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978-1-107-05609-1 - Mapping Social Exclusion in India: Caste, Religion and Borderlands

Edited by Paramjit S. Judge

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Mapping Social Exclusion in India

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Preface

The study of social exclusion in India has begun in a big way with the initiative of the University Grants Commission (UGC) during the second half of the previous decade. Once it was introduced as a part of the policy of the UGC, by starting the Centres for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy with grants in various universities of the country, the study of social exclusion got the impetus it required and began in right earnest. The arrival of the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion is no accident in history. It is a result of the optimistic will of the people who believed that exploitation would end with revolutionary transformation and achieve a classless society. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of corporate capitalism with liberal democracy, understood as the end of history, apparently turned Marx upside down. The emerging social and political scenario in the world order presented the hegemonic domination of the USA and the politics of recognition of multicultural realities. In this unipolar world, the West, with its liberal democracy and market economy, was self-confident enough to recognize multicultural citizenship. It was faced with non-economic bases of discrimination in the labour market. Immigrant communities began to assert their cultural rights and highlight ethnic discrimination in employment. The subsequent developments paved the way for the popularization and theorization of very useful concepts to understand the mode of functioning of labour market in particular, and social and cultural institutions in general.

Its arrival in India saw the rich potentialities of the concept when social scientists, for example Sukhdeo Thorat, applied it to intercaste dynamics. However, caste has been the only element in the practice of social exclusion in India whose people are diverse along cultural, linguistic, religious and regional lines. At present, inclusive development of the society has become the goal of the Indian state. The kind of inclusive policy required for India other than poverty

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eradication and abolition of caste-based discrimination would depend upon how comprehensively and earnestly the patterns and modes of social exclusion are mapped. This volume is an effort in the direction of identifying and examining various trajectories of exclusion at both the macro and the micro levels. One of the strengths of this work is the inclusion of certain micro-level empirical studies, which pinpoint the multifaceted character of social exclusion. The social movement strategy seems to be one of the acknowledged ways towards social inclusion and integration.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have given this book its present form through their efforts and commitment to the subject. Thanks are also due to Harpreet Kaur, Manjit Kaur, and Bhupinder Thakur for their assistance at various stages of the work. I am also grateful to Rajivlochan for his comments on various contributions, which helped a great deal. Last but not least, I am indebted to my wife, Gurpreet Bal, whose help, both intellectual and emotional, remained crucial in completing the work.

Paramjit S. Judge