

Dynamics and Extent of Exclusion of Ethnic Population in Urban Setting: An Ethnographic Study of Darai People

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Abstract

Exclusion as a widespread phenomenon has prevailed in urban settings. The ethnic population in particular is victims of exclusion caused by urbanization. Though the process of urbanization and its associated processes result in opportunities for income and better services, ethnic populations feel detached from them in the absence of efficiency of modern state institutions and officials. Also, the change in traditional occupation and production results in ethnic populations in their exclusion and marginalization from the social position and space. Darai people of the studied area have been suffered from exclusion however the income chances are increased.

Keywords: community, Darai, development, exclusion, ethnic population, indigenous people, marginalization, urbanization.

Background

The concept social exclusion first appeared in the early 1970s in France to discuss the people without access to social privilege; such people include the physically disabled, delinquents, abused children, the aged, single parents, asocial person, and so on (Room, 1995, Jordan 1996, and Percy – Smith, 2000) which later become a core concept in European Union and a foundational policy concept in Tony Blair's New Labor Government in the UK. Many scholars suggest that the concept of social exclusion, as a policy term, made its English-language debut in the European Union Poverty Programmes in the 1980s. (Peace, quoted in Social policy journal, Vol 16th, 2001). The concept of social exclusion offers an integrated framework for analyzing social disadvantages (Jackson, 1999). Social exclusion marginalizes people producing vulnerable groups experienced disadvantages in complex material, cultural, and socio-political ways (Jackson, 1999). The exclusion was begun to be treated as a condition where an individual or group could be included and during the 1970s, the excluded referred to the group that economic growth forgets (Silver, 1994). The conditions of social exclusion arise with failure in the operation of the social system and relations between the system and its subsystems (Lama, 2014). Urbanization and its expansion today have taken place as the modern macro socio-economic processes leading to the advanced facilities and changes in the socio-economic conditions of people (Maharjan, 1994). Planned development and encompassing processes such as urbanization is supposed to result in opportunities and life chances for the betterment of local communities but have caused the eviction or displacement of the population resulting in impoverishment risks (Cernea, 2005). The condition of exclusion makes people and communities be detached from the right, property, hold, and concern.

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Ethnic Population and Exclusion

Ethnic people are those who have been residing in a particular region for long decades having unique culture, economy, language, and dependence on nature and natural resources and claim themselves different from other groups of people. The poor economic situation and the low level of consciousness have become the causes of a low level of representation and exclusion of ethnic people. Poor economic status and lower levels of education are considered the result of the exclusion of ethnic communities (Magar, 2009). The marginal situation is defined in terms of the given facilities and the ownership of land and in the context of which landlessness is pivotal to exclude and marginalize the particular community forcing them to live with very poor socio-economic, educational and political status. The institutionalization of their skill and knowledge improves their economic status (Sah, 2009) that the governance of any state is responsible to include the particular community and incorporate their knowledge in development. The study conducted in the Gandharva community has shown that the dominance of the Hindu religion and Hindu caste group has obstructed the social inclusion of Gandharva (Gandharva, 2009). Though the study was centralized in a specific place, domination causes exclusion. Limited access to indigenous people to productive resources has caused the subordination of particular ethnic and caste groups. Isolation from the adequate information and knowledge has caused the poor situation of the minority group. The major hindrance to the development of such a group is the social policy sustaining the exclusion. The government of Nepal has made initiation inclusion since the Tenth Plan however it is not sufficient (Subba, 2009).

Exclusion in Nepal

In the context of Nepal, social inclusion, and related research should encompass the agenda of establishing harmonious social relations based on equitable human development, meaningful representation, respect for cultural diversity, and intergroup solidarity. Mukta Lama (2014) argues that social inclusion and related research should encompass the agenda of establishing harmonious social relations based on equitable human development, meaningful representation, respect for cultural diversity, and intergroup solidarity. Studies have indicated that social exclusion is (a) a condition, (b) a relation, and (c) a process. The state of exclusion, marginalization, and isolation also is expressed in the poor social situation of the respective community (Lama, 2014). Literature has shown that reservation contributes to the representation and social inclusion of a particular community. The development and implementation of the inclusion policy can enhance the status of the excluded group (Pariyar, 2009).

Landlessness is a bitter fact of Nepal and it has caused low production and low wages (Chaudhary, 2009). Landlessness is the corollary of the development. This idea matches the cases of minority ethnic populations of Nepal. The study has shown the relationship between the level of human development and the level of satisfaction regarding the role of leaders representing indigenous communities. The confidence and self-esteem prevent the ethnic population from the exclusion. The satisfaction and higher level of human development are also found in that a situation where the indigenous people have taken initiation in the development process (Magar, 2009). This fact makes us understand the role of the local initiation in the proper, equitable, and social-friendly development in inclusion as well.

The Darai community is one of Nepal's indigenous ethnic groups. The population and settlement of this community are scattered somewhere in Tanahun, Chitwan, Nawalparasi, Gorkha, Dhading, Palpa, Ramechhap, Bardiya, Sindhuli, Nuwakot, Udayapur, and Jhapa districts. The total population of Darai is 16789 and out of this, Tanahun District shares only 3591 that accounted for only 21.38% (CBS 2011). Darai people have their historical privileges in Nepalese society. But they are now excluded and marginalized resulting in gradual cultural disappearance as an adverse effect of urbanization because of which youths of the Darai community don't use their traditional medicinal system (Darai, 2009).

Methods

The Vyas Nagar Municipality which is located in the western part of Nepal has been selected as the site of research. This municipality is surrounded by rivers and streams on three sides and by forest area on one side. In the core bazaar area and vicinity of this municipality, ethnic people such as Darai, Bote, Magar, Gurung, and Dura do live there now. This location has been considered the hallmark for the anthropological study in the sense that the exclusion and marginalization of Darai ethnic people have been experienced over here. The accessibility of the data; the context of the relevancy of discipline; and the researcher's interest have proved the rationale of the selection of a site. The general objective of this study is to provide an account of the impact of urban development on the ethnic population of the study area. The specific objective of this study is to determine the dynamics and extent to which the urban development has excluded local ethnic (Darai people) population of the studied area.

As the central unit of this research analysis, fifty-four (54) House Holds (HH) of the Darai community of Ward no 1, 2, and 4 of Vyas Municipality has been selected applying the consent of the researcher to fulfill the specified objective in this study. Therefore the sampling procedure was purposive. The head of the house has been considered the sources of information through which the historical account on the process of urban development, planning, redistribution of planned land, and exclusion of the Darai community have been revealed. In anthropological research, rapport building is considered an art and so also is the belief of the researcher. Explaining the purpose of the study researcher found the situation very supportive quickly. Also, the clear identification of the purpose and academic skill made the researcher success to build up a rapport and able to get the presence socially accepted.

This research has been based on an ethnographic model. Ethnographic notes have helped to collect the necessary information that proves the historical trajectories of the socio-economic life of Darai populations. Applying this method, the present socio-economical, cultural, and political situation have been evaluated and interpreted in the historical and contemporary context ensuring the validity and reliability of the data. The description of the process of urban development, exclusion, and marginalization of Darai ethnic nationalities have been presented supporting by the primary information drawn from the field area. The exploratory research design has helped to generate qualitative information and to meet the specified objective of this study. Primary data have been collected by using fieldwork. The social survey, interview schedule, group interview, and key informants interview techniques have been applied in the field. All the techniques are valid in anthropological study. Morally and

ethically guided anthropological research has been concerned with the professionalism and moral obligation of the researcher. The researcher has maintained trust and academic honesty throughout the research work.

Qualitative data on the social structure, position, participation, and authority collected by using the anthropological tool have to be classified based on thematic specialties of information. All the notes and field descriptions have been collected and put according to the class, characteristics, and levels. These data and information have been presented in table, diagram, and bar graphs, and in any other relevant and appropriate frame. Findings have been made analyzing the relationship between various variables and facts drawn upon the study. After presenting and analyzing data, the findings and generalizing have been made looking at the relationship between and among the variables which has made the broader meaning of research questions and implications of the study.

There has been a linkage between the findings and premises of theoretical approaches that are used in this study. So the limitation is that the findings are considered only in this perspective. This study has become more limited by time, resources, and other constraints. Findings can only be relevant to the sampled populations.

Results and Discussions

Opportunities, access, and exclusion

Opportunities have been considered the keys to the progress and development of human collectives to which urban development has been perceived as the dominant method of creating such opportunities in modern days. A study from VyasNagar municipality, though it is urbanized, has shown that the exclusion has resulted from unequal access to opportunities. Another fact is the social exclusion is a phenomenon distinct from poverty and also distinct from economic inequality. Though there is an association between the dispersion of incomes and social exclusion, it is not a straightforward one since the relationship is mediated by the experience of common fate, through the sharing of common institutions. Respondents in the study area were found to agree with the creation of economic opportunity after the urban development but also were found dissatisfied with the distributive pattern of the opportunities. They have realized that the significance of personal income remains in the capacity to share in common institutions. Yam Bahadur Darai states- *'the community member have felt a gap between the market and community. They have also felt humiliated and become backward irrespective of the opportunities of income. The increased wants to be lured by the availability in the market have made the Darai community extravagant, imitative, and passive in their original social and economic life'*. To Yam Bahadur, a master's degree holder in Sociology, the opportunities created in the urban areas have become a matter of social prestige. The schools and colleges opened in the urban areas have forced them to abandon and quit their mother tongue. He believes through the English language is an international language, it is undesirable to forget the Darai Language in the current political context. The move of the ethnic identity has, in his view, become the weak pushing them back from the mainstream of ethnic politics. Employment and job opportunity only is not complete to include Darai people in the processes of governance. The attraction and the will earned in the energy of

social capital matters for the dignified life. Respondents claimed that- *'there is a question on the belongingness and durability of ownership over the given opportunities since these opportunities are created by outsiders. From an anthropological perspective, the perception, internalization, valuing, and response of the community members are keys to decide the effect of particular circumstances'*. Following this principle, simply the creations of opportunities are not a sufficient condition of incorporation and involvement of the feelings and sentiment of the community members and hence they are excluded. It is true, as I have emphasized, that public policy can make a difference to the impact that any given degree of inequality has on the extent and severity of social exclusion. Though, in any society in which the great bulk of goods and services are allocated through the market, and in which even those provided publicly can also be bought privately, there must be a close connection between unequally given access and social exclusion.

Occupational shift, loss of skill, and exclusion

Occupation, skill, and knowledge are associated and mediated by the production system practiced in a community determining the nature of ownership over the resources, form of social relationship and values and perception internalized in the context of collectivity and member of the belonged community. The community member feels placed within the boundaries of the stream occupying the equal, dignified, and central position within and among the groups only in the continuity of customarily practiced occupation and skill. Skill refers to the system put on the resources and technology to produce the material objects and services carrying not only economic value but also social and cultural values. The change in occupation and loss of skill create the transformation of produced goods and services and mode of consumption pattern leading to the change in ownership that kills the zeal, belongingness, integration, and total social capital of the community. Loss of social capital leads the community member towards the exclusion and isolation from the rest. So was found in the studied area. Respondents of the study area are found not interested and motivated to work in their field. They have now barren land. Before the shift of district headquarter and commencement of urbanization, the land of the studied population was used for farming. They, in the past, produced rice, lentils, and the cotton insufficient amount being enriched with food sufficiency. Now they do not produce such goods because of two reasons. To them, one is in the lack of farming land and another is that they can get a high price of building plot if they could sell it. Nevertheless, respondents are not willing to do so. They won't work in the field as farmers. They replied that neither there is a demand for such goods nor it is possible to produce an insufficient amount. Since they have lacked traditional productions, they have now lacked the shared consumption system and shared ownership over the resources, goods, and services. It has detached the community members from each other. Each of the community members seems isolated however they live together. Cheej Bahadur Darai, a teacher who was interviewed as the key informant reported that- *'they have lost their original and typical survival mechanism even in the possibility of the high economic value of the land. Darai people have now been found unable to match the income and expenses'*. They, in the view of Cheej Bahadur, have now lost their shared and communal experiences and feelings. Neither they are capable to entertain the modern system occupying the position in the socio-political process. Hence, the situation of cultureless ness has also appeared.

Urbanization, everyday experience, and exclusion

Exclusion has now been understood as the situation of moving away from the identical occupation, ownership system, consumption pattern, and from the public spaces. Community members are to form the sphere through their everyday life accompanied by production, exchange, consumption, and storage of resources. The commonality and collectivity of a particular community have been found in the foundation of the above mentioned aspect of lives. The detachment of the studied population from the aforementioned aspect has been considered the consequences and extent of their exclusion from the customary landholding pattern. The landholding pattern has been found changed creating undesirable effects and producing unwanted demands among the present generation. The youths are found unwilling to cooperate in the collective matters of the Darai population. There is an organization called Darai Samaj (established for the welfare of the Darai community) and youths have been found away from its concern and activities. Respondents have been reported with the denial of youth generation and to them, it is due to the urbanization and planning of land for building plots. 85% of the respondents replied that the youths are not available to communicate the messages and information regarding meetings and other affairs within their community. It is so because they are now busy to mediate between the land sellers and buyers. They reported the researcher with the bitter experience that they could not find the people to convey the message of the meetings and discussions of Darai Samaj located in Vyas Municipality – 1, one of the selected study areas. They offered seven hundred rupees as the wage but none youth agree to do so. Respondents have made a distinction between *Sanskriti and Bkriti* and are found to have internalized isolated and dislocated from their spaces and spheres. They have seen opportunities but are placed far from the utilization. Indra Bahadur Darai who had been elected in the ward chairman of ward no-11, states: *'municipality and District Development Committee did not provide desirable opportunities in justice base way. Though the Darai is the old settlers and Adivasi of Damauli Bazaar, in the view of Indra Bahadur, it is unfortunate that Darai is not given even the information'*. He further shared the fact and experience that they earlier had the relatives but now Darai people individually do not know each other. Even in the presence of some physical amenities, Darai people now have realized the social capital lessness. Lessness has thus been the indicator of exclusion.

Modern facilities, use and practices, and exclusion

Social exclusion and calling for measures to give youngsters access to basic services and opportunities for a better future has now become a hot issue among the anthropologists. It has also been the prime problem of anthropological research. The document stresses that despite growing up close to modern facilities and basic services, many people in urban areas lack access to electricity, clean water, and education. They are also at high risk of contracting diseases due to unsanitary conditions and suffering from malnutrition. Realizing this fact, the researcher had explored the extent of social exclusion caused by the expansion of modern facilities in the studied area. The data acquired through the social survey revealed that there are no government services and institutions namely health post, police post, postal service, sells depot, public telephone booth, and irrigation as well seeds centers in ward no 1 of the studied municipality. It represents that the expansion of modern facilities is not equitably and justifiably distributed even in urban areas. Contrary to the generally internalized fact,

urban development in the studied area could not maintain justice among the people. Despite their access to such facilities in ward no 2 and 4; they have felt inequality, injustice, and discrimination. The respondents replied that they were not brought in the major process of development and decision-making process during the initial stage of urbanization. Indra Bahadur Darai states- *the information used to be given orally but it was far from the hearing of the Darai population. He claimed that the high-tension line of electricity was passed from just above his land. He believed and shared that ‘the immediate administration took the advantage of the simple nature of Darai people during making consensus and expanding physical infrastructure of facilities in studied areas. Respondents have now experienced overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in core urban areas’.* All most all the respondents have been found involved in agriculture as per their response and it has reflected that there is no change in the understanding of the occupation. It shows the gap between the physical reality i.e. constructed and social reality.

Community threats and loss of social capital

Protest against the experience of displacement and exclusion caused by urbanization, erection, and expansion of governmental bodies and unequal access to the social processes and decision making have been found responsible to result in the threats in studied Darai community. The impoverishment, injustice, and disempowerment have become the decisive factor in the loss of social capital and threats before the secured life of the Darai people. Expropriation of agricultural land and loss of access, hold of the migrants over the urban induced job opportunities, displacement from their settlement and loss of cultural space, social, psychological, economical and political stagnation and downward mobility, loss of cultural sites and practices, and disruption to social institutions are found to threaten the studied Darai community. Tom Bahadur Darai expressed the fear of social dislocation of the forthcoming generation along with the disappearance of the original and fundamental life world of the Darai community. It might be that studied Darai populations have become aware of their social, cultural, and political right. Otherwise, none respondent expresses their consent to the result of urbanization in terms of their welfare.

There is only 0.03% of the total sampled respondents were found involved in governmental service. This data proves the exclusion of the Darai population from access to job opportunities. Transfer of land through market transactions and governmental processes caused the loss of social capital of the Darai community. Narrowing the political space of the Darai community through land acquisition, urbanization forced towards the path of exclusion. Raise in the cost of services has created insecurity among the respondents. Nabin Darai states: *‘the governmental bodies which are responsible to empower the marginalized and excluded Darai people are not capable to continue the required programs. They, to him, sometimes launch these sorts of programs but no remarkable effect has been found in the studied area’.*

The political process, participation, and exclusion

There must be freedom for people to express diverse views and develop unconventional unique ideas. It has been the central essence and condition of political processes and participation that aims to social inclusion. Ensuring this condition in the mechanism of governmental institutions and bodies of the studied areas is identified as sufficient to prevent the Darai

community from the exclusion. The need for the development of confidence within the Darai population to engage and interact with each other, and build mutual trust while working and engaging in social work has also been pivotal for the mainstreaming of the studied population. Despite this fact, the study could not explore the satisfactory responses from the respondent regarding the aforementioned conditions. Respondents replied to the absence of encouraging and all-inclusive participation of the studied population. They have identified the lacking of access to public infrastructure and facilities such as community centers, recreational facilities, and public libraries, resource centers with internet facilities, well-maintained public schools, clinics, water supplies, and sanitation in the studied area. They reported that these are the basic services that will create an inclusive society characterized by social justice, empowerment, and equality social position and recognition. Man Bahadur Darai, one of the Key informants replied that- *'the representative of local bodies have not recognized the position of Darai community. Response to the unequal power relations is therefore a necessary step to increase participation of the Darai people through accepted representations in all service-oriented bodies and income-generating opportunities'*.

Summary and conclusion

Land acquisition, planning, redistribution, and urban development have caused the exclusion in an urban setting. Social exclusion is a process that deprives individuals and families, groups and neighborhoods of the resources, economies, and political activity of society as a whole and seems in the inadequacies of the information, incorporation, and participation. Through this, people are cut off from their institutions and services, social networks, and developmental opportunities that the great majority of society enjoys. Thus, the exclusion has become a hot issue among the academicians, development experts, consultants, social workers, politicians, and policymakers. The urbanization in productive and plain land has been found responsible to create opportunities and services on one hand and factor of exclusion of specific population from the basic socio-economic, political, and administrative processes. The actual analysis and account on exclusion could be given by ethnographic research conducted at the micro-level. Ethnographic research based on qualitative data and information has full faith and trust in the qualitative research regarding the construction and exploration of reality. Qualitative analysis of the information and data have been considered the most essential and basic strength of such studies. Basically, in this study, the exploration of the dynamics of exclusion of ethnic populations has been made the objective. Within this objective, this research is intended to show the role of urbanization in the exclusion of Darai people, an ethnic group of Nepal residing in the studied area since many years ago. Similarly, this research task is intended to reveal the extent of exclusion of the studied population and has found their exclusion from the social, cultural, political, administrative, and economic processes of urban settlement. This study revealed that the studied Darai population has been forced to lose customary occupation, right and hold inland cultural practices, and reciprocity due to urbanization.

Various factors and dynamics have been found responsible for the exclusion of ethnic populations, especially in the Hilly region. Besides political factors and dimensions, social, cultural, economic, and administrative factors have been found responsible for the exclusion

of ethnic populations. While talking about the extent of exclusion, ethnic populations are found excluded to the extent of utilizing resources. The close association between the extent of exclusion and shift in the land use pattern has also been seen. Similarly, the ethnic population has been found excluded to the extent of the socio-cultural sphere. They are deprived of their typical social and cultural capital. The extent of exclusion also has been seen in the level of household and to the field of employment opportunities. The domain of information also has excluded the ethnic population. The condition of exclusion can't be seen and found only in the public sphere and material status but also in the individual experiences and feelings of excluded groups. Finally, urban settlement bears diversity in terms of caste, ethnicity, religion, culture, and ideology. Formal processes govern the social, cultural, political, economic, and judicial affairs. An agency and bargaining capacity of one determines the position of an individual and community. Weak agencies and negotiation capacity lead the minority towards the exclusion. Space is given in the decision-making process and economic resources enable the community and individual with their agencies and negotiation capacity. Eviction from the resources caused by urbanization leading to the changes in land-use patterns and isolation of specific community through political and administrative process excludes the ethnic populations.

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