

STATUS AND PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT INCLUSIVENESS ACROSS SOCIAL GROUPS IN INDIA

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Abstract

India is full of diversity. Social exclusion, discrimination and deprivation on the basis of group identities such as SCs, STs, OBCs, Others etc. in India are rooted from the very early period. Although, Indian economy has experienced remarkable growth rates over the last few decades, but such growth rates have limited success in achieving more inclusive societies in India. With this backdrop, this paper attempts to make an overview of the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of India's development experience using secondary data mostly from NSSO and Census of India. For this analysis two indices namely, the Social Exclusion Index (SEI) and development Attainment Index (DAI) have been calculated. From the analysis it has been found that the pace of development in India is not uniform across castes and across states over time. Social groups like OBCs and Others have experienced relatively higher level of development than SCs and STs.

Key Words: Social Exclusion, Inclusiveness, Social Groups, Development Attainment.

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Over the last six decades, Indian economy has experienced remarkable impressive growth rates. However, such growth rates had limited success in translating economic development into more integrated and more inclusive societies. India's stellar Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates have resulted to two faces of India — a “Shining India”, which is competing internationally and benefiting from the forces of globalization, technological change, and economies of scale, has grabbed the attention of media and the world; and a “Suffering India”, not as well publicized but even more important, has unacceptably wide swathes of its population who are poor and vulnerable (Yogeshwar 2016). These two faces of India are both a symbol of prosperity and despair. Considerable inequalities persist in many regions and growth has not been sufficiently inclusive and equitable for all segments of the population. There are serious concerns among the researchers and policy makers about the inclusiveness of the Indian growth process. India's levels of malnutrition, illiteracy and poverty are unacceptably high. The rise in income inequalities and regional disparities are also a matter of concern. Nevertheless, there have been serious concerns that while the privileged class has done well in this period, a large section of the population continues to have a life of low standard and deprivation (Patnaik 2007). And above all, an overwhelming majority of the population is deprived of basic social protection. Hence, India's actual development outcome is affected by its exclusionary process. As a result, exclusion has become a challenge for India's future development.

In literature on inequality, a distinction has been made between inter-personal or vertical inequality and group based or horizontal inequality. It is argued that the later has received unduly less attention (Stewart 2002). Therefore, in our study, an emphasis has been placed on group-based or horizontal inequality. Our study has made an attempt to examine how persistent are the traditional socio-economic hierarchies and how inclusive the India's growth process. Thus, here we answer these questions in the context of India by comparing various socio-economic indicators of development such as income, health, education, poverty etc. among four different groups of Indian population ----- SCs, STs, OBCs and 'Others' (so called Upper caste Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and other religious minorities etc.).The limited number of studies on exclusion in India has affected appropriate policy formulation to overcome discrimination or exclusion and its impacts on poverty or other social evils. Thus, empirical research on economic, social and political conditions of excluded groups is essential as it will pave the way on the part of the government in adopting more inclusive development strategies.

1.2 Review of Empirical Studies:

Over time, there is a long history of conducting research on the India's Development experience relating to different social groups of population in India by many researchers. In this section, different stands of literature contributed by researchers, scholars and organizations have been traced out for reviewing. The issues presented by the researchers, scholars, organizations and findings of the relevant empirical studies will suppose to provide valuable insights for the present study as well as able to locate research gap in the literature.

India is full of diversity. It is the second most populous country after China and the 7th largest in terms of area. It is one of the oldest civilizations of the world and is home to seven major religions of the world—Hinduism, Islamism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Again, India is a country with complex and regressive caste system. Religion, race, caste and language play an important role in many economic decisions, both at household and at national level (Bharti 2018). Historically, there is unequal distribution of wealth along the caste lines in Indian society. In this context, it is very important to understand the potential reasons behind this. Further, it is also important to understand why despite being different development phases, these caste groups face inequality. Thus, in order to ensure that the benefits associated with economic and social progress are more widely shared, it is necessary to identify who is missing out and or being left out, in which areas, and why. Hence, a more meaningful concept of **social inclusion/exclusion** is necessary as it would provide indicators for the individual and group identity. Such research has real and measureable potential to inform transformative responses to reconcile divides within and among societies (Ginrich and Lightman

2015). A growth process is considered ideal when it generates equal opportunities for different sections of a society (Ali and Zuang 2007). There are no standardized or simple definitions on social exclusion. Social exclusion is group-based in nature. Broadly speaking, social exclusion can be defined as “the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live”. At a general level, social exclusion is considered as a “process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live –in this sense social exclusion is opposite to social integration” (de Haan 2001).

Exclusion on the basis of caste and religion in India under diverse social, economic and political systems has been an important issue for centuries. Historically, the socio – economic progress in India continues to suffer from the inflexibility of a rigid caste system and caste-based discriminations (Deshpande 2000; Omvedt 2013). According to Bhagat (2013) “There has been considerable progress in the well- being of SCs and STs during the last decades, but the gap between SCs and STs and of both these groups compared to the rest of the population has widened”. Singh (2009) demonstrated that the root cause of inequality among caste groups is actually grounded in a hierarchy of land rights, political power and is driven by religious and secular ideology. Hence exclusion has become a challenge for India’s future development. A large segment of population is deprived of basic social and economic opportunities and hence continues to have a life of low standard and deprivation. Since Independence, the Indian policymakers have made significant strides in reducing extreme poverty in the country. While the country has achieved high economic growth rate in the recent years and remarkable success in reducing extreme poverty but it still face the challenges of hunger, undernourishment, child mortality, low achievements in primary education and other non income dimensions of developments. Moreover, inequalities pertaining to income and non income outcomes between different groups of populations, especially between vulnerable sections, have been widening. Continued inequalities in outcomes and access to opportunities across social groups disrupted the social fabric and India’s sustainable growth process. In spite of decades of planning and a sizeable amount of public resources being channelled in the name of welfare of SCs/STs but actual benefits have hardly reached these groups. Human Development Report of India, 2011, observed that:

“For historical reason, Indian society is segregated into castes, and some of these are economically and socially deprived to a great extent. It is therefore, essential to bridge the caste gaps and ultimately eliminate all forms of discriminating social barriers. Also the tribal groups of central and eastern India in particular have remained deprived in multiple dimensions”. (India, HDR 2011:3).

Hence, there is a new genuine and widespread recognition about the adverse social consequences of rising inequalities in the recent high growth phase, which do not seem to be mitigated through the so-called “trickle down” mechanism. In this context, we can claim that it is of utmost importance to address the issues of inclusive growth approach in India and also monitor the outcome. *The Eleventh Plan claims to outline “a comprehensive program for development of infrastructure, especially in rural areas, and in the remote and backward parts of the country consistent with the requirements of inclusive growth at 9% per year.... What this plan seeks to do is to target the slower growing regions and the backward areas within these states, for higher levels of public investment that will enable the backlog in physical and social infrastructure to be addressed”* (Planning Commission 2008). *The inclusive approach has been extended with greater commitment in Twelfth-Five –Year-Plan (2007-2012). This approach recognizes that while faster growth remains the main goal, it is not an end in itself but the means to an end. And the end would demand outcomes which yield benefits for all, but particularly require that the benefits of growth reach the poor, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), minorities and women (GoI 2007).*

Thus, identifying different forms disadvantage among different segments of population can provide a basis for identifying the levels of poverty and exclusion. In Indian context, poverty is a social problem. Poverty clearly reflects the economic inequality which is attached to social inequality. Scheduled caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), which constitute about a quarter of the population, are socially and economically excluded, and hence have a disproportionate rate of poverty level. These communities are identified on the basis of certain criteria such as primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation and general backwardness. These castes were considered to be at the bottom of the Hindu social hierarchy. This forward caste or the Upper Caste Hindu has been enjoying all the social, economic and political privileges since long ago constitutes only 28% of the total population but the poverty rate among them is the lowest (12.5%). On the other hand, Other Backward Class (OBC), which stays in the middle of the Upper Caste Hindu and SCs and STs, are neither so deprived like SC and STs nor so affluent like the upper caste. Although with the passage of time, the magnitude of deprivation and marginalization are diminishing among them but with the slower and unequal rate.

1.3. SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1.3.1 Scope:

The study is mainly confined to the four different communities in India--- SCs, STs, OBCs and ‘Others’ (so called Upper caste Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and other religious minorities etc.). . As stated above, the choice of these communities is for understanding the inclusiveness of India’s development experience over time.

1.3.2 Objectives:

Based on the review of literature and our intuitive logic, we have the following objectives ---

- (i) To measure the level of economic and social exclusion among different social groups of population
- (ii) To examine relative development attainment among the four categories of Indian population.

1.3.3 Research Questions:

The one important research question motivating the study is---

- i) As the Indian economy has grown, got transformed and become globally integrated, have population groups converged in terms of key socio-economic indicators of development?

1.4 Methodology, Data Source and Analytical Frameworks:

The study is based on entirely on secondary data sources. The secondary data used in the study have been collected from the NSSO for four time periods--- 1993-94, 1999-2000, 2004-2005, 2009-2010, and 2011-2012, Census of India (From 1971 to 2011), Planning commission Reports, Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), Agricultural Census of India and Various Development Reports of the Government of India, Books and Journals.

1.4.1 Analytical Framework:

Preliminary analysis has been done by values of development parameters across groups and over time. For objective (i), i.e. to measure economic and social exclusion, we use the *Social Exclusion Index*. And in order to examine relative development attainment among different categories of Indian population, i.e., for objective (ii) we have constructed the *Development Attainment Index (DAI)*.

1.5 A Profile of the Major Social and Religious Groups in India:

One of the basic features of India's demography is that it a country where there is an immense diversity of castes and religions. India is a home to seven major religions of the world--- Hinduism or majority community constituted about 80 percent of the total population and the rest or one-fifth of the population included religious minorities like muslims (14.23 percent), followed by Christians (2.30 percent) Shikhs (1.27 percent), Buddhists (0.70 percent) Jains (0.37 percent), and other religious minorities including Parsis (0.66 percent) and communities for which religion not stated (0.66 percent). Again, India is a country with complex and regressive caste system. In India, social hierarchy is based on castes which get reflected in the general behaviour of masses. The origin of the caste system dates back to the age of Rig-Veda. The word 'caste' is originated from the Portuguese language word 'Castas' meaning 'race' or 'breed' or 'difference'. In Indian context, caste represents social interactions. The caste system has significantly influenced the Indian social life in a number of ways. It is opined that the caste system assigns ascribed status to individuals by virtue of birth and divides the society into endogamous and exogamous groups. In Indian caste system, we get four categories of population --- Scheduled caste (SC), whose population accounts 16.6 percent, Scheduled Tribe (ST) constituting 8.6 percent of the population, Other Backward Class (OBC), which constitutes 41 percent of the total population and the General Caste with the rest of the population constituting nearly 34 percent of the population of the country (Census, 2011).

1.6 Development Attainments and Disparities among Social Groups in India:

In this section an attempt has been made to compare the level of **social exclusion** of four different communities under consideration in India in key socio-economic parameters, using available secondary data mostly from the NSSO of 50th Round (1993-94), 55th Round (1999-2000), 61st Round (2004-05), 66th Round (2009-10) and 68th Round (2011-12), Census of India (1991, 2001&2011). In order to trace out the social exclusion of different communities, various development indicators based on the available comparable statistical data were classified under six broad categories---- Education, Labour Force Participation Rate, Worker Population Ratio, Unemployment Rate and Incidence of poverty. In order to measure social exclusion, we have constructed the social exclusion index. The *Social Exclusion Index* is defined as the ratio of a particular community's attainment in a particular domain to the attainment of all population in that domain.

1.6.1 Literacy Rate: As an Educational Attainment:

Education is an essential component of human resource development as it improves the knowledge, capabilities and efficiency among individuals. "Education is an important input as well as an outcome indicator influencing other development indicators like health, nutritional status income and family planning" (Pathak, 2009). But in our country the spread of education is low as compared to the other developing counties of the world. In this section an attempt has been made to examine the scale of social exclusion among different social groups in terms of *Illiteracy*. The trend of illiteracy pattern and scale of social exclusion among different social groups has been shown in the Table-1.

Table: 1 Distribution of Illiteracy by Social Groups in India

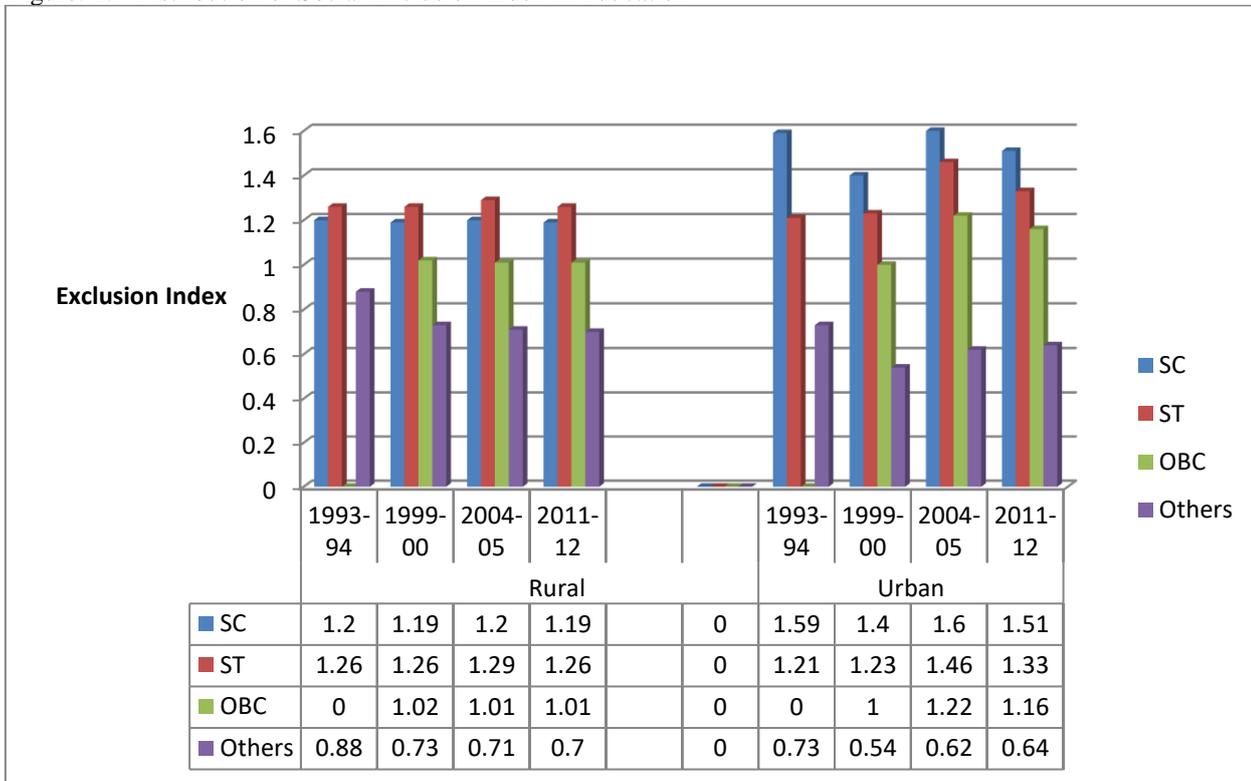
Social Groups	Rural				Urban			
	Illiteracy Rate (%)				Illiteracy Rate (%)			
	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2011-12	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2011-12
SC	68.3	61.5	54.4	43.4	46.9	39.2	31.5	24.4
ST	71.5	64.7	58.6	45.6	37.7	34.4	28.7	21.5
OBC	---	52.4	45.7	37.0	--	28.1	24.0	18.8
Others	50.2	37.3	32.2	25.3	22.9	15.2	12.3	10.3
All	56.7	51.3	45.2	36.3	31.2	27.9	19.6	16.1

Source: NSSO (1993-94, 1999-00, 2004-05, 2011-12)

The data presented in table-1 indicate that the rate of illiteracy was found to be higher for STs followed by SCs in rural areas, whereas it was higher for SCs followed by STs in urban areas. The rate of illiteracy was found to be lowest in respect of ‘Others’ compared to the rest of the social groups both in rural and urban areas.

Again, the social exclusion index for education as presented in figure 1.1 was also higher in respect of STs followed by SCs in rural and urban areas and it was found to be higher in case of SCs followed by STs as compared to the rest. It is to be noted that although, the rate of illiteracy in most of the cases have declined over the period 1993-94 to 2011-12, but the scale of social exclusion has been on rise in urban areas. However, there has been a marginal decline in social exclusion index in case of ‘Others’ as compared to the rest of the social groups.

Figure: 1.1 Distribution of Social Exclusion Index in Education



Source: Author’s estimation from table -1.

Therefore, it can be commented that over time, although the rates of illiteracy have declined among the social groups, but the scale of social exclusion has been on rise particularly in respect of historically deprived groups such as SCs and STs mostly in urban areas. This has resulted a two-face problem – on the one hand, the high level of social exclusion in educational attainments is likely to create low-end and low-paid casual jobs among the marginalized groups which in turn experience chronic poverty. On the other hand, high level of social exclusion in urban areas will hamper the growth of urban economies as compared to the rural economies particularly in respect of labour market.

1.6.2 Employment and Social Exclusion:

Participation of a country’s labour force in productive activities is an important determinant of economic growth. In an emerging economy like India, labour force participation plays a significant role. India’s labour force reached 47.79 crore in 2011 against 18.07 in 1971. As per 2011 Census, India’s work force is 78.8 (15 to 60 years) and unemployed force is 11.3 crore persons. Increase in work force is an indicator of enhancement of demographic dividends, whereas, increase in unemployment rate is indicates the slaughter of human resources. Over time, there has been an increasing trend in both work force and unemployment rates in the country. However, the participation of work force in the labour is not uniform across different social groups. There is a social exclusion of participation of workers in labour market. This may be due to differences in education, experiences, and many other socio-cultural characteristics of the workers. In this section, we aim at assessing the magnitude of Worker Population Ratio (WPR) of different social groups, their social exclusions according to usual status (PS+SS) using NSSO data for three different rounds viz., 55th Round (1999-2000), 61st Round (2004-05), and 68th Round (2011-12).

Table-2 Number of Persons Employed (WPR) in% among Social Groups in India- 1999-00 to 2011-12

	WPR			Exclusion Index		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
SC						

1999-00	531	325	431	1	1.09	1.03
2004-05	554	333	441	1.02	1.02	1.005
2011-12	539	262	404	0.99	0.91	1.01
ST						
1999-00	558	438	503	1.05	1.47	1.20
2004-05	562	464	514	1.03	1.37	1.17
2011-12	557	364	463	1.02	1.48	1.16
OBC						
1999-00	532	302	421	1.001	1.01	1.004
2004-05	537	330	436	0.98	1.009	0.99
2011-12	538	239	391	0.99	0.96	0.98
OTHERS						
1999-00	520	223	377	0.98	0.75	0.80
2004-05	557	262	412	1.02	0.69	0.94
2011-12	552	201	382	1.01	0.81	0.96
ALL						
1999-00	531	297	419			
2004-05	546	327	439	-----	-----	-----
2011-12	543	248	399			

Source: NSSO- 1999-00, 2004-05 & 2011-12.

The data presented in table-2 show that the WPR in rural males varied between 53.1 percent and 56.2 percent whereas for female, it varied between 20.1 percent and 46.4 percent. Similarly, in urban areas, for males, the WPR varied between 48.0 percent and 55.4 percent and for females 10.8 percent and 24.5 percent. The share of WPR was found to be higher in respect of STs followed by SCs and OBCs in both rural and urban areas. The pace of WPR has been on the gradual rise over 1999-00 and 2011-12. The rise was marginally higher in respect of STs and SCs as compared to others. Thus, the share of WPR is lowest in case of 'Others' both in rural and urban areas. This implies that the social groups SCs and STs with low level of education and high incidence of poverty, they seemed to have shifted to the low- paid casual jobs, agricultural labourers which in turn results in lower level of income earnings, causing a greater prevalence of poverty among SCs and STs as compared to rest of the social groups. Thus, although the rise in WPR is a healthy sign for an economy, however, this may not be true in case of SCs/STs because of their relative backwardness in the society. They join the workforce because of their low economic condition.

Again, the *exclusion index* for WPR was estimated to be larger in case of STs followed by SCs and OBCs as compared to 'Others' in rural areas. In the case of urban areas, it was also higher in respect of STs followed by OBCs and SCs as against 'Others'. Further, if we compare the index values over the years 1999-00 to 2011-12, we notice a very marginal decline in exclusion for all the social groups. This implies that although the social exclusion in the labour market in India was found to be larger in case of SCs and STs vis-à-vis OBCs and 'Others', it has been on the decline, showing a more inclusive participation in the labour market or the work force.

1.6.3 Incidence of Poverty and Social Exclusion:

The concept of inclusive growth claims that all social groups have equal access to opportunities for upward economic and social mobility. But poverty is one of the challenging factors causing economic and social exclusion. Further, poverty causes exclusion in the domain of education, labour market, in acquisition of wealth and good health. Poverty among the disadvantaged groups of population is proportionately high. This is reflected in the proportion of persons falling below poverty line as shown in the following table-3.

Table- 3 Proportion of People in Poverty among Social Groups in India

Rounds	Rural				Urban			
	SC	ST	OBC	OTHERS	SC	ST	OBC	OTHERS
1993-94	48.1	52.2	44.0	31.3	49.9	42.4	28.2	30.6
2004-05	52.7	61.9	39.8	26.2	40.0	35.0	30.6	15.8
2011-12	31.5	45.3	22.7	15.5	21.7	24.1	15.4	8.1

Source: GOI, Planning Commission, Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2007-12, Volume-I, Inclusive Growth.

The data provided in table-3 indicate that the level of poverty is not uniform across social groups. Historically, the marginalized groups such as SC and STs were denied access to education, health facilities, land, formal credit and other wealth etc., while others were able to access. It means SCs and STs were economically and socially excluded. Hence, the incidence of poverty is not only higher but also chronic among them.

From the data as provided in table 3 it is evident that the incidence of poverty was quite significant among STs in rural areas, followed by SCs in urban areas during 1999-94. This clearly implies that the degree of exclusion was much higher among the SCs and STs as compared to the rest of the social groups. However, since 1990s, the incidence of poverty registered a declining trend in varying degrees across social groups. It has been observed that the decline in poverty was faster among the 'Others' followed by OBCs as compared to SCs and STs both in rural as well as urban areas during 1993-94 to 2011-12. Further, a greater decline took place in the incidence of poverty among SCs and STs in rural areas vis-à-vis in urban areas in recent years. Thus from the above trend in poverty it can be commented that the incidence of poverty is still significant among the SCs/STs as compared to other social groups both in rural and urban areas. This indicates that in spite of constitutional safeguards and developmental measures, the social exclusion has been concentrated in respect of SCs and STs in India. However, at the same time, we have also to accept to fact that there has been a gradual inclusion of people from these marginalized groups in meeting their basic necessities of life.

1.7 Capturing the Status and Pattern of Development Inclusiveness across Social Groups in Major Indian States through Development Attainment Index:

This section aims to have an idea about the inclusiveness of communities in development experience of fifteen major Indian states during 1999-00 to 2011-12. For this analysis, a *Development Attainment Index (DAI)* has been constructed using NSSO data for three different rounds viz --55th Round (1999-2000), 61st Round (2004-05), and 68th Round (2011-12) which reflects the development inclusiveness or exclusiveness of those communities under study.

Development attainment of four different communities or social groups viz—SC, ST, OBC and Others has been sought to capture in terms of two components: first, the quality of living conditions, and second, the level of human progress. Thus, the Development Attainment Index (DAI) is combination of two sub- indices, namely, the Quality of Living Condition Index (QLCI) and the Human Progress Index (HPI). For QLCI, two indicators—Average Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure and Labour Force participation Rate of households of fifteen major Indian states are considered. Again, for HPI, Literacy Rates and Percentage of Population above the Poverty line have been taken into account.

Scores have been assigned to the four categories of population of each of the fifteen Indian states in terms of their attainments in each of these components. Then these scores of each social group are divided by the maximum possible scores in each component. The arithmetic mean of these ratios is taken as state level of QLCI. The same procedure is also followed for the construction of HPI.

Then the State Level Development Attainment Index (SDAI) has been calculated by combining the two sub-indices of QLCI and HPI as follows:

$$SDAI = 2\sqrt{QLCI * HPI}$$

Here, the fifteen major Indian states include—Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and All India.

Results and Discussion of SDAI:

- In regard to state level Development Attainment Index, we observed that a huge gap in the level of development attainment between the poor states like Bihar, Orissa, UP and the richer states like Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc, during 1999-00. Here we found a divergence in development attainment between SCs and STs and OBCs and 'Others'. In rural areas, OBCs have attained higher level of development while, in urban areas, 'Others' have attained a higher level of development as compared to the rest of the social groups.
- During 1999-00 and 2004-05, there has been an improvement in development attainments across all states, especially, richer, and across all categories, more for 'Others' category.

Lastly, it has been observed that a considerable improvement in development attainment among the states across all social groups both in rural as well as in urban areas in 2011-12. We also again observed some disparities in development attainment across social groups. The OBCs in urban areas have attained higher level of development as compared to the rest of the social groups. As compared to 1999-00 and 2004-05, in 2011-12 maximum number of states has attained a higher level of development. This clearly indicates a *convergence* in development experience of different social groups over time in India.

1.8 Conclusion:

From the analysis it has been found that although there has been a considerable improvement in development attainment across different social groups in India, these are not uniform across castes. From the illiteracy pattern and scale of exclusion, it has been observed that although the rates of illiteracy have been declined among social groups over time, but the scale of social exclusion has been on rise particularly in respect of SCs and STs mostly in urban areas. Again, the exclusion index for WPR shows a declining trend in social exclusion in labour market implying more inclusive participation in labour market or work force. Further, from the poverty trend it can be commented that the incidence of poverty is still significant among SCs and STs as compared to the rest of the social groups. Lastly, the Development Attainment Index shows that there has been a *convergence* in development attainment across social groups over time in India.

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