worldwide debate. In literature review, there are some important citations of worldwide renowned authors and their views about exclusion and inclusion. In the context of Nepal, how the exclusion was introduced and



how it influenced is still a debatable subject. Three notions about the exclusion and inclusion debate in Nepal has been discussed. The different political movement related to exclusion and inclusion has pressurized to the Nepalese Government and as a consequence, the issues of different excluded groups have been addressed in Nepal's Constitution of 2015 and Civil Service Act 2049. I have mentioned different scholars' articles and books which are very effective for academic discourse.

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