Financial Accessibility Of The Tribal Society In India: A Study Of Inclusion And Exclusion

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Abstract

Lack of access to economic opportunities, such as capital assets, skill development, and education, is based on an individual's group identity rather than income, productivity, or merit. In this situation, tribal groups, making up more than 70% of those living in forests, are some of the most economically exploited, socially neglected, geographically isolated, and poorest members of society. Education, skill development, training, asset building, investment, and job prospects in sectors such as agriculture, forest-based industries, and fishing are encompassed in the dimensions. Since agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the tribal community, the majority of investments are directed towards this sector. It was found that out of the 18 major states, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka scored high, six states scored medium, and the remaining 9 states had a low financial inclusion status. It is interesting that states with stronger economic growth, such as Haryana and Gujarat, also had low levels of financial inclusion. As a result, it was discovered that Scheduled Tribes were the social category encompassed in financial services at a lower rate of 36.32 percent, a decrease of 10 percent from the national average of 46.64 percent. Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes were both equally represented in financial inclusion, with 50% and 49% respectively.

Keywords: Financial Inclusion and Exclusion, Marginalised of society, Tribal Community

Introduction

The concept of social exclusion emerged at the end of the 1980s in the context of new forms of disadvantage and marginalisation in a Europe of improved economic growth, new understanding about the rights of citizenship, and concerns to promote stronger economic and social integration within the European Community **(Commins 1995, Room 1994, and Chapman et al. 1998**). Though poverty is attributed as a cause of marginalisation there is a difference between the two: According to the distinction (between poverty and social exclusion) represents a three-fold change in perspective (i) from income related poverty to multidimensional disadvantage; (ii) from static accounts of disadvantage to the analysis of dynamic processes by which conditions of disadvantage come about;

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and (iii) from a focus on individuals and households to recognition of the wider economic and social contexts. It refers to the dynamic processes of being shut out, partially or fully, from any or all of several systems which influence the economic and social integration of people into their society. It points to 'system failures' rather than to individual failings as causes of social exclusion. Interpreted in its widest sense, it constitutes a denial of full citizenship – the collection of rights and responsibilities that one acquires as a member of society. Citizenship itself is a concept which denotes inclusiveness and there is increasing acceptance of the idea that human rights – civil, political, economic and social – are indivisible and interrelated **Connolly (1999).**

Tribal Society and the Concept of Exclusion

It has been argued that the basis for exclusion is group identity and not the economic or productive characteristics of the specific individual. While exclusion does result in the denial of economic opportunities-such as access to capital assets, development of skills, and education – the origination cause is not lack of income, productivity, or merit but rather the individual's group identity. In this context the tribal communities, constituting over 70% of the forest dwellers, are among the poorest, socially neglected, geographically isolated and economically exploited most vulnerable section in the society lacking the basic necessities to maintain a decent standard of living: sufficient and nutritious food, adequate shelter, access to health services, energy sources, safe drinking water, education and a healthy environment **Anon., (2006).** Tribal are primarily major gatherers of a wide range of hunters, shifting cultivators, herders, simple farmers and traders.

Tribal Society and Dimensions of Inclusion

The task of bringing the tribals into the mainstream of the society has been recognized as on herculean due to the distinctive characteristics features of their way of living and survival mechanisms. The dimensions include education, skill formation, training, asset creation, investment and employment opportunities in agriculture, forest based industries, fishing, and the like Agriculture being the main occupation of the tribal population, the major part of investment goes to this sector. it major channels of investment are irrigation, tractors and other machines, vehicle for transport and marketing of agricultural goods and provision of modern seeds etc. it was noticed that a small percentage of tribals make investments. A key component of inclusive growth strategy is a sharp increase in investment in tribal areas. Tribal infrastructure development agriculture credit public spending on education and health care. Inclusive growth is an all encompassing concept, which includes aspects, such as agriculture development, employment generation, poverty reduction and reduced regional inequality. Agriculture development may be deemed as the critical aspect of inclusive growth and proves to be a smooth path for achieving social and economic inclusion.

Political Inclusion

Social exclusion strongly embraces a political dimension. Those who are poor are also the powerless in society. The reproduction of poverty is, in contemporary society, the routine exercise of power in ways that suit the interests of the power holders themselves. **Curtin, Haase and Tovey (1996)**, offer several illustrations of this routine exercise of power in Ireland based on a political economy perspective. It is manifest in an ideology of development which recognises 'modern farming' only in terms of one specific model – that which is easily adapted to large-scale food-processing systems; in the competitive striving of transnational agribusiness and food corporations; in local natural resource development by external capital; in the limited powers of local government authorities; in consensual models of community development; and in the centralisation of many public services. Nevertheless, the authors sought to avoid a narrow economic determinism on the premise that powerful structural forces are never absolute; there are continuing possibilities for actors, groups and institutions to collaborate, resist or negotiate new pathways to social inclusion**.** In India, the constitution spells out non – discrimination and specifies the rights of socially excluded population.

Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion may be defined as the process of ensuring access to financial services and timely and adequate credit where needed by vulnerable groups such as weaker sections and low income groups at an affordable cost **(The Committee on Financial Inclusion, Chairman: Dr. C. Rangarajan)**.

Financial Inclusion, broadly defined, refers to universal access to a wide range of financial services at a reasonable cost. These include not only banking products but also other financial services such as insurance and equity products. **(The Committee on Financial Sector Reforms, Chairman: Dr.Raghuram G. Rajan).**

Financial Inclusion: Physical and Functional Access to poor

The availability of quality financial services in tribal areas is extremely important for the growth of the economy as this will enable the large number of tribal households to improve their livelihoods. Therefore greater financial inclusion in these segments is imperative.

Financial services can play an important role in tribal development. Savings and insurance schemes assist the tribal population in reducing vulnerability to risks, planning more reliably for the future and saving for upcoming investments, as well as smoothing out irregular income flows and covering unexpected expenses. The latter is particularly important in tribal areas where income depends on agricultural cycles. Short term consumption or emergency loans can help households to avoid difficult situations that might have forced them to sell an asset. Some poor borrowers experience difficulties in repaying their debt, to a lack of knowledge and wrong investment strategies. Despite the significant demand for financial services in tribal areas, institutions offering financial services – such as banks, credit unions, Microfinance Institutions (MFI) or insurance companies – are typically reluctant to serve tribal areas. As a result, the majority of the developing world's tribal population does not have access to the formal financial system. Confronted with this lack of access, households, farmers and small entrepreneurs rely on informal ways of accessing financial services. Entrepreneurs usually rely on family savings or borrow money from friends to make small investments, and in emergency situations people tend to borrow from acquaintances. Such loans are usually repaid without interest. Also, people typically rely on moneylenders to obtain loans. Moneylenders often ask for usurious interest rates and sometimes try to recover the loans by violent means. On the other hand, moneylenders can provide loans rapidly in an emergency, and they do not ask for collateral. Community self-help schemes such as Self-Help Groups (SHG), community-based savings and credit mechanisms are useful instruments to encourage savings, provide small-scale insurance and avoid debt at exorbitant interest rates. Formal institutions can offer a broader range of financial products. Formal services such as microfinance cannot replace loans from friends and family, but they do complement them and enable the tribal population to access a wider range of services. Moreover, formal financial institutions belong to the economic infrastructure of a country or region and can thus help to foster economic development.

Social Exclusion

The two terms 'social exclusion' and 'social inclusion' are most widely used in recent years by politicians, social scientists and the public as well. The term social inclusion was originated in French social policy in the 1970s. It came into play in the 1980s economic crisis (**Benn, 2000)** when state sponsored Republican Tradition of Solidarity was in command. (**Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997).**

Social exclusion moved on to the political agenda in Europe in the 1990s. The conceptual development of social exclusion draws from two leading social policy traditions: i) social democracy, in terms of concerns surrounding inequality and equal opportunities and ii) social catholic, concern for social ties in the community and within the family. Definitions of 'social inclusion' range from little more than re-naming of poverty (**Burchardt et.al 1999)** to more broad based concepts based on a lack of or inability to participate in society. That is, 'Labour market exclusion', exclusions from land' and 'exclusion from security' and the like. Discussion of social inclusion and exclusion also relates to citizenship rights, particularly in terms of the dichotomy between individualism and collectivism.

Social exclusion denotes the characteristics, as given below, of a society at large or individuals at least.

i) Inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life.
ii) Distance and alienation from a so called mainstream society.
iii) Isolation from major societal mechanisms

Economic exclusion

It has been stated that economic exclusion or discrimination affects whole groups in a society, independent of the income, productivity, or merit of individuals within the group. Anyone can be excluded from access to markets because of lack of income, or form employment on the grounds of low productivity, or form admission to educational institutions on the basis of low merit. In the case of group- based exclusion, however, the basis for exclusion is group identity and not the economic or productive characteristics of the specific individual. While exclusion does result in the denial of economic opportunities-such as access to capital assets, development of skills, and education – the main cause is not lack of income, productivity, or merit but rather the individual's group identity.

That in so far as exclusion and discrimination involve the denial of access to resources, employment, education, and public services, they certainly impoverish the lives of excluded individuals. Economic theory also implies that such discrimination can hamper economic growth by reducing efficiency. Labour market discrimination causes less than optimal allocation of labour among firms and sectors (given that those who are discriminated against receive a lower wage than their marginal product), and it reduces the effort expended by workers who perceive themselves to be discriminated against. Discrimination also results in inefficiency by reducing the magnitude of investment in human capital buy discriminated groups and by reducing the return to any human capital investments made. Discrimination is thus a concern not only for equity but also for economic growth, and in this way it affects poverty both direly by adversely affecting the income distribution and indirectly by affecting economic growth. Moreover, discrimination can also lead to intergroup conflict by exacerbating existing inequality and contributing to its perpetuation from one generation to the next.

Education status of Tribal people in India is moving towards inclusive growth but lack of education, skills development and transparent governance are a few hurdles in progressing towards it at a faster pace **Sahu (2014).** Capital in its broad sense means, investment in different sectors of the economy. Agriculture being the main occupation of the tribal population, the major part of investment goes to this sector. The major channels of investment are irrigation, tractors and other machines, vehicle for transport and marketing of agricultural goods and provision of modern seeds etc. it was noticed that a small percentage of tribals make investments. The key component of inclusive growth strategy included a sharp increase in Investment in rural areas, rural infrastructure and agriculture spurts in credit for farmers, increase in rural employment through a unique social safety net and a sharp increase in public spending on education and health care. Inclusive growth is an all encompassing concept, which includes aspects, such as agriculture development, employment generation, poverty reduction and reduced regional inequality. Agriculture development may be deemed as the critical aspect of inclusive growth and proves to be a smooth path for achieving social and economic inclusion.

Financial institutions delivered various financial services include credit, savings, insurance, pension, digital payment services. The various financial services include credit, savings, insurance, payments, and remittance facilities. RRBs account for 37% of total tribal offices of all scheduled commercial banks and 9% of their workforce is posted in tribal areas. They account for 31% of deposit accounts and 37% of loan accounts in tribal areas. Out of the total 22.38 lakh SHGs credit linked by the banking industry as on 31st march 2006. In terms of number of agri-cultural credit account the Short Term Co –operative Credit system (STCCs) has 50% more accounts than the commercial banks and RRBs put together. Bank will be eligible for support from the funds on a matching contribution of 50% from the fund in regard to districts other than tribal districts and 75% in case of branches located in tribal districts identified under the tribal sub plan.

They consider the different dimensions of financial services, including transactions, savings, credit and insurance and possible institutional and technological innovations digital tools for identification, payments and storage.

Begin with banking, in keeping with the earlier observation that access to a transaction account can serve as a foundation or gateway for broader access to financial services. Two studies from India provide positive evidence that targeting bank access can have positive impacts. **Burgess** and **pande (2005)** examine the social banking program introduced after India's bank nationalization in 1969. By 1990, 30,000 rural locations with no prior formal credit and savings institutions received a bank. The number of bank branches, rural credit and saving shares, and poverty and wage estimates, shows that branch expansion was associated with reductions in rural poverty. It was found that national policy that caused banks open relatively more branches in less financially developed states and to expansion into rural unbanked locations, reduced poverty across Indian states. Enforcement of directed bank lending increased bank borrowing among the poor in particular tribal groups.

Dimensions of Financial Inclusion / Financial Exclusion

The institutions (Global and National) and individuals provided a range of definitions on the concepts of Financial Inclusion and Financial Exclusion. These explanations were briefly given in a tabular form to highlight the different dimensions of the above two concepts. The World Bank Report (2008) itself acknowledged the fact that it is difficult to define and measure **"access"** because this term has many dimensions.

Table 1 FINANCIAL INCLUSION / EXCLUSION: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Institution /Author	Definition	Indicators
ADB (2000)	Provision of a broad range of financial services such as deposits, loans, payment services, money transfers and insurance to poor and low-income households and their Micro-enterprises /businesses.	Deposits, loans, payment services, money transfer and insurance.

Stephen P. Sinclair (2001)	Financial exclusion: The inability to access necessary financial services in an appropriate form. Exclusion can come about as a result of problems with access, conditions, prices, marketing or self-exclusion in response to negative experiences or perceptions.	Basic banking services covering money transmission, credit, insurance, debt and debt assistance, long-term savings and financial literacy.
Chant Link and Associates, Australia (2004)	Financial exclusion: Lack of access by certain consumers to appropriate low cost, fair and safe financial products and services from mainstream providers. Financial exclusion applies to lower income consumers and/or those in financial hardship.	Deposit accounts, direct investments, home loans, credit cards, personal loans and insurance services.
Treasury Committee , House of Commons, UK (2004)	Financial Inclusion: Ability of individuals to access Appropriate financial products and services.	Affordable credit and savings to everyone in the society and access to financial advice.
Scottish Government (2005)	Access for individuals to appropriate financial products and services. Having the capacity, skills, knowledge and understanding to make the best use of those products and services.	Access to products and services, and capacity, skills, knowledge and understanding.
United Nations (2006 b)	A financial system that provides 'access' to credit for all 'bankable' people and firms, to insurance for all insurable people and firms and to savings and payments services for everyone. Inclusive finance does not require that everyone who is eligible use each of the services, but they should be able to choose to use them if desired.	A fair level of access to credit, insurance, savings, payment services.
Report of the Committee on Financial Inclusion in India (Chairman:	The process of ensuring access to financial services and timely and adequate credit where needed by vulnerable groups such as weaker sections and low income groups at an affordable cost.	Existence of access to financial services and provision of timely and adequate credit.

C.Rangarajan) (2008)		
World Bank (2008)	Access to financial services implies an absence of price and non- price barriers in the use of financial services.	Having a smooth access to financial services such as deposit, credit, payments, insurance.
Raghuram G. Rajan Committee (2015)	Financial Inclusion: To universal access to a wide range of financial services at a reasonable cost. These include not only banking products but also other financial services such as insurance and equity products.	Bank accounts for savings and transactional purposes, low cost credit for productive, personal and other purposes, financial advisory services, insurance facilities (life and non-life).

Source: NABARD

Financial Inclusion: Global Perspective

The work by UNDP on Human Development Index (HDI) helped individual researcher like **Kempson et al (2004), Mandira Sarma (2008, 2012)** and **Mandira Sarma and Jesim Pais (2011)** to work on Index of Financial Inclusion (IFI) at the global level / macro level. Further, after an initiative by World Bank (Global Findex Database, 2011), researcher like **Demirguc-Kunt and Klapper (2012)** framed new dimension to the indicators of financial inclusion. A major contribution relating to India came from **Anjini Kochar (2018).**

On the basis of the above works, a brief note on Index of Financial Inclusion for select countries, for two years (2004 &2010), was prepared and presented here.

Table 2 Values of IFI for Select Countries

Sl No	Country	2004	2010
1	Argentina	0.183	0.252
2	Bangladesh	0.321	0.401
3	Brazil	0.309	0.354
4	Finland	0.663	0.835
5	France	0.677	0.738
6	Germany	0.651	0.713
7	India	0.306	0.386
8	Japan	0.922	0.922
9	Malaysia	0.636	0.791
10	Pakistan	0.190	0.110
11	Russian Federation	0.660	0.781
12	South Africa	0.201	0.388
13	Thailand	0.643	0.673

14	United Kingdom	0.957	0.949
15	United States	0.366	NA

Those countries having IFI values between 0.6 and 1 are categories as high IFI countries, those having IFI values between 0.3 and 0.6 as medium IFI countries and those having IFI values less than 0.3 are called low IFI countries. India can be termed as low IFI country since its value was just 0.306 and not improved much even after six years that is, in 2010 (0.386).

Financial Inclusion in India

The Human Development Report (2011) for India has one component namely financial inclusion index among the other Human Development Indices. The states wise Financial Inclusion in India (FII) was calculated as given below:

FII for the state j is measured by the normalized inverse Educlidean distance of the point (D_{1j}, D_{2j}, D_{3j}) from the ideal point (1,1,1).

$$\text{FIIj} = 1- (1-d1j)+(1-d2j)+(1-d3j)^2$$

Score points

To find different levels of financial inclusion the following criteria were adopted.

$0.500 \leq \text{FII} \leq 1.00 \longrightarrow$ High Financial Inclusion

$0.300 \leq \text{FII} \leq 0.500 \longrightarrow$ Medium Financial Inclusion

$0.00 \leq \text{FII} \leq 0.300 \longrightarrow$ Low Financial Inclusion

The indices of financial inclusion of 18 major states computed by using the data for three dimensions, viz., availability, access and usage were presented in table

Table 3 Financial Inclusion Index of Major States of India

SI No	**State**	**D_1 (Availability index)**	**D_2 (Access index)**	**D_3 (Usage index)**	**FII**	**Level of financial inclusion**
1	Kerala	1.000	0.562	0.351	0.548	High
2	TamilNadu	0.466	0.744	0.426	0.524	High
3	Karnataka	0.453	0.565	0.504	0.505	High
4	Maharashtra	0.270	0.574	0.737	0.489	Medium
5	Andhra Pradesh	0.320	0.734	0.476	0.481	Medium
6	Punjab	0.789	0.392	0.213	0.413	Medium

7	Uttarkhand	0.493	0.419	0.181	0.351	Medium
8	Odisha	0.198	0.350	0.428	0.319	Medium
9	West Bengal	0.349	0.229	0.331	0.301	Medium
10	Haryana	0.527	0.335	0.082	0.291	Low
11	Gujarat	0.279	0.235	0.123	0.210	Low
12	Uttar Pradesh	0.232	0.194	0.180	0.202	Low
13	Assam	0.084	0.209	0.286	0.189	Low
14	Rajasthan	0.132	0.165	0.144	0.147	Low
15	Jharkhand	0.156	0.125	0.143	0.141	Low
16	Madhya Pradesh	0.123	0.124	0.177	0.141	Low
17	Chhattisgarh	0.067	0.117	0.136	0.106	Low
18	Bihar	0.166	0.013	0.127	0.099	Low

Source: Human Development Index (2011)

Out of the 18 major states three states Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka got high score; six states secured medium and the remaining 9 states (50%) got a low level of financial inclusion status. What is intriguing is the fact that relatively better performing states in terms of economic growth like Haryana and Gujarat too fared low level of financial inclusion.

Financial Exclusion in India

When looked form the other side i.e. financial exclusion, **Karmakar, Banerjee and Mohapatra (2011)** worked out the degree of financial exclusion that prevails in the states.

The extent of financial inclusion was measured in terms of percentages and given under four categories: >75 (Very High); 51-75 (High); 25-50 (Medium) and <25 (Low).

Accordingly it was found that the extent of financial exclusion was very high in the five north eastern states and Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. And it was very low only in one state Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala along with other five states fell in the range of 25 to 50 per cent of financial exclusion (Table)

Table 4 State – wise Financial Exclusion

Extent of Financial Exclusion (in percentage)	States
>75	Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand
51 – 75	Bihar, Orissa, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim
25 – 50	Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamilnadu, West Bengal, and Rajasthan
<25	Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, and Pondicherry

Source: Karmakar,Banerjee and Mohapatra, (2011)

Social Group wise Financial Inclusion

The information provided by the Committee on Financial Inclusion (2008) brought out community wise level of financial inclusion in India. Accordingly it was found that the Scheduled Tribes were the social group included under the financial services at lower level of 36.32 per cent which was 10 per cent lower than the all India average of 46.64 per cent. Even Scheduled Castes (50%) were found equally placed with Other Backward Classes (49%) in the level of financial inclusion.

Table 5 Social Group –wise Financial Inclusion

Social Group	Percentage Excluded
Scheduled Castes	49.77
Scheduled Tribes	63.68
Other backward classes	48.58
Others	50.58
Total	**51.36**

Source: Committee on Financial Inclusion, 2008.

Conclusion

Economic development constitutes the fundamental framework for any societal advancement. In order to foster national progress, it is imperative to elevate the status of marginalized populations. Their capacity for earning is exceedingly limited. Consequently, their income and quality of life remain correspondingly low. It is essential for financial inclusion and infrastructural development to occur simultaneously to ensure equitable progress for the disadvantaged groups residing within society. The services rendered by government policies and financial institutions ought to encompass provisions for both the deposit and withdrawal of cash at banking branches as well as ATMs, in addition to the credit of financial benefits obtained through governmental initiatives, among others.

Overall, the financial inclusion of marginalized populations in India remains a critical concern. Additional proactive measures from both the government and financial institutions could significantly advance the financial inclusion of tribal communities.

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